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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
OF NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A
SCOTTISH CENTRAL INSTITUTION

A Doctoral Thesis Submitted

to

The Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Glasgow

by

JAMES GORDON DUNCAN

August 1986

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Dedication

To my wife, Mairi, and our children,
Elspeth, Graham and Gordon

Acknowledgements

The gestation period for this thesis has absorbed five and a half years of my life. During this period, many individuals and groups have collectively contributed, in various measure, to the fulfillment of this endeavour. Although doing research of this nature can only be a singular pursuit, one soon experiences the need and worth of an emergent nucleus of relationships necessary to support one's goal. The following individuals and groups constituted this important network of sustenance.

The College: to the past Principal who initially sanctioned the locus of the research; to my immediate Departmental colleagues who acceded to my sabbatical leave and thus created the time and space for the thesis completion; to the Chairman and the members of the Research Committee who voted the approval and confidence to my application.

One's dependence upon, and even vulnerability to, the inordinate amount of information required is mitigated only by the inestimable services of the College Library. The patient and unflinching efforts to aid my often random efforts to trace relevant data is gratefully acknowledged to Mrs. Warnock.

Andrzej Huczynski at Glasgow University generously provided all that necessary intellectual challenge, stimulation and support to all my incipient ideas. He was a patient listener, gave practical and experienced advice whenever it was required. This supervisory guidance, in all the discrete phases of development of the thesis, can only now, reflectively, be appreciated in its fullest.

The fulcrum of this research has rested upon that small group of colleagues who generously gave their time and thoughts to respond and share their experiences with me. For reasons of confidentiality, they individually remain anonymous but my appreciation to them is publically recorded.

The physical production of this thesis belies all those many hours of meticulous and persistent typing efforts of Mrs. Hall. It includes all

those unseen tasks in transcribing hand-written drafts, correcting misspelling, proof reading and re-typing alterations so that the final presentation reflects all those unheralded and unstinting hours of diligent work.

The solitude of research is also borne by one's immediate family whose long suffering understanding, tolerance and emotions sustained this disproportionate intrusion into their everyday lives. My sincerest and deepest appreciation is expressed to them for this unconditional support over the years.

Finally, the author of this research unequivocally and publically acknowledges his total responsibility for its conception, development and subsequent analysis.

Abstract

This research concerns itself with an educational organisation (Scottish Central Institution) and an important intra-organisational process, namely new course development.

The Scottish Central Institutions provide a variety of mainly vocationally orientated C.N.A.A. validated degrees outwith the traditional university sector of higher education. The locus of this particular research is a small college engaged over the past years in a multiple process of upgrading a range of diplomas into first degrees as well as evolving into new degree areas.

New course development is often and generally portrayed as a rational, planned and an eminently manageable organisational process. The basic thesis of this research eschews such a notion and assumes that it is a complex, diverse and problematic activity. It is conceptualised as a nexus of social constructions, individual and group, which are imbued with the internally situated aspects of culture, ideology and knowledge. These internal components of the organisation's milieu are themselves open to the external influences of a disparate set of organisations, groups and individuals. New courses are developed out of such an amalgum of social forces and constructions.

Theoretically, the research is informed by the interpretive paradigm of sociology applied to the organisational context. The social phenomenological perspective provides its descriptive and analytical focus. As such, interpretive sociology offers an established and an alternative view to the predominant functionalist literature in the organisation field.

Phenomenology is directly concerned with the meaningful lived experiences of individuals. It provides the researcher with meanings and understanding generated by the individual's own daily experience of organisational affairs and events. Social reality thus lies deep within a network of typifications which individuals use to make sense of the situations in which they find themselves.

The complexity of devising new degree courses was addressed around four assumed critical variables - culture, ideology, knowledge and environment. Six academics reconstructed and reflected their individual experiences and interpretations of new course development by talking about the college's environment, their own discipline area, teaching and research, the impact of college structure and processes, formal and informal. The in vivo, semi-structured, recorded material constituted the data base for the research. The academics represented diverse disciplinary areas, college hierarchy, a range of active curricular experiences, disparate philosophical and ideological orientations, and included the traditional and contemporary voices of education.

The oral material was authentically reproduced into written protocols which formed the basis for the individual phenomenological descriptions. Each transcript was analysed to reveal the invariants of perception (emergent themes) and was further examined to educe the underlying structure of the conscious experiences (essences/universals). This procedure was repeated for each transcript and then combined to compile an organisational profile.

This research has found that new course development is a multi-levelled and multi-faceted social process. The college and its formal processes are differentially perceived by the academics and there clearly exists sharply defined arenas of 'organisational reality' - the political, bureaucratic and professional (academic).

The political arena manifests itself in diverse micro-politics - interdepartmental and committee, contested resource allocations, formal and informal pressure groups, subversion of formal processes, overt engineering of planning and so on. Conflict sustains and constructs alternative realities which challenge the imposed definitions and interpretations provided by the formal organisation.

A bureaucratic sphere of organisational reality evolved out of the formal processes and practices associated with developing new courses. This arena constitutes the reality of institutional life characterised by its anatomy of rules, prescribed relationships, time-consuming and

laborious procedures, control and hierarchy. It was sustained by an objectifying and rationalising language, a strong technocratic (vocational relevance) ideology and attempts to define an 'official' college culture. This bureaucratic foreground was consistently challenged by the political and professional practices of individuals and groups reacting to the perceived inadequacies and inefficiencies of the formal system.

Academic professional practice relies heavily upon epistemological traditions, discipline sub-cultures and individual ideological orientations. These factors interacted forceably in the design of both vocational and non-vocational degrees. Again, conflict 'made visible' the boundary demarcations of knowledge and its ownership. A traditional and an opportunistic attitude to the various uses of the discipline was exhibited between the academics and their individual attempts to influence other colleagues on new course proposals.

In essence, the 'active voice' of this research illustrates the complex sets of social constructions (meanings, interpretations and understandings) which exist about the process of devising new degree courses. It firmly discounts any notion that new course development can ever be a neutral or simplistic rational planning activity. The experiences of practice confirms its diverse and problematic nature, and helps us further explore and understand the complex dynamics associated with the design and planning of new degree courses.

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CHAPTER 1

General Statement of the Research Area

By definition, this chapter will provide the reader with a general, yet sufficiently focused, statement with regard to the contextual factors affecting new course development and define a framework for this piece of research. It is a map but is not the territory. Subsequent chapters (2-5) will progressively explore theory, methodology, issues and problems alluded to in this chapter and which are considered germane to an understanding of this area.

Why select new course development (NCD)?

(a) Personal experience

The impetus for this research arose out of many years of academic involvement in new course development (subsequently abbreviated to NCD in the text) [1] of degree courses validated by the Council for National Academic Awards (C.N.A.A.). This personal experience has been coupled to a progressive awareness of, and an increasing concern about, the complex of theoretical and practical issues associated with the process of devising new degree courses.

As this research adopts a phenomenological [2] stance in an attempt to illustrate the processes, it is apposite to introduce a brief personal account of one's own reflections of some of the observed practices.

At a general and personal level of experience, there exists a compound imagery of - interminable meetings both formal and informal, which evolved into highly iterative and fragmented sessions; of diverse competing and often imprecise concepts of curriculum design; of academic departmental territorial imperatives on subject ownership and autonomy; of exposure to different academic thinking styles which compounded the views offered on students, learning and content selection; of a general and sustained muddling though the process to meet ever-demanding deadlines; of a growing sense of isolation and frustration with one's colleagues; of micro-politics and 'hidden' agendas; of a

singular lack of liaison between the various subject working parties; of the multiple claims to the ownership of thematic areas (especially common in interdisciplinary degrees); of personalities and their impress of power, influence and advocacy; of the tutelage of the incipient ideas ...

In essence, this brief cameo attempts to capture and portray some of the actualities of one's own reflective experience. These, then, are merely illustrative examples of some of the disparate elements of the author's 'life-world' associated with devising new degree courses.

Monge et al (1984) state that "the search of knowledge is a search for pattern in experience" (p.22) which succinctly embodies a phenomenological orientation to understanding the common and not-so-common experiences of individuals. The crucible of one's own individual experience leads to a specific desire to explore the 'meaningfully lived experiences' of others engaged in this important aspect of their professional academic work.

This study takes up Mary Warnock's (1977) assertion that "if anyone engaged in the business of education is to feel satisfied, he must be prepared to think about what he is doing and why and for whose benefit" (p.10) and clearly frames the personal research agenda for this study.

(b) The organisational context

Any meaningful understanding of the complexity and significance of NCD has to attempt to accommodate a picture of the range of internal, as well as external, factors impinging upon the process. Organisations, be they schools, colleges or universities, do not exist 'in vacua' but are inextricably bound to and actively involved with a range of diverse environments - academic and non-academic. Whatever metaphor is used to describe the phenomena of organisation, few definitions, either functionalist or interpretive [3], now fail to make explicit the environment-organisational link. (Berg and Ostergren 1979; Baldrige et al 1978)

The locus of this study is a Scottish Central Institution [4], a particular college whose antecedents were derived from a strong social concern with the poor, inadequate diets, feeding and broad nutritional matters in the late 19th century. These particular care activities were sustained and modified slowly throughout the subsequent decades. This 'market' identity has now become further diversified into a range of modern 'caring professions' directly associated with the various agencies of the welfare state. The Scottish Central Institution sector is epitomised by a vocationally-orientated thrust and identity in their course offerings.

Historical antecedents combined with the "demographic decline in traditional client groups and the vagaries of political economic policy" (Duncan, 1982, p.46) have created a pressure momentum which becomes translated into an active process of constantly appraising courses and course opportunities against the perceived exigencies of the educational 'market' place.

The organisational context becomes that richly subjective milieu in which the 'reality' of pressure becomes articulated into a series of managerially-orientated constructed perceptions of the college's role vis-à-vis potential course markets and, at the departmental level, results in a strong prescriptive drive to produce new degrees. This 'rational' assessment process is often contained in the rhetoric of such words and statements as - 'survival, competitive advantage of the college, diminishing resources, declining student numbers, economic cut-backs, inconsistent SED policy ...' A common organisational vocabulary then becomes codified (Daft and Wiginton 1979; Evered 1983) which emerges and subtly permeates the content of academic and course committees and becomes used to sufficiently agree a 'common' need to collectively and collaboratively agree action on NCD. But organisations are contexts for multiple realities - it is where ideas, events and people combine to constantly negotiate and re-negotiate their multiple definitions of the situation.

Musgrove's (1968) concern that the curriculum was "first and foremost an artificial device, a contrivance, in some sense an unnatural arrangement" (p.100) owes as much to the series of imperfect human perceptions and negotiations of academics about curricula, as it does to prevailing and often conflicting organisational cultures and ideologies in which the process itself takes place. Hamilton (1975) also makes the point when he notes that "Every school has its distinctive network of institutional and social variables that interact in complicated ways and influences much of what takes place ..." (p.205). Colleges, operating in the non-university sector of higher education, also demonstrate their own distinctive internal social fabric within which process and action are deeply embedded and influenced (Clark 1970).

The need to encompass the social dimension of organisational contexts is expressed by Salaman (1979) in the form that "organisations do things, they create products, services, news, knowledge and other commodities. And what they do, how they do it, and what they do it to all have implications ..." (p.87), cogently reminds us of the multi-levels of organisational functioning - both objective (functional activities) and subjective (symbolic activities) aspects are concurrently involved.

This thesis will subscribe to a notion of organisation that is eloquently captured by Weick (1979) when he wrote "despite their (i.e. organisations') preoccupation with facts, numbers, objectivity, concreteness and accountability are in fact saturated with subjectivity, abstraction, guesses, making do, inventions and arbitrariness ... just like the rest of us." (p.5) The concept of organisation embodied in this quotation shifts away from one of objective rationality to one of human social construction in which organisational members actively engage in defining the varying and multiple realities, both within, and external to, their organisation.

Because NCD is such a basic yet fundamentally important academic task, it is important to explicate the process from what Pfeffer

(1982) generically calls a 'social constructionist perspective' [5], and hence contribute to our stock of knowledge in this area.

(c) Recent research perspectives

This sub-section will be restricted to providing a necessarily brief account of some aspects of the 'new' sociology of education as it applies to the content of the curriculum and the internal operations of educational organisations. [6]

Apple (1979), Eggleston (1977), Reid (1978) and Robinson (1981) amongst many others, have categorised the dominant perspective in curriculum design and innovation as that of 'rationalism or behaviourism' and is singularly characteristic of the work of Bobbitt (1924), Tyler (1949), Bloom (1956) and his associates.

The current popularity of such behaviouristic approaches can be seen in the core learning programmes of the MSC Youth Training Schemes, the module descriptors of the Scottish Education Department's 16-18 Action Plan (Mack 1984) and also, often forms the blue-print of the various materials produced for Distance and Open Learning projects (e.g. Scotvec). Robinson (1981) notes that the rationalist model is attractive because of "its logic, its seeming objectivity and its correspondence with an 'efficient' concept of education " (p.129). The enthusiasm for rational models of instruction can be widely found in the literature of professional and managerial training (see, for example, Huczynski 1981; Ramiszowski 1981).

However, by the mid-1970's, an increasingly critical debate arose as to the bases of such approaches and their practical applicability in education (Gleeson 1979, 1977; Hamilton 1975, 1973; Eggleston 1977; Reid 1977; Inglis 1974). The emergence of the 'new' sociology of education in the early 70's was largely born out of what Hargreaves and Woods (1984) call the "despair at the failure of traditional approaches to make much impact upon educational inequalities ..." (p.10). The focus of investigation now began to shift to the internal processes of the classroom and the school.

Hammersley and Woods (1984) in a recent collection of papers also note that "undoubtedly the injection ... of interpretive approaches, especially symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology" (p.1) has created a major stimulus in identifying and exploring meanings embedded in action. The interpretive paradigm has subsequently contributed a richly eclectic approach, drawing upon such diverse theoretical frameworks of Marx, Weber, Mead and Schutz to the analysis of classroom, school and society (Hargreaves and Wood 1984, pp.1-9), coupled to an equally diverse range of methodological orientations exploring substantive issues such as streaming, classroom knowledge, pupils' interpretations, school culture, teachers' treatment of pupils, etc. Although these interpretive approaches have been widely applied to the process of schooling, virtually no research has been carried out in the higher education sector from these perspectives, let alone in mainstream organisational research, until very recently (Sanders 1982; Smircich 1983; Startup 1979; Becher 1984). These interpretive approaches allow the researcher into the hidden and, what Collins (1975) calls, the 'invisible organisation' being "sets of beliefs and rules and accepted ways of acting which large numbers of people carry around in their heads ..." (p.310) now become amenable to investigation. The subjective and experiential social world of the organisational member can be probed and described in its "context of time, place and mediated by the individual's experience" (Cornbleth 1984, p.34).

The problematic nature of NCD

(a) The problem of knowledge

It is posited that the 'problematic nature' of NCD is due to three basic and inter-related dimensions: (a) the 'problem' of knowledge, (b) the college-to-environment relationships, and (c) the academic task. This section will preview some the pertinent aspects of the knowledge dimension (Chapter 3 will further develop these themes).

Socio-linguistics, the sociology of knowledge and Marxism, have all contributed to an understanding of the 'problematic' nature of

knowledge (leaving aside all the educational and philosophical debates). [7]

Bernstein's (1971) seminal work, epitomised in his much quoted phrase "How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public ..." (p.202) reflects the fundamental and wider process of cultural transmission that takes place through the curriculum content and is the focus where 'valid knowledge' is presented to the student. The basic question relevant to NCD is, how is this knowledge selected and organised?

The selection of knowledge according to Bernstein (1971) is based on a definition of boundary strength and subject integrity - 'strong classification' or subject separateness (e.g. Physics, Maths) and 'weak classification' or subject integration (e.g. Modern Studies). Bernstein's analysis "presents a theoretical basis for understanding the social, organisational and intellectual differences between 'subject-specific' and 'integrated studies'" (Hamilton 1973, p.61) and as such, presents an initial framework to explore the practicality of NCD.

The direct relevance of such an analysis is patently obvious in many of the C.N.A.A. degree formulations which attempt to transgress the intrinsic subject boundaries in compliance with the rigorous strictures imposed to achieve integration of subject matter. [8] Such tensions are apparent in the many and varied attempts to re-cast previously discrete and insular subjects to form a coherent field of knowledge, for example, Communication Studies. This particular degree borrows eclectically from many intellectual traditions as well as knowledge domains and, if it had to successfully pass the C.N.A.A. criteria, demonstrates its overall internal coherence and integration of subject materials (Corner 1981; Barnett and Brown 1981).

Developing a new degree, such as Communication Studies, demands that the polar extremes of strong and weak subject classifications be reconciled and manifested into an 'integrated code' to satisfy

powerful external academic peer groups. This sketch exemplifies some of the issues inherent in the process of NCD and underscores the need to accurately understand this process in higher educational contexts. Current educational policy expounds an ideology which demands new degrees to be instrumentally aligned to their 'usefulness' in the market-place - what, then, are the implications for subject relevance in the Humanities or Social Sciences, especially their future curricular contributions and formulations?

(b) **The problem of environment**

"In order to survive and prosper, every organisation (and presumably educational ones too) must develop and maintain an acceptable alignment with its environment" (Snow and Hambrick 1980, p.572). The alignment process in an educational institution is new course development and ultimately produces the courses, distinctive of the particular Central Institution.

Isaac (1980) has attempted to review the research [9] that has been done to identify those organisational factors in universities or colleges which make them open to the development of new programmes but notes that few actual studies had been done. One could be tempted to speculate, for example, on the role of the 1981 UGC financial strictures on certain institutions of higher education. The University of Salford has been well documented and publicised in the educational press as a model of entrepreneurial success in the university survival league. Parsons and Platt (1973) maintain that education must incorporate "new areas of knowledge if they are to remain intellectually solvent" (p.8) which seems to echo a self-evident truism in to-day's economic and political ideology.

Environment is an elusive concept. It is not only a "set of impersonal forces whereby the organisation 'itself' acts but is a series of definitions and meanings of the situation" (Silverman 1971, p.37). The basic idea to be useful has to be understood in terms of the organisational members' perceptions and meanings (Bartneuk 1984) - how do they attend to, differentiate, and

actively construct their environmental domains, is a crucial factor (Linder 1982). Child's (1972) original work also reminds us to view the 'choices' which are made as being conditioned not simply by some technological or bureaucratic logic, but reflects the essential 'political' nature of this complex process and its ideological basis. The earlier static and deterministic conceptions of an organisation's environment failed to acknowledge what Pondy and Mitroff (1979) state that "only parts of an organisation's environment is given to it" (p.13) and further point out that there are multiple realities to be contended with, rather than what Blumer (1971) calls, the simplistic linear cause-effect relationships.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) put forward the basic premise that "individuals are adaptive organisms, adapt attitudes, behaviour and beliefs to their social context and to the reality of past and present behaviour and situation" (p.226). Adaptation, in the sense of 'making sense' of environments, the internal processes and the individual's own social information processing abilities, is bound to influence the course of NCD. Even accepting Lynch's (1981) synthesis of the environmental issues as being "financial pressures (reduced real resources), demographic pressures (shrinking student numbers) and demand pressures (shifting student subject preferences)" (p.33), how do organisational members subsequently attribute meaning and action to these factors, is highly problematic.

(c) The problem of the academic task

Whether to create, transmit or re-appraise knowledge, the essence of the academic task remains complex. Burrell and Morgan's (1979) framework consisting of four sets of basic assumptions - ontological, epistemological, human nature and methodological - could be used to analyse and elicit the nature of the academic task.

Academics have their own internalised and well-established self-perceptions about their own subject paradigm (Bloor and Bloor 1982; Becher 1981; Becher and Kogan 1980; Lodahl and Gordon

1972) which strongly conditions the 'knowledge boundary' of their respective disciplines.

Becher and Kogan (1980) draw the distinction between the 'operational' and 'normative' modes of academic departmental functioning and the often conflicting tensions which arise out of the interaction between these two forces (Rousseau 1978). In non-academic situations, work by Pondy and Boje (1975), Meyer and Rowan (1977), Bland and McKinley (1979), all have explored the role of 'shared ideas or meanings' and their effects on an individual's behaviour in organisational contexts.

Lockwood's (1981) research confirms that university academic departments were 'discrete sub-cultural' entities which resulted in 'different preferences, commitments and opportunities' when applied to the pragmatics of university planning.

Mention has already been made of the 'invisible colleges' - those groups exercising influence over the individual academic, like discipline peer groups, research councils, and professional bodies - all bear additional and complex forms of social control over the creation, evaluation and dissemination of the academic task. All groups and organisations "... build a point of view or perspective about themselves, their problems and their environments" (Smith and Keith 1971, p.1) this neatly sums up the pervasive nexus of relationships which exist. Additionally, and certainly in the university sector, lecturers perceive the promotional system being allied to the discipline base and its research provision. These forces reinforce the current departmental structures and tend to impede professional and organisational change. For colleges, similar arguments prevail, and are further fostered by the like attitude of C.N.A.A. as to the role of research and its credence in terms of the individual academic. Gran (1981) has referred to this aspect as 'inflexible job structures' which are sustained by powerful membership categories.

Varying external constraints

Smith and Keith (1971) express the aim of this section when they say that "sometimes a picture of social reality becomes clearer by stepping back from the concrete images of day-to-day activities and events by viewing the larger context into which the particulars fit" (p.1).

The point has already been advanced that in order to holistically appreciate the inherently 'social' nature of NCD, both the specific internal organisational processes (formal and informal) must be somehow related to the broader external contextual forces (direct and indirect) which impinge upon and affect the organisational dynamic. Figure 1 diagrammatically represents these salient external influences. A general caveat, the diagram at best, can only superficially pertain to be an abstraction of the complex 'reality' of the situation which exists between a college and its diverse environments.

To deal synoptically, yet coherently, with the range of external forces, it is proposed to arbitrarily categorise them into three broad sections - political, academic and professional.

(a) Political constraints

The political connection to education was established by Aristotle, the economic one by Marx. Few today would deny this contemporary equation and its practical implications.

A critical element in the relationships between the SED [10] and a college is the control exercised on the development of new course initiatives. New degree proposals are formalised in a Stage A document. [11] The screening process operates on several levels - appraising the intrinsic worth of the degree (educational need), its relationship to other courses and institutions (geographical/distribution need), its contribution to skill and manpower (vocational/instrumental need), evidence of commercial/industrial/service sector demand (market need), proposed student intake numbers (financial/grant need) - approximates to the current prescriptive and comprehensive practice. A positive response means that the application can proceed with suitable curricula detail for CNAAC consideration

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION (NON-UNIVERSITY SECTOR) IN ITS TOTAL SOCIETAL ENVIRONMENT

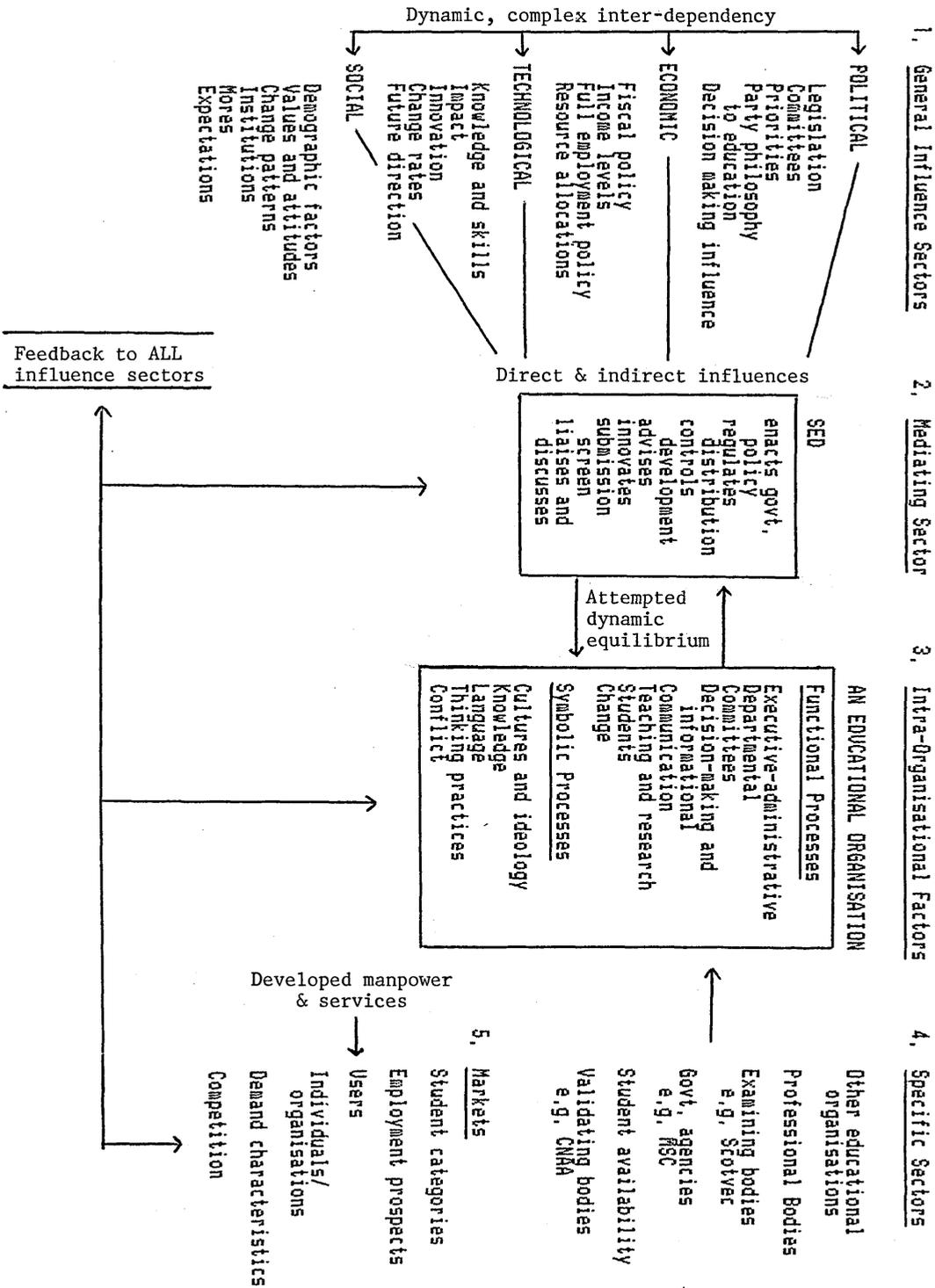


FIGURE 1

and/or the appropriate professional body. If there exists some semblance of a 'grand design' for non-university higher education in Scotland, then this system of control must be an important aspect of it.

The autonomy of the institution to regulate and develop new areas of work is thus constrained by this screening process. However, colleges can exercise a moderate influence through the network of both formal and informal committees of SED and the personal relationships with members of the appropriate subject inspectors. The quality and quantity of advice and consultation can vary enormously and often seems subject to the vicissitudes of political directives being exercised at the time, or is a function of the particular form of SED's own agenda setting.

This tenuous, but nevertheless important, dimension of 'knowledge exchange' that occurs at different levels of the college-to-SED relationship can be of considerable value to the institution - allowing it to proceed with, or change, certain course initiatives which have been 'informally tested out' prior to the formalisation of a Stage A document. College academic plans can only therefore be realistic in the light of the varying limitations and restrictions imposed upon them in terms of the control of resource allocation and the internal priorities of SED planning.

(b) Academic constraints

Academic influences which most directly bear upon NCD are those exercised by the subject boards and committees of the CNAA. [12] They are composed of academics from a variety of institutions, but who share a common subject knowledge and specialisation in a chosen field. These 'experts' have the role of investigating, not only the credibility of the academic content of a submission, but also scrutinise the 'knowledge' of the authors of the subject proposal and their research (or lack of research) credentials in the field.

Visiting validating groups often, in the process of their investigations, make apparent the tensions between the selection

of relevant academic material and attempts to coherently present this material in some kind of integrating framework, and becomes especially critical, if the degree is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, e.g. Communication Studies. Acute dilemmas are constantly faced in terms of Bernstein's 'strong' and 'weak' classifications in these 'hybrid-type' academically-orientated degrees where the field itself is in a state of evolution and its own identity depends largely upon older traditional disciplines.

Where a new degree also requires the validation of a professional body, the academic strictures, while still rigorous, can seem to be subservient to the professional educational demands, especially where there is a large practical skills element present, e.g. Nursing Studies.

Validation is explicitly and critically in the business of assessing, inter alia, how knowledge is selected, organised and transmitted to students. The inherent complexity of validation raises a host of critical issues which can only be briefly referenced - the selection of academics who 'represent' the field, their own theoretical biases and value orientations; the 'corporate historical image' of the institution and its staff can facilitate, or not, the process; the nexus of academic and research 'community' relationships existing external to the college form, 'informal' yet powerful bonds - all of which, add additional dynamic to the C.N.A.A.-to-college relationship and which 'conditions' NCD in a variety of direct and indirect ways.

(c) Professional constraints

Professional bodies, like the Royal College of Nursing amongst others, have long sought the active 'professionalisation' of their profession. Commonly, professional standing has long been equated with the level of the initial qualification awarded, e.g. diploma or degree. In vocational areas like nursing and physiotherapy, there is strong pressure to 'up-market' the basic qualification to degree status (see, for example, the Auld Report 1981). [13] Dore (1978, 1976) and others, have noted the trend of 'educational certificate escalation' and that the 'diploma disease' has been

brought about by the combination of the self-interest of the teaching profession, the institute's own standing and identity, professional rivalries, etc.

Another facet in the demand structure that can affect curricula content is that of the mature professional who now seeks either a part-time degree to upgrade initial diploma, or a higher degree to enhance career prospects, e.g. Edinburgh University's M.Sc. for Public Administrators (Scotsman 1985).

The rate of growth in 'new' knowledge also puts pressure on areas of professional practice which have become increasingly more complex in recent years (Eraut 1985). This demand for new and effective skills based on newer theoretical bases becomes translated into further training and development programmes. These, in turn, have to be incorporated into any new degree proposal which ultimately aims to produce a more competent and sophisticated professional.

(d) **Other constraints**

The rubric of description has, so far, been selected to particularly illustrate those factors and their inter-relationships to the vocationally-orientated type of degree.

Reference has also been made to a different type of degree, viz. Communication Studies, which demonstrates different and additional sets of factors that interplay. How does an incipient idea like a 'communications' degree become transformed into a tangible reality?

The development becomes 'bounded' by, not only the complexities of assembling what counts to be relevant knowledge from academic disciplines contributing to the field, but is also compounded by such pragmatic factors as: the collective 'inexperience' of the staff involved, their lack of a coherent knowledge of the field, the uncertainty of market direction, should the content be information or communication or some combination, the lack of a defined employment sector, ... The delicacy of the situation is

best exemplified by the fact that it was quickly recognised that some form of liaison or consultancy would have to be entered into and developed with the recognised centres in the field. These academic centres also produce the 'experts' for CNAA validation.

The challenge, at this phase of NCD, was to evolve, formulate and manage a relationship which would not subsequently compromise any future impartial validation but, at the same time, would also attempt to establish that one could have an academic credibility and contribution to offer to the field. Such can be the dilemmas in NCD.

Internal organisational factors

The previous sections, which dealt with the 'organisational context' and the 'academic task' both touched upon some of the symbolic processes associated with the internal dynamics of the organisation as they relate to NCD.

Mintzberg (1979), in a synthesis of a large volume of material relating to organisational structures, has identified a structural configuration called a 'professional bureaucracy' which he approximates to educational contexts. (Chapter 2 will provide a critical evaluation of the contributions of organisation theory to educational organisations.) [14]

Some of the general points contained in Mintzberg's description of a professional bureaucracy are pertinent to universities and colleges. A key characteristic of such organisations is the fact that they hire duly trained and indoctrinated specialists and give them considerable control over their own work. This fact has great implication for the structure and functioning of a professional bureaucracy.

A permanent 'para-structure' of committees exists juxtaposed to the academic and administrative structures. Academic work is both centralised (in departments) and also de-centralised (in various committees). A range of problems and issues arise out of such structural formulations, for example - attempts by academics to collectively seek control over administrative decisions which might affect their autonomy; that there can be no single strategy

formulation of academic plans; that a diffuse, plural and part-time decision-making system exists; (Enderud, 1977), the difficulties in co-ordinating professionals, the uneven range of specialisations and skills available to develop new courses, ... all compounds the assumed rationality of the NCD processes.

Fielden and Lockwood (1973) and Lockwood (1981) have cogently noted that the 'rational' managerial processes in educational organisations are severely restricted by the nature of the academic task, the plural and fragmented nature of the part-time joint decision-making processes and the power and autonomy of the individual academic departments. Too often, the internal structural arrangements and the resulting decisional processes make the institution simply reactive to the market. The minimum lead-time required to develop and finalise a new degree is generally in the order of 2-3 years.

The actual size of a college is another factor which relates to the scale of curricular initiatives that could be developed. A small college, by definition, will have a restricted 'pool of academic' talent upon which it has to rely.

Historically, colleges have often recruited staff for their 'generalist' contribution to work serviced over a range of courses. The converse can be imposed when a C.N.A.A. directive demands the recruitment of a 'specialist' before agreement will be given to allow a new course to run. On most degree courses there is also an expectation that staff contributing to the teaching will indulge in some form of research germane to the degree and their subject specialism. The 'doing research' element creates further potential dilemmas for the organisation.

If size dictates the staff compliment (SED's norm is now a student/staff ratio in the order of 12:1), what role does staff development play? Does the department instrumentally direct staff into certain academic directions or allow traditional professional autonomy to self-direct the individual? Departmental as well as corporate academic plans for future courses have to cope with this variable and its associated time dimension.

Change patterns and NCD

The overall scenario on NCD would be incomplete without a cursory look at the world of change which Toffler (1981) asserts is now endemic in all sectors of society.

The relationships are undoubtedly complex and even the range of official studies and reports which have tried to tease out the crucial parameters which might affect education are full of assumptions, abstractions and often flawed statistical influences which, in the end, tend to generate more debate than solutions.

Time-honoured fears about the allocation of scarce resources, the quality of standards, inequalities of educational provision, equality of opportunities, curricula relevance to work, leisure and society, inefficiencies in educational organisations, rising costs - all are uncompromisingly familiar and are constant reminders of the ongoing tensions and dilemmas associated with educational change. Imposed or self-directed, the key variable is the rate of change in the different sectors in which a college interacts and how these differentiated rates may affect the institution and its NCD programme. The matrix of change may be continuous in some sectors while, in others, it may be discrete.

The halcyon days of post-Robbins' (1963) expansionism of higher education has been recently replaced with a stern period of educational retrenchment and the old platitude of 'survival in the market place' has a new and added currency. Dr. Pope's (1977) address to Aston University captures the current spirit when he said "We had better ask what really makes students decide to come to Aston because on the correct answer to that question could depend the livelihood of us all ..."

Links have undoubtedly to be made with the economic and technological infrastructures along with a forecast as to their future development - this work is embodied in the 'manpower' planning and skills approach and is reflected in a range of curricula and course innovations, e.g. open learning material for the small businesses' sector, and there is some evidence that some established degrees are being reformulated to

re-match the current volatile and highly differentiated student and employment markets. [15]

But Lord Vaizey's (1979) statement implies change in other directions, when he says that institutions must be prepared "to be flexible in their structures and courses, to cater for new student clientele coming from such social groups like - older people, working people especially women, the unskilled and handicapped ..." (p.42). Hence they must adjust to the needs of the newer learners. The educational delivery system may no longer be the mass lecture or tutorial but will be part-time, self-pacing and flexible to individual needs rather than the slavish adherence to the syllabus demands. "New attitudes to work, leisure and the shape of society" (Briggs 1978) will inevitably dictate the content of future courses and strain the traditional monopolies and dictates of the recognised disciplines.

"The quicksands of tradition, the departmental 'whims' or the intuitive academic hunch" (Duncan 1979, p.94) have all been favoured approaches in the past and often surprisingly successful in terms of innovative new degree courses. The growing popularity of applying a marketing orientation to aid the planning and development of new courses can be increasingly found in the education literature (Doyle and Lynch 1976; Doyle and Newbould 1980; Newbould 1980; Lynch 1984; Duncan 1981, 1979) in which marketing concepts are then applied to educational planning. The utility of such approaches has also been criticised (Duncan 1982).

Meadows and Perelman (1977) timeously remind the new course planner that "to-day, higher education is predominantly structured around disciplines instead of real world problems ... unfortunately the real world is not neatly divided into disciplines" (p.34). de Moor (1978) expands the change theme in tertiary education and maintains that change will affect the whole system - levels, objectives, students, teachers and teaching methods. NCD has to acknowledge all these crucial parameters, and future viability for a college may rest on the axiom of managing change or being managed by change.

NCD is undoubtedly an important organisational dynamic, expressive of an amalgum of forces and becomes focused and articulated through the diverse perceptions, images and constructed realities of all the involved parties. Anne Huff (1983) describes this subjectivity when she says that "the strategy of an organisation is rarely, if ever, non-controversial. Organisations embrace too many viewpoints and interests for complete accord." (p.167) Discord and disagreement provide strong symbolic content and varying meanings, all expressive of the competing views and differential experiences of organisational members.

"Organisation is experience" (Greenfield 1979, p.97) reflects the fundamental nature of human construction and meaningful interpretation of actions and events. A phenomenological perspective allows the researcher to detail the map and explore the territory of NCD experiences anchored to their organisational context. Bronowski (1973) predicates the argument thus, "man ... is not a figure in the landscape - he is a shaper of the landscape" (p.19), which epitomises the philosophy and orientation of this research.

Aims of the research

(a) Resumé

In summary, the proceeding sections and sub-sections of this chapter have attempted to delineate some of the problems and issues which are addressed as a general statement of the research area and also state why NCD is an important, complex and highly problematic process to understand.

The descriptions and examples which have been offered should firmly reject any notion that NCD is a rational and eminently manageable organisational process. A more realistic assessment of how this process takes place is based on the explicit assumption that individual organisational members are actively engaged in 'making sense' of their immediate environment, their own and colleagues' actions, and the on-going stream of daily organisational events. To explicate the meanings associated with these 'situation-defining' efforts would offer insights into the NCD processes and becomes the central tenet of this thesis and of the research.

(b) **Problem focus**

As a preliminary exercise to stating the specific aims of this research, the 'problem area' will be drawn into a sharper focus.

The framework of the problem area is conceptualised as a **nexus of social dimensions** which can be described in terms of four basic sets:-

- 1) the internal organisational milieu (culture and ideology)
- 2) definitions of the academic task (values, beliefs and orientations)
- 3) individual discipline orientation of academics (culture, ideology and knowledge assumptions)
- 4) definitions of the externally situated contextual influences (environment, knowledge and construction).

These social dimensions inter-relate and intersect to create and sustain the socially defined meanings and experiences relating to the activities of NCD. The thesis employs phenomenological constructs and methodology to describe the nature of these experiences and the foundations of knowledge used by the organisational members working within this organisational process.

Aims

The specific aims of this research are:-

- (a) to establish a framework of research into NCD which, de facto, confronts the complexity of this organisational process;
- (b) to demonstrate that a phenomenological perspective can be used to explicate organisational experiences;
- (c) to describe the experiences of organisational members actively engaged in NCD;
- (d) to describe how these experiences define, for the individual, his academic task and its relationship to the NCD process.

Collectively, these aims contribute to the following **general postulate** about the research:-

There exist academic tasks and environments, within which organisational members are differentially interdependent and from

which they create, negotiate and sustain a meaningful, social reality of their activities and events.

The above aims and postulate are based upon the following principal and explicit assumptions:-

- (a) that, as education is a cultural phenomenon, NCD will encompass beliefs and attitudes situated as part of the wider social context;
- (b) that the everyday 'taken-for-granted' experiences of organisational life are, themselves, an area worthy of research;
- (c) that NCD is an appropriate organisational focus to educe the underlying socially constructed meanings ascribed to it by members engaged in the process.

Chapter 1 Notes

1. New course development (NCD), in the context of this study, is broadly defined as a new degree course for the college and which may have previously existed in some other standard format, e.g. a diploma reconstructed into a first degree or an unclassified degree into an honours formulation. The definition excludes a degree reformulation as part of a quinquennial process or a general re-development of individual subjects within an established degree programme.

As the college was a diploma awarding institution prior to 1977, course development was aimed at producing degrees in various vocational areas. This work is seen as new on three basic points: (a) the selection and organisation of subject material to coherently produce degree-level status is seen as being sufficiently different from diploma material; (b) the range of activities and experiences associated with NCD, for the bulk of the staff involved, were new; and finally, (c) the procedure of submission, validation, case presentation and argument to the visiting panel were also new.

2. Phenomenology (which will be detailed in Chapter 4) attempts to study human experiences as it is lived (Merleau-Ponty 1964). In a phenomenological perspective man is viewed as: possessing consciousness; being intentional; being social; being temporal; being in-the-lived world (Lebenswelt) ... (Lynch-Sauer 1981, pp.3-4). A succinct overview is provided in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol.1, No.14, pp.210-215. Filmer et al (1972) "New Directions in Sociological Theory", chapter 6, contains basic themes. Mary F. Rogers (1983) "Sociology, Ethnomethodology and Experience", chapters 1-5, explain the basic concepts. Smart (1976) "Sociology, Phenomenology and Marxian Analysis", chapter 3. Psathas (edit.) (1973) "Phenomenological Sociology". Luckmann (1978) "Phenomenology and Sociology". This list provides initiation into the field and is a basis for subsequent development. Also see bibliography for further books and relevant articles.

3. The interpretive paradigm of sociology consists of various related schools of thought. According to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) classification, the paradigm consists of (a) solipsism, (b) phenomenology, (c) phenomenological sociology (to include ethnomethodology and phenomenological symbolic interactionism), and (d) hermeneutics (p.235). Their common concern is to "understand the subjective experiences of individuals" (p.253).
4. Scottish Central Institutions are a distinctive sector of Scottish higher education outwith the traditional universities. They award a range of mostly vocationally orientated degrees under the validation of C.N.A.A. (They, the Central Institutions, are broadly equivalent to the English polytechnics but pre-date them in terms of their original establishment in higher education.)
5. Pfeffer (1982) uses the phrase 'social constructionist perspective' to generically label those perspectives on human action which are emergent, almost random, dependent on process and social construction - embraced by ethnomethodology, cognitive theories of organisation, language in organisations, affect-based processes, etc. ... See chapter 6 of his book.
6. The phrase, the 'new sociology' of education, is variously applied - by Robinson (1981) "to the return of interest in the social organisation of knowledge" (p.115), by Hammersley and Woods (1984) "to the internal processes of schooling" (p.7) which draws upon a range of theoretical frameworks such as Marx, Mead, Weber and Schutz. Hargreaves and Woods (1984) point up the approaches of symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology. A current hallmark of the movement is the range of ethnographic studies applied to classroom and school processes. An assessment of the work is given by Delamont and Atkinson (1980). Bates (1980) looks at some of the issues in the recent developments of the 'new sociology' of education. An expanded account is contained in the introduction (pp.1-77) in Karabel and Halsey's (1977) book "Power and Ideology in Education".

7. The literature on both educational theory and the philosophy of education is voluminous and one can only give a personal selection of some of the literature. See, for example, Young (1971) edit. "Knowledge and Control", Pring (1976) "Knowledge and Schooling", Apple (1979) "Ideology and the Curriculum", Hirst and Peters (1970) "The Logic of Education", Barrow (1976) "Common Sense and the Curriculum", Phenix 'Realms of Meaning' in Whitefield (1971) edit. "Disciplines of the Curriculum", White (1973) "Towards a Compulsory Curriculum", Hirst (1974) edit. "Knowledge and the Curriculum", etc. The list is for basic guidance only.
8. The C.N.A.A. periodically publish various booklets which offer guidance for the submission and validation of their degrees.
9. Some selected aspects of the educational innovation literature has contributed some insights to how the 'organisational variables' affect the process. For example, Glan (1981), Barnett and Brown (1981), Nias (1972), Ross (1976), Clark (1968), Berg and Ostergren (1979), Baldrige and Deal (1975), Collingwood (1979).
10. The following books provide a description of the structure of the Scottish educational system and the role played by the S.E.D.: Findlay (1973) "Education in Scotland", Hunter (1972) "The Scottish Education System", and S.E.D. paper (1979) "The Scottish Education System". A recent review of Scottish higher education in a THES issue (14/12/84).
11. A Stage 'A' document is required by S.E.D. to be submitted for their initial appraisal of any new course initiative by a college. This document must contain a precis of the following categories of information: rationale for the course; course aims; consultation of individuals, groups, bodies, firms, etc.; demand for the course including quantitative data; course structure; funding implications; resource implications - human and physical.
12. For a basic description of the structure and the validating procedure of the C.N.A.A., see Lane's (1975) book "Design for Degrees".

13. The Auld Report (1981) is an example of a profession's concern (in this case, nursing) for their long-term educational requirements. A continuing education programme is envisaged throughout an individual's career and is allied to a range of postgraduate certificates, diplomas and higher degrees (M.Sc. and Ph.D.).
14. Organisation theory, per se, does not exist. The phrase is commonly accepted to relate generically to a diverse collection of theories and perspectives applied to the study of organisations.
15. Personal communication with colleagues in other Central Institutions.

CHAPTER 2

Functionalism, a Critique and Educational Organisations

The first chapter offered a preview of the range of interactive factors which impinge upon the NCD process. As the locus of this research is an academic organisation - a Scottish Central Institution - it is pertinent to turn the focus upon the dominant paradigm which informs us about the concept of organisation. The objectives of this chapter will be (a) to profile the various functionalist schools of thought in organisation theory, (b) to synthesise a general critique of functionalism in the organisation field, (c) to review the relevant functionalist orientated research in the context of educational organisations, and finally (d) to suggest a foundation to exploring the substantive issues concerning academic task and orientation, culture and ideology, structure and environment. (See Chapter 3) Subsequent chapters (4 and 5) will offer and develop an interpretive perspective to the understanding of an organisation and its processes. [1]

Introduction

Astley and Van de Ven (1983) observe that there has "been a growing theoretical pluralism in the organisation literature which reflects partly a growing awareness of the complexity of organisations and partly a refinement of the interests and preoccupations of organisational theorists" (p.245). They have attempted to reconcile the divergent central perspectives in organisational theory by examining six common and current debates in the literature and conclude that the "proponents of each paradigm ... impose their own conception of reality on the practical events of social life" (p.270). Organisation theory not only attempts to reflect aspects of 'organisational reality' but it also helps produce that reality by structuring its own subject matter and has consequently produced diverse perspectives on organisations.

Social Science research typically makes interpretations about the nature of reality and about the phenomena under investigation. Kuhn (1970) calls these 'core assumptions' a paradigm. [2] Ritzer (1975) has described a paradigm as follows:

"A paradigm is a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answer obtained. ... It (a paradigm) subsumes, defines, and inter-relates the exemplars, theories, methods and instruments that exist within it." (p.156)

Benson (1983) also asserts that it is not only an intellectual stance towards research in a particular field, but is "a form of life, a discourse embedded in a social situation, a set of practices. The paradigm is a social product ..." (p.36). It is constructed and sustained by an identifiable collection of scholars working within broadly defined and commonly understood assumptions about theory and practice. Morgan (1983) maintains that "the logic of different research strategies can be decoded through a systematic analysis of the modes of engagement" (p.20) and presents a framework for decoding which contains paradigms (constitutive assumptions), metaphors (epistemological stances), and puzzle solving (favoured methodology).

Burrell and Morgan (1979) have reviewed and grouped organisational research according to their principal theoretical and philosophical assumptions and from this, have posited four basic paradigms - the functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist. Their framework is based upon two underlying dimensions of social science: the subjective v. objective notion of reality, and the regulation v. radical change views of social order. These dimensions are combined to define the four paradigms. [3]

While this schema could undoubtedly be criticised on many counts, e.g. the difficulty of drawing discrete boundaries between theories or paradigms, it is, nevertheless, a useful attempt to review the complex and plural nature of the field of organisation theories. Other authors over the years have created their own typologies and schemas on differing criteria and dimensions (Carper and Snizek 1980; Weeks 1973; Scott 1981; Hage 1980; Pugh et al 1966), and these have been usefully discussed by Clegg and Dunkerley (1980).

A recent book by Pfeffer (1982), makes the 'perspectives on action adopted' a critical dimension which distinguishes between the various theories of organisation. The three perspectives on human behaviour defined by Pfeffer are: "action seen as purposive, bounded or intended rational or goal directed; action seen as externally constrained or situationally determined; and action seen as being somewhat more random and dependent on an emergent unfolding process" (p.5). These distinctions are to be found contained in the explicit or implicit 'models of man' assumptions contained in the various theories and paradigms.

The "dominant paradigm in organisational theory is the functionalist view" (Putnam 1982, p.195) and it subsumes the mechanistic, organic and cybernetic root metaphors (Brown 1977; Morgan 1980). The variety of metaphors used by organisational theorists allow us to link perception and knowing into an interpretive process which differentiates the categories of our experience and understanding, commonly referred to as an 'organisation' (Koch and Deetz 1981). Each of the metaphoric images which are used, focuses our attention in selected ways and provides us with different ways of 'knowing' the phenomena of organisation (Morgan 1980). [4] The following profiles provide a resumé of the basic assumptions and characteristics of the main functionalist schools of thought in organisation theory.

Classical School

Classical management theorists and the early structuralist, are exemplified in the work of Taylor (1947) and Fayol (1949) who espoused a scientific approach to administration and emphasised the predictable nature of technology, valued efficiency, rationality and goal-achievement. The machine metaphor applied to this organisational world is also attributed to the behaviour of a passive employee who is manipulable to the dictates of management. Scott (1981) has called this period the 'rational closed systems model' in which organisations were designed to purposively pursue explicit objectives. Organisations were closed and static systems, stressing authority, span of control and other internal structural relationships. Work efficiency was the prized goal, and this was principally achieved through rigid work routines. The orientation to the organisation, its structure and work,

was clearly embedded in the scientific method. A hard concrete reality was deemed to exist which could be systematically investigated and which would reveal the underlying regularities of both organisational structure and behaviour. The human aspects in organisations were reduced to a calculative formula of good financial incentives. [5]

Human Relations

A strong reaction to the mechanistic approaches employed by the early management theorists gave birth to what is now called the 'human relations movement' and arose from the work of Mayo (1933) and his colleagues. The post-Hawthorne objectivism has evolved into a range of fields such as small group dynamics, motivation and job satisfaction, morale and participative leadership. This vast area of development in organisational studies is still largely concerned with the 'practical implications' of human behaviour in organisations and approaches its subject matter in a prescriptive manner through the disciplines of psychology and social psychology. [6]

Weber and Bureaucracy

Max Weber (1946) in his ideal-type construction of the model of bureaucracy proposed the first structural-functional theory of organisation by "asking which form of social organisation was the most efficient and why" (Hage 1980, p.15). The organisation is treated as a largely stable phenomenon having unitary goals, predictive rules and regulations, a hierarchy of rational-legal authority, sets of impersonal social relationships, a calculative and an instrumental view of human nature. The ontology of these conceptions is realist, "the social world (is) external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable structures" (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p.4).

The regularities of Weber's model of bureaucracy have been the subject of voluminous research and much debate over the years. The original critiques of his work evolved out of the cumulative work of Selznick (1949), Blau (1955), Gouldner (1954) and Merton (1965). Collectively, these authors offer a critique of bureaucracy as an ideal-type, explore and explain the types of 'dysfunctions' that can occur within such organisational structure. In essence, they describe and explain some of

the human and informal change processes in bureaucratic social systems and how these interpersonal aspects can, themselves, generate new elements of the organisation, e.g. Gouldner's illustration of the impact of rules by different managers - produced 'mock', 'representative' or 'punitive' types of bureaucracy. Selznick showed how 'ideology' was used to achieve conformity and loyalty, Merton's example of the 'displacement' of goals - illustrate the processes of change that can occur in complex organisations structured on bureaucratic principles. [71]

Open Social Systems

A second root metaphor commonly found in the functionalist paradigm is the biological concept of organism. This eventually gave birth to what Scott (1981) calls the 'open natural systems' model of organisations and is reflected in schools of thought as diverse as general systems theory, structural-functionalism and contingency theories - the common premise which integrates them is the idea of a 'life sustaining system' whose prime goal is survival.

Open systems are characterised by their exchanges with an environment and have the following analytical elements - boundary, parts or elements, interdependency, adaptation and equilibrium mechanisms (Reed 1980). The functional imperatives implicit in this approach can be seen in control, integration, and survival of the system. The socio-technical approach of the Tavistock studies (Trist and Bamforth 1951; Rice 1958; Emery and Trist 1965) and the social systems work of Katz and Khan (1966) represents extant work in this field.

The development of open systems has converged into what is now commonly termed 'contingency theory' and has developed out of the work of Burns and Stalker (1961), Woodward (1965), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and the programme of studies called the Aston School (Pugh and Hickson et al 1974). The cumulative work of the contingency theorists "endorses the view that there are no universally valid rules of organisation and management" (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p.167).

Recently, work by Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) and Aldrich (1979) has further developed the 'environmental imperative' in the 'natural-

selection' or 'population-ecology' model which posits that "environmental factors select those organisational characteristics that best fit the environment" (Hage 1980, p.314). The model deals with populations of organisations, and those with the best fit are selected. The 'resource-dependency' model of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) is based on the premise that decisions are made within the internal political context of an organisation. The organisation subsequently attempts to manipulate the environment to its own advantage and generates a variety of resources to sustain itself. Strategic choices have to be made in terms of the environment and this in turn has 'implications for the use and distribution of power and the social structuring of the organisation'. [8]

Plural Approaches

Issues of power, conflict and sectional interests are the substantive concerns of a pluralist approach to understanding organisations. Organisations are seen as being composed of groups of people with sectional interests, often divergent and mutually inconsistent goals. A common purpose exists, only in so far as the groups are interdependent (Hopper 1985), thus the organisation is basically made up with 'loose' coalitions.

Many organisation theories currently contain elements of this view but tend to stop short of a fully developed pluralist theory of organisation. Elements can be seen throughout the literature, e.g. human needs v. organisation needs (Argyris 1957), the dysfunctions in bureaucracy (Merton 1968 et al), in choice situations (Child 1971; March and Olson 1976), in Crozier's (1964) analysis of two French administrative organisations, Etzioni's (1961) work on the 'nature of compliance', and so on ...

The above representative, but necessarily brief, review allows for the development of an overall critique of the paradigm and to raise some of the issues that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

General Critique of Functionalism

A general critique of functionalism will be organised around the following salient points that frequently occur in the literature.

(a) **General points**

"Functionalists view society as objective and orderly; behaviour is concrete and tangible, and society has a real and systematic existence." (Putnam 1983, p.194)

Ontologically, the work contained in this paradigm has a realist and objective conception of reality. Research thus aims through scientific rigor to discover knowledge that is empirical, verifiable and practical. The general shift from mechanical to organic metaphor, and from closed to open and natural systems, has not created different conceptions of reality - these still exist, and are independent of the individual's cognition.

In the organisational field, Weick (1969) states that the 'processual' nature of organisations has to be further addressed. Similarly, Silverman (1970) at the time of writing, criticised the general explanation of organisational phenomena in terms of impersonal mechanisms and suggested that the focus should shift to an orientation which took into account the behaviour and meanings of the organisational actors.

Benson (1977) talks about the 'innovation and crisis' which affects the study of complex organisations and asserts that the dominance of the 'rational model' has been challenged by a number of recent developments in the field. For him, the crisis is concerned with four analytical problems, namely "action, power, levels and process" (Benson 1977, p.5). In a more recent paper, Benson (1983) suggests that the "major alternative perspectives today challenge fundamental features of the paradigm governing the field, thus creating a 'crisis at the level of theory' ... also argues that this situation grows out of a 'crisis at the level of praxis'" (p.35). He identifies the alternative and innovative work to be the 'demythologizers' - those who offer a critique of rational structuring, (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 1978; March and Olsen 1976; Weick 1976), the 'politicizers' who focus on power (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Pfeffer 1981; Edwards 1978), the 'ecologizers' who stress the environment, resources and power-dependency (Hannan and Freeman 1977; Aldrich 1979), and finally,

the 'totalizers' who relate organisations and society (McNeil 1978; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980, 1977).

Zey-Ferrell (1981) provides a detailed critical analysis of the dominant approaches to organisational analysis and comments that their "generalisations do little to contribute to understanding organisational processes, strategic choice and power relationships" (p.181).

It would now be useful to draw together some of the more specific criticisms levelled at the functionalist theories of organisation in order to advance the merits of an alternative framework in chapter 4. Each of the specific points to be discussed below have been separated from each other only for the purpose of the analysis, as collectively, they illustrate the coherence of the functionalist paradigm.

(b) Rationalism

The rationalistic view of organisations owes as much to the intellectual roots of Weber as it does to the obsessive measurement of structural elements and their inter-relationships as typified in the work of the Aston programme of researches. Structural characteristics were defined, operationalised and measured, then refined, in a continual revision of the selected characteristics of an objective model of an organisation.

The various structural approaches viewed organisations as rational goal-seeking entities, what Georgiou (1973) terms 'goal paradigms'. As Zey-Ferrell (1981) notes, the term 'rational' has developed several meanings in which organisational functions are described in terms of means-end relationships, efficiency is maximised, decision-making becomes a logical process, and where certain structural arrangements allow for the achievement of predetermined outcomes. Benson (1977) said that "virtually all explanations touched base at some point with the assumed rationalizing tendencies of the organisation" (p.4).

A host of basic objections has concentrated on the overall conceptualisation of the rational organisation. One major reason why organisations are not totally rational instruments in the pursuit of goals, is that the people who comprise them are not totally rational. March and Simon (1958) comment: "They seldom have a consistent ordering of goals; they do not always pursue systematically the goals they hold; they have incomplete information, they have an incomplete list of alternatives ... and they do not always know the relationship of organisational means and ends" (p.184); which ably demonstrates that there cannot be one assumed organisational rationality. There can only be a "multiplicity of rationalities originating from various actors and groups within all organisations" (Zey-Ferrell 1981, p.184). The importance of non-rational human behaviour, the institutional and societal elements, all have effect in organisational contexts (Weick 1976; Meyer and Rowan 1977),

The rational approach too often assumes the central importance of the organisational goal. Several problems arise in this construct - first, the 'personification' of the organisation. It is people, not organisations, who have motivation and goals (Etzioni 1975; Georgiou 1973). Who is it, that defines the goal - individual or group - and how does a goal eventually become accepted as being a realistic and definitive rational end-state? (Georgiou 1973, pp.297-298). Goals can be viewed as the result of the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman 1967), or as an imposed reality by some dominant coalition, or as a reflection of the capitalist state (Edwards 1978). Others, like Silverman (1970), Crozier and Friedberg (1977), note the tendency of defining the boundaries of an organisation in terms of its goals, which facilitates the serious problem of reification, both of the organisation and goals.

Another aspect which contributes to the rational image, is a view by many of the structural and contingency-theorists that the organisation is somewhat constrained. The environment, technology and size are the principle determinants of structure and performance. Crozier and Friedberg (1977) have criticised the

implied view of most of the open systems theories that the environment is automatically imposed upon the organisation, or that it is characterised as a single complex change entity. The determination of technology has been also criticised by Child (1972), Braverman (1974), Edwards (1978) and others. They argue that environment, technology or structure is not beyond choice, but is chosen on some rational basis, and does account for the decisions to do with the division of labour, specialisation and hierarchy, etc.

Hence, the structural arrangements and functional imperatives that account for the organisation have also to be understood in terms of the actions and choices of those in power. The 'dominant coalitions' (Cyert and March, 1963; Thompson, 1967) often form the basis of the strategic choices which are made (Chandler, 1962; Child, 1972; Schreyogg, 1980). The rational view has to accommodate the fact that there are powerful social entities which can dictate structure, function and choice. This challenges any unitary or static perspective of organisation.

(c) **Research methods**

Methodologically, the functionalist paradigm is characterised by the use of data which is derived in a strongly positivistic manner. The epistemology of organisation is decided through the operationalism of such organisational variables as goals, technology, task, environment, etc. into a series of constructs which can then be measured and interpreted against the cannons of statistical rigor. Benson (1977) makes the point that: "Organisational features are simply treated as objective realities having an unchallenged factual character. Thus, studies of such variables as differentiation, hierarchy, span of control, technology and so on, proceed as if these features are independent of the people whose actions the patterns are expressed." (p.6)

The strong presumption is that, if relationships between variables, or set of variables, can be established, then these can form the basis of some natural law relating to organisational characteristics. Organisational features are investigated and

measured with "little concern for the processes through which these features are produced and reproduced by participants" (Johnson 1982, p.42). Positivism is thus associated with an explanation of human behaviour derived from the direct reaction to some external stimuli correlated with a technical feature of the organisation. Mangham (1978) has criticised such research methodologies for their emphasis on the 'average' and reliance upon inferential statistics to explain human behaviour. The question of individual meaning and understanding is simply treated as non-problematic.

Morgan (1983) neatly frames the dilemma when he recalls, from practical experience of working with correlational coefficients, "while supporting the hypothesis they simultaneously negated it by identifying the basis for a counterexplanation in terms of what was unexplained - the affirmational 0.45, identified a problematic 0.55!" (p.12)

In essence, the critics of positivism assert that the social world can be understood from the perspective of the individual who is actively and directly engaged in the creation of this world and not from statistically created notions of a social world. These ontological and epistemological assumptions direct attention to the essentially subjective and interpretive nature of the enterprise of understanding. The study of organisation, it is suggested, can benefit from such a methodological orientation.

(d) Model of man

Every theory of organisation is based upon an implicit or explicit model of human behaviour - a certain conception of 'how' and 'why' people behave in their organisational contexts. Hollis (1977) has stated that all "social theorists and philosophers who seek to explain human action have a 'model' of man, a metaphysical view of human nature". (p.59) The social systems and objectivist approaches largely see human nature in terms of economic instrumentality, albeit with social and complex rationalities. The general functionalist view is still one of man as passive,

reactive, purposive but externally directed with little acknowledgement of any self-direction and voluntarism.

Barr-Greenfield (1973) notes the tendency of organisation theory to deal with human responses rather than with "human activity in creating organisations" (p.556). To construct a valid and useful theory of organisation demands a more sensitive and sophisticated understanding of the infinite variety and range of human behaviour that can occur in organisational contexts. Manghan (1979) captures the proposition thus: "My metaphor for man is man; I am proposing that in order to understand organisations and in order to develop ideas for action, people should be treated as if they were human beings as we know and understand them in everyday life. I submit that we do not know and understand people as machines, as plants, or as systems, rather we know and understand them as unique entities, as specifically human beings." (p.14) [9]

The foregoing basic criticisms of functionalist theories of organisation have evolved through the many debates in the literature over the years. The main criticisms which have been elaborated can be summarised as follows:- the emergence of a rather static (mechanistic) concept of organisation which fails to deal adequately with adaptation and change; a range of positivistic methodologies employed to account for structure and process, and a preoccupation with variable analysis; an embracive unitary view of the organisation; problems isolated and defined in terms of a managerial bias; an inappropriate model of man emphasising an overweening rationality; a de-emphasis on the role of power and conflict; an overall lack of a process orientation ... (Johnson, 1982; Zey-Ferrell 1981; Benson 1983, 1977; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980).

Despite the growing and trenchant criticism of the functionalist perspectives in organisation theory, most of the research done on institutions of higher education espouses some form of this paradigm. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a selected review of some of the relevant research done in academic organisations. A

synthesis of those elements which purport to characterise academic organisations per se, will be made at the end of this chapter.

Educational Organisations

First, a caveat - as this research is concerned with an important academic process, developing new courses, and is firmly orientated towards an understanding of this process 'as it is practised' and 'conceived of' in the social constructions of its participants; the locus of that experience is the organisational context. What images do we have of academic organisations that will contribute knowledge and understanding about the context of the academic experience? Some of the answers to this question may be provided by reviewing the dominant models that are used to describe the quintessence of academic organisations. In general, there has been a move to reject the static "ideal-type of bureaucratic organisation" as formulated by Weber and an attempt to "locate formal structure ... within the strategies and motives of teachers, pupils and administrators" (Tyler 1985, p.49) which not only reflects the theoretical pluralism in the field, but is also a recognition that only partial and unsatisfactory images were being created by the slavish adherence to rigid theory and method. The challenge is, according to Hall (1981), that "organisation theory does not match the current practices and problems found in higher education" (p.42). However, let us first see what it can contribute. [10]

Bureaucratic model

Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy provides an initial starting point. It highlights three essential characteristics of organisations:- (a) a coherent set of goals giving clear direction and which are formally translated into the various sub-task achievements; (b) formal control specified in rules and regulations devised to create stable procedures and limit behaviour; and (c) the integration of structure, tasks, authority and information flows. (Herriott & Firestone 1984, pp.42-43) Stamp (1966) concluded that there were many characteristics of colleges and universities that approximated to the Weberian model, such aspects as - professional competence criteria, official appointments, career heirarchy, procedural regulations, etc. Baldrige (1971) also comments upon the bureaucratic elements of hierarchy, formal communication

channels, and the 'people-processing' aspects like record-keeping, registration, graduate requirements,

Enderud (1977) reminds us that it is obviously possible to find 'bureaucratic traits' if one looks in the right place - by focussing on the formal structure, looking for routines and programmes, and restricting the analysis to certain sectors of the university, e.g. the central administration - all these aspects contribute to a bureaucratic picture of the organisation. The basic point is the selectivity of the focus - parts not wholes. Baldrige et al (1978) maintains that this view fails to explain the non-formal processes of power and influence, the dynamics occurring within the formal structure, changes within the organisation and the complexities of policy formulation.

A modified structural arrangement called a "professional bureaucracy" by Mintzberg (1979) has attempted to outline five basic functional areas - the strategic apex, where the college executive carry out their academic and administrative tasks; the middle line, representing the heads of departments functionally responsible for departmental, academic and administrative tasks; the operating core, where the specific teaching and research function is carried out. To this line function, a vast support staff of administrative and ancillary personnel is required but relatively few technical staff are required to give advice/expertise to the academics. By modifying a universal structural configuration like the hierarchial bureaucratic pyramid, Mintzberg has attempted to relate his configuration to specific situations like education, recognising the paramount autonomy of the professional worker.

Little recognition has been given to the enormous 'para-structure' of committees which co-exist with the formal structure in this type of organisation. Authority is not only delegated through the line and departmental structures but is also discharged through a hierarchy of academic committees (academic council, scrutiny, course and examination). The formal line structure and the committee one, forms a parallel decision-making process - one is full-time, the other (committees) is part-time in nature. Enderud (1977) drew attention to the diffuse democratic participation patterns of academics and how the

part-time and changing membership of committees perpetuates the ambiguous nature of goals and future plans. Clarification of goals and plans requires time, energy and presence.

This network of interdependent committees adds an additional configuration to the established academic and administrative hierarchies. Functionally, these committees provide diffuse and democratic decision-making mechanisms within a tight framework of clearly defined accountability regulated by procedural rules. They also create an inertial pace to information generation and transfer, to the co-ordination of communication between the various committees, each one meeting on its own time schedule, and all of them, "impregnated with potential conflict and disagreement" (Davies and Morgan 1982, p.155). From a range of institutional case studies, Davies and Morgan (1982) have isolated the following common denominators associated with committee functioning:- short range compromised policy decisions; concurrent dilemmas associated with a pervasive lack of trust; time-consumption of meetings; professional rivalries; sectional interests; uncertainty of the political and economic parameters; ...

Clark (1983) notes that these bureaucratic co-ordination mechanisms aimed at linking the 'actors with the actions' have, paradoxically, fostered and strengthened the political, professional and market forms of action. Bureaucracy, in the educational organisation context, seems ill-adapted to cope with the contemporary external and internal forces acting upon its structural arrangements. The membership can often display a surprising and superficial indifference to, and a general lack of awareness of, the wider implications which are directly related to NCD. Internal concern for organisational politics frequently clouds the more pragmatic issues of new course relevance to volatile and ill-defined market needs. Professional bureaucracies have a strong internal orientation and a marked reactive external orientation. [11]

The Collegial Model

If the rational bureaucratic model lacks descriptive power to characterise the essence of a university or college, some writers (like Gross 1968 and Millett 1962) have found the image of 'collegium' or 'community of scholars' useful. The community approach sees the

university as more a 'community' in which decentralisation, individual autonomy, informal relationships and consensus-building occurs. It captures a somewhat idealistic ivory-tower ambiance and overlooks the practical implications of operation. Millett's (1962) notion of a "company of equals bound together by common value-systems and heritage" (p.53) promotes the view that the university or college is "one cohesive community of academics, administrators, students and non-academics all pursuing academic goals in a context of co-operation and consensus" (Meek 1981, p.14). This cannot be a valid proposition in the highly differentiated and professionally dominated modern university context. Kerr (1963) sees 'several communities' co-existing while Sanders (1973) concluded that there exists a functional community which "depends, internally, upon the division of labour, interdependence and conflict-resolving mechanisms" (p.78). Clark (1966) talks about the dominance of 'expertise' and how authority and organisation evolve around it.

If the 'community of scholars' is the human face grafted on to the bureaucratic structure, Baldrige et al (1978) again notes some of the limitations of this conceptualisation. The model fails to deal with the problem of conflict, "the prolonged battles that precede consensus" (p.34) and is further elaborated by Meek (1981) when she says that there "can be different communities, such as a community of humanists and a community of scientists, with different cultures, values, norms and symbols, within the same organisation" (p.8). Indeed, there can be a consensus but one has also to realistically acknowledge that academic organisations are colourful arenas in which power, conflict and micro-politics all play a role. The professional academic is not above the exercise of jealousy or pettiness. Normative consensus in one group may well trigger conflict in others who hold different norms and values. If departments represent strong sub-cultures and professional (academic) orientations, these then become powerful interpretive frameworks for assessing their (i.e. the departmental) contributions to the collective academic task. Their sense of identity and worth are constantly being reappraised by other professionals who are not always prepared to share the value of such contributions. Hind (1971) makes this point when he suggests that there is a strong desire for credibility and positive evaluation by others in the institution.

Wyatt (1977) has analysed the notion of 'community' as applied to institutions of higher education and focuses the term around four models, each one is related to a particular style of interaction and a theory of learning.

The 'craft guild' idea of community "rests on a belief in strong boundaries within which interaction takes place" ... where "learning rests on the unity of knowledge" ... and is acquired "by progressive stages of achievement" (p.127). This image links with those conceptualisations of Gross (1968) and Millett (1962). A small theological college might serve as a contemporary approximation.

Another model rests of Newman's classical ideal, the "structure of the community was simple: the teachers and the taught" (p.128) with no room for narrow modern-day specialisations, the singular task was nothing less than the 'cultivation of the intellect'. It still provides, even in today's economic and instrumental climate, a strong and evocative image of academia.

Bureaucratic divisions of labour group academics into functional 'communities' separated by the departmental boundaries. Here, the 'community' is created by the reality of academic planning and the existence of evolving knowledge specialisms rather than some ideal notion.

The final model proposed by Wyatt (1977) is defined as the 'spontaneous community' with its origins in the de-schooling and neo-Marxist social criticism tradition. It is characterised by its organic, spontaneous, transient nature and attempts to overcome what is seen as the manipulating and alienating tendencies of the large modern educational bureaucracies.

The collegial model has the merit of drawing attention to the interactional order and value base of organisational membership. Community, in the academic sense, can be both broad and inclusive. Diversity in academic specialisation can still make a common claim to some corpus of knowledge which becomes translated into a concern about the inextricable ties of learning, research and teaching. These ties

transcend the administrative and structural contingencies of organisational design and become expressed more through the articulation of varying academic cultures, ideologies and practices.

The Political Model

The political paradigm of universities was first articulated by Cyert & March (1963) who identified the main features as follows - a limited number of interest groups exist; they have their own well-formulated goals; joint decision-making becomes a process of conflict-resolution through bargaining; the outcome of conflict is usually compromise; leadership in the organisation is one of brokerage and mediation.

Baldrige (1971) summarises the situation as such: "A complex social structure generates multiple pressures, many forms of power and pressure impinge on the decision-makers ..." (p.24) and initially identifies the 'plural' character of the university. Interest groups are in continual competition with each other over valued resources - organisational symbols, economic rewards, major policies, power, authority, prestige or ideologies.

The description of the decision-making process has both 'bureaucratic' and 'political' elements in it (Enderud 1977, p.42). Politics forms part of the complex process but does draw attention to some of the underlying assumptions that Baldrige (1971) considered were reflective of the university's dynamic, namely, that only some people devote time and energy to issues, a lot of inactivity prevails, that conflict is a normal concomitant of fragmented social groupings and should not be read as a sign of breakdown. These aspects severely qualify the 'rational' bureaucratic processes, and add a dynamic to static structures.

Some qualifications have been noted, principally by Enderud (1977) but also by Baldrige et al (1978). First, interest groups may have individually articulated goals which might also share a 'common' element with others, and hence need not always be in conflict with one another. This consensus is more likely to be pursued within the bureaucratic structure of decision-making. Second, interest groups often become heterogenous in their make-up and are not necessarily

representative of single departments. Third, the environmental factors have been broadened to account for the growing influence and complexity of outside influences, and lastly, as the original study centred on a particular episode, the model has now to account for longer term decisional patterns. Notwithstanding these qualifications, Meek (1981) asserts that the "political model of university organisation is an improvement over the bureaucratic and the normative ones" (pp.12-13), and does identify the processual nature of the organisation.

Politics presupposes an ideology that not only directs energy, but 'frames' the selection of the issues and problems to be addressed. Various authors, (Baldrige 1971; Bacharach and Lawler 1980; Enderud 1977; Bardach 1978) have discussed the complex interaction of resource allocation, authority and power, all of which colour the practical institutional decision-making processes. Educational organisations are characterised by widely distributed power bases amongst numerous semi-autonomous academic groupings who spend a not inconsiderable amount of time in bargaining and persuasion. Macro educational politics find intense micro-organisational focus and expression. Conflict is thus taken as part of the natural state of academic affairs. [12]

Contingency Model

Deer and Deal (1979) working within a change perspective, cite six reasons why schools as organisations differed from their industrial/business counterparts. Some of the points have now been covered, like diffuse and ambiguous goals, what they call the 'myth' of professionalism (autonominism), the concept of ill-defined technologies (unclear linking between teaching and learning) and the interpenetration of the environment into the organisational world. Out of newer theoretical developments - organised anarchy, loose coupling and the open system approach - they have proposed a contingency-type synthesis. The synthesis accommodates the "human relations approach ... structuralists ... and phenomenological, examining the underlying symbolism of organisational patterns and activities" (p.53). For them, the problem has been that rarely have these diverse viewpoints been integrated into a comprehensive framework to account for the interaction of structure and process.

Having already touched on some aspects of bureaucracy and politics in the preceding reviews, brief mention will be made of the symbolic dimension of the Deer and Deal's (1979) framework. As this dimension will be explored later in this thesis, Clark (1972, 1970) incorporates the idea of the symbolic in his notion of the 'organisational saga'. Deer and Deal (1979) define the symbolic as "a constellation of non-rational, non-verifiable, self-reinforcing meanings and understandings" (p.55) to include myths, rituals and ceremonies, values and beliefs, and norms - all of which express symbolic behaviour, and which can be found in the structure and processes of all organisations.

Ellstrom (1983) argues that a social systems approach views "organisational processes as spontaneous, adaptive responses to internal or external demands, rather than as intentional action" (p.234), hence overcoming the 'rationality' straightjacket. The roles, norms, the cultural system of values, beliefs and ideology, all create an integration and interdependence between the system's elements (Katz and Kahn, 1978), as well as being determinants of organisational action. These ideas are also reflected in the contingency efforts of Deer and Deal (1979).

Although introducing a symbolic element in terms of organisational culture and ideology into their models, its explicit use tends to be functionally orientated. It is comparable to a simplistic notion that people become socialised into this stock of universal cultural elements which then defines the prescribed patterns of acceptable behaviour. Culture is not a static set of meanings but is active, constantly being renegotiated and hence, it is false to conceive of one single holistic organisational culture.

However, contingency models, according to Schreyogg (1980) and others, are still heavily influenced by causal thinking and an open system perspective. Too often the contextual factors, environment or technology, are regarded as conditions over which the organisation has little control or choice. The organisation simply reacts to its environment and does not act on it. The environmental and technological imperatives leave little room for the intentional selection and choices of organisational members.

In the educational context, an increased environmental vulnerability has been brought about by a combination of social factors such as political redirection, financial stringency and demographic decline in traditional client groups. The direct organisation-to-environment link is more diffuse for education. The educational 'products', that is, current courses, are culturally complex and arise out of a compounded social process of knowledge creation and transfer. Contingency theory, while descriptively useful in mapping out the interactions, fails to adequately cope with the social constructions and interpretations of the organisational members in pursuing their strategy and choices.

The Organised Anarchy Model

A further image which has been elaborated to describe academic organisation is Cohen's et al (1974, 1972) notion of an anarchistic organisation. The following are the properties commonly associated with this conceptualisation - the overall organisation is loosely structured (relative and varying sub-unit autonomy) and arising from this anarchic structure "four central assumptions can be made about the participants of the organisation, its goals and technology" (Enderud 1979, p.49).

The model has four assumptions which are: (a) ambiguous goals - inconsistent and ill-defined preferences in which the goals are described as a "loose structure" (Enderud 1979, p.50); (b) unclear technology - the degree to which there is exercised professional autonomy and choice as to what is taught and how it may relate to other subjects in the curricula. Often, this is "poorly understood by the other members of the organisation" (Ellstrom 1983, p.235) and ends up as a loose and poorly defined collaboration; (c) part-time participation in joint decision-making - there is a fluid and mostly part-time participation in the various committees in which the academics are engaged resulting in a variance in the amount of time and effort they devote to different domains; involvement "varies from one time to another" (Cohen et al 1972, p.1); (d) autonomy - there exists large variation in the degree of autonomy exercised between sub-units, faculties, departments and even individuals within them. Meyer and Rowan (1978) maintain that an anarchic organisation is held together by the "logic of confidence" in which the various parties

bring the taken-for-granted, good-faith assumption that others are, in fact, carrying out their specified activities, e.g. teaching, research and administration, competently.

The above metaphor of organised anarchy assumes a basic lack of intentional organisational action, hence problem solving and choice are problematic. Decision-making processes are the result of four 'independent streams' consisting of problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities (Cohen and March 1974), all co-existing in 'garbage cans'. Collective decisions will lead to either one or more solutions offered for one or more problems, or else, to temporizing and avoidance. Passing decisions from one committee to another in academic organisations helps perpetuate the prolonged and diffuse nature of many of the decisions taken and in turn is further compounded by the inter-related nature of the anarchic properties of the organisation. Enderud (1979, p.114) calls this the 'closed circle of anarchy' which perpetuates this state of affairs and ends up in a form of stable equilibrium.

Turner (1977) comments that colleges are, by the nature of their enterprise, anarchic and demonstrate the basic properties associated with this organisational description. The basic premise is that they operate in unpredictable, turbulent environments and is arguably reflective of the current situation.

The bureaucratic hierarchy with its participative committee management is designed more for stable and predictable environments. These structural arrangements discourage risk-taking, trust and innovation. Committees are notorious for developing more procedures, more rules and more routines, hence increasing the internal organisational stability.

Anarchic organisations are not formless or merely loose collections of unpredictable individuals. Structure, in the anarchic sense, is partly determined by external pressures, and partly as a product of the nature of the organisation itself. It is the problematic relationship between goals, members and technology that gives the organisation its anarchic characteristic.

Tyler (1983) notes the tendency in education to apply a range of inappropriate "models of organisation developed on factories, the military and business ..." (p.40) and concludes that the goals in education are not as clearly defined as those in industry nor are the links between them and technology as tractable as those in other sectors. The 'organised anarchy' metaphor attempts to approximate to the structural and processual feature of educational organisations. It has, at least, the merit of some originality and locates its description directly to the educational context.

The Loose Coupling Model

Weick (1976) has challenged the idea that within organisations, the various structural elements are closely tied together. His concept of 'loose coupling' posits the converse of the bureaucratic model and is an alternative to the one-dimensional, over-rationalised view presented of educational organisations.

Loose coupling infers a loose connection between the stable sub-units of an organisation such that a relative independence exists. This structural looseness allows for local adaptations in the sub-units and a degree of independence to resolve problems at the unit level. The expression of different educational and political ideologies allow staff to approach their teaching and research tasks within freedom and self-direction. This is what Meyer and Rowan (1982) calls the "disconnection of bureaucratic structure from technical activity and this activity from its effects" (p.71). Other examples of loose coupling within universities and colleges would be: intention and action; processes and outcomes; administrators and teachers; teachers and teachers; teachers and students. Loose coupling "carries connotations of impermanence, dissolvability and tacitness, all of which are potentially crucial properties of the 'glue' that holds organisations together" (p.3). As Weick (1976) says, "they sensitise the observer to notice and question things that had previously been taken for granted" (p.2) and as such warns us against the pitfall of believing that educational organisations behave only in certain ways.

The 'decoupling' (Meyer and Rowan 1978) of the goals, technology and organisation, challenges the notion of shared goals and a formal

authority system which serves to control, co-ordinate and integrate a rational entity. However, strong control is exercised by society in terms of what counts as valid education and certification. Complex rules define and classify teachers, students, their grades and evaluation - collectively, they provide the external forces of cohesion to the system. Tight coupling exists at the level of control over the 'ritual classifications' imposed by society and its social agencies.

Integration within the individual organisation is achieved by what Meyer and Rowan (1978) call "the logic of confidence". "Parties bring to each other the taken-for-granted, good faith assumption that the other is, in fact, carrying out his or her defined activity" (p.101). As long as this logic of confidence applies, each person is allowed to carry out their work with little or no interference from others.

Tyler (1983) notes the 'expressive or symbolic' sense of the loose coupling model in that the organisational members have to construct or negotiate some kind of social reality, "a self-conscious and flexible set of normative guidelines to everyday practice" (p.40). Organisational life is thus reflected through the constant interplay between the activities that we need to carry out and the organisational accounts we need to give to others - our colleagues, external peers, professional agencies. [13]

A Summary

What then is the status of the academic organisation? Contingency theory, loosely coupled systems, garbage can organisations, organised anarchies - these conceptual models share the basic structural premise of flexibility in their sub-systems so that the organisation is somehow better able to adapt and survive. Lutz (1982) reminds us that "no single theory accounts for the entire range of administrative and organisational behaviour" and also much "organisational phenomena (is) left unaccounted for" (p.653-654)

Ellstrom (1983) has proposed an 'integrative' model and argues that each of the four organisational models emphasise different aspects of reality but are essentially complementary as each model represents four dimensions of the same organisation. Academic organisations are

assumed to be rational, political, social and anarchic. Again, the emphasis is based upon a situational view of organisational life which seems descriptively adequate of these features at certain times and phases of organisational activity.

It is temptingly easy to crudely relate these images to NCD at a simple descriptive level to illustrate the salient features. NCD is a formal bureaucratic process and results from organisational attempts to rationally define some future desired goal in new course provision (a product-market orientation). The structural vehicle of this process is a plethora of committees - academic planning, staff development, course planning, internal validation, etc. (Lockwood 1981; Lynch 1981). From a systems perspective, NCD acknowledges the environment link, the difficulty of resource procurement, of matching the market niche to staff specialisation and contribution (Enderud 1979).

The political dimension of NCD is both internal - departmental micro-politics, sub-cultural differences, academic self-interests - and external - the dialogue of influence between the college, S.E.D. and C.N.A.A. As the organised anarchy metaphor, the barriers and problems of NCD would encompass organisational inertia, academic ideologies, fragmented and capricious interest groups, fluid participation, contested issues and varying organisational realities, etc. All these images contribute something to the 'surface experience' of the process. However, deeper processes are situated within the context.

Returning to Lutz's (1982) assertion that most "theories and models fail to account for a considerable amount of observed organisational behaviour, particularly in educational organisations" (p.653) and goes on to further state that "when sufficient data in human organisation are left unexplained, a much better research strategy is to admit that failure and to engage in further 'descriptive research' (p.654). In order to accept this challenge, a bridge has to be built between the functionalist paradigm and their explanations of organisational phenomenon to that of the interpretive paradigm.

To date, the descriptions of organisational structures and processes have been what Geertz (1973) would term 'thin' descriptions and what

has not been done is an analysis to explicate the 'deeper' underlying layers of meanings behind these events - the 'thick' descriptions. Levin and Simon (1974) argue that organisation is not a single abstraction, but rather the varied perceptions of individuals. Hence it becomes "a multi-faceted notion reflecting what individuals see as their social world and what meanings and purposes, individuals bring to or take from that reality" (p.45). Greenfield (1973) has criticised the reification of organisations by the dominant paradigm and contends that such assumptions are false on two principal grounds: first, organisations are described and understood apart from human beings; and second, goals are usually posited to be independent of those held by individuals within the organisation.

Sieber (1977) talks about the 'existentialist image' of school which stresses the role of personal values, goals and needs of the individual in the unique setting of each. Pondy and Mitroff (1979) in a critique of the prevalent open system model of organisation argue for a view of organisations "as language using, sense-making cultures" (p.30) and where myths, stories and metaphors provide powerful vehicles for exchanging and preserving rich sets of meanings for individuals (Boje and Rowland 1977; Clark 1972; Meyer and Rowan 1977; et al).

NCD becomes the focus for 'thick descriptions where meanings are created, sustained and changed, throughout the process. Where the interplay of academic task and orientation, the organisational context and its environment, undergo many reproductions in the attempts to make sense and ground the organisational realities in the practices and intersubjective understandings of other people.

So far, the research has reviewed the current range of models of organisation explicated within the dominant functionalist paradigm. The underlying assumptions, the basic theoretical constructs and a general criticism of the main characteristics of functionalism have been presented. Greenfield (1979) refers to systems theory and structural-functionalist thinking as "the ideological hegemony of administrative studies" (p.98) and concludes that it perpetuates bad theory and sterile research.

The summary argument is this, that despite its pre-eminence in the field of organisational studies, functionalism with its language of objective rationality and structure has singularly failed to adequately address itself to the view of human beings as generators of their own social reality and sense-making. Received organisation theory too frequently creates an objective, artificial and conventional reality, which ignores the basic human processes which define and sustain the social milieu of organisations.

We need to know more about these multiple organisational realities from the perspective of the experiencing actor. We live in separate realities but we live with each other and therefore we need to understand these disparate social worlds and their artefacts - that which we call organisation.

To echo Benson's (1977) concern that an adequate approach to organisational analysis must deal with "the social production of organisational reality" and "the continuously emergent character of organisational patterns" (p.14), the following chapter will direct the process of looking at some of the explicitly social patterns in educational contexts. The substantive areas of academic task and orientation, culture and ideology, knowledge and environment, all provide fundamental elements of the social fabric expressed in the discourse of organisational life.

Chapter 2 Notes

1. The literature base for this chapter reflects a synthesis of three principle sources - the orthodox and voluminous organisational field, the higher education sector, and the literature on the organisational structure of the school. The latter areas, higher education and schools, have closely followed the theoretical developments, fads and fashions of mainstream organisation theories. An attempt was made to abstract and integrate the major and relevant theoretical points of common concern within the functionalist paradigm and address their application to educational organisations.
2. Although Kuhn's (1962) concept of a paradigm has gained increasing popularity and common usage, it is not without its critics who challenge its explanatory power. Even Kuhn (1974) has had his own reflections and second thoughts. For a clear exposition of the basic idea and its problematic application to sociology, see Lemke and Picou's (1985) article.
3. Burrell and Morgan's (1979) is basic to any scholar of organisation theory as it reviews and groups organisational research according to its principal theoretical and philosophical assumptions and also provides a useful bridge between these two areas. Pfeffer (1982) is equally worthwhile, as he categorises the theoretical perspectives in organisation theory by combining 'perspectives on action' with 'levels of analysis'. Astley and Van de Ven's (1983) paper succinctly orientates the researcher to the current debates and issues in the bludgeoning field.
4. Morgan (1980), Koch and Deetz (1981), Manning (1983) remind all researchers in the organisational field that the language used to describe these organisations, itself circumscribes our understanding of them and influences the theoretical discussion about them. Not only can one investigate the dominant metaphors used to describe organisations per se, but also one can turn the linguistics lens usefully 'inside' the organisation and look at how language is used in everyday discourse (see Daft and Wiginton

1979; Evered 1983; and part 4 of Pondy's (1983) et al (eds.) book **Organisational Symbolism**).

5. A good sociological and historical analysis of both Scientific Management and the early Human Relations movement is contained in Bendix (1956) **Work and Authority in Industry**. For a general critique: Perrow (1979) **Complex Organisations: A Critical Essay**. 2nd edition; Trist in Lockett and Spear (1983) **Organisations as Systems**, 2nd edition. The development of this field, see chapter 3, Clegg and Dunkerley (1980).
6. Rose's (1978) book **Industrial Behaviour** traces the subsequent developments and applications of Taylor and Mayo. Soper (1972) **Organisations in Theory and Practice**, part 2, is another useful review.
7. Dawe's (1970) original debate about the 'two sociologies', one about 'structure' and the other 'action', often receives dichotomous treatment in organisational theorising.

The stable and predictable world of a Weberian model of bureaucracy provides the blue-print for 'rationally' designed structures in which 'rational' individuals carry out clearly prescribed roles and action. For Weber, 'rationality of action' had to be adjudged against some objective standard and this 'formal' rationality is reflected in managerial thought and literature. Substantive rationality, less distinctively logical in its treatment of means to end, is governed by some ultimate end, value or principle. This latter type of Weberian rationality is less well developed and addressed in the management field. Marxist perspectives however relate technical rationality to social forms of production and domination.

Weber's four-fold typology of the various forms of social action - traditional, affective, rational value-orientated, and rational goal-orientated - is useful in sociological analysis. In contrast, Marx's model of action is called 'instrumental rationalism' in which the social actor achieves his goals through the use of a

variety of tactics and strategies. For comprehensive treatment of the problems and issues to do with action and structure, see, for example, Cohen (1968) *Modern Social Theory*, Rex (1976) *Key Problems of Sociological Theory*, Lee and Newby (1983) *The Problem of Sociology*, Giddens (1979) *Central Problems in Social Theory*, and also by the same author, (1982) *Profiles and Critiques of Social Theory*, Trigg (1985) *Understanding Social Science*. Giddens' 'theory of structuration' attempts to resolve the problem in social theory of "Structure vis-à-vis agency, of constraints vis-à-vis enablements, of macro- and micro-levels" (Bertilsson 1984, p.343). Reed's (1980) thesis gives a rigorous treatment to a social action perspective in organisations.

The concepts of structure mostly employed in functionalist theories of organisation are historically and intellectually linked to Weber, Fayol and Taylor. The contemporary literature reflects these roots and, coupled to the contingency variables, forms the basis of organisational design and development work. The articles by Salaman (1978) and Ranson et al (1980) provide a sociological orientation to structure.

8. Silverman (1970) is still a basic text which critically reviews the range of theoretical frameworks employed to explain the concept of organisations, and argues the case for the action frame of reference. Articles by Wood (1981) and Schreyogg (1980) give comprehensive critiques of the contingency approach and generally highlight the insufficient attention paid to the discretion of the key decision-makers and how their values, beliefs and ideologies may influence the choices made. Clegg and Dunkerley (1980), chapters 3 and 6.
9. Shotter's (1975) book, *Images of Man in Psychological Research*, is a basic introduction. A more rigorous treatment is contained in Chapman and Jones (1980) *Models of Man*.
10. General and extensive reviews of the organisation theories applied to schools is to be found in the following articles: Allison (1983), Bell (1980), Davies (1981), Tyler (1985) and Willower

(1982) Institutions of higher education are documented by a number of authors in their books, for example, Blau (1973), Baldrige et al (1978), Becher and Kogan (1980), Clark (1983, 1970), Halsey and Trow (1971), March and Olsen (1976). The empirical literature is diffuse and covers diverse aspects such as the educational system, organisational functioning, professional work, etc. Work by Lockwood (1981), Lynch (1981), Startup (1976), Reed (1980) are examples of more specific research in institutions of higher education.

11. King's (1980) article relates a Weberian framework to education and provides a synoptic look at the various issues. At an organisational level, Tyler (1985), Reed (1980) and Mintzberg (1979) review and critically appraise the bureaucratic model, offering refinements. Brown (1978) provides an interesting contrast to the conventional approach.
12. Power and politics in organisational contexts is a growing and complex field. For specifically educational examples, see Moodie and Eustace (1974) *Power and Authority in British Universities*, Baldrige (1971) *Power and Conflict in the University*, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) "Organisational decision-making as a political process: the case of a university budget", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Enderud (1977) *Four Faces of Leadership in the Academic Organisation*.
13. Critical assessments of the 'loose coupling' model are contained in Lutz (1982), Willower (1982), Herriott and Firestone (1984). The article by Allison (1983) provides a background to the uncritical reliance on the various images and models of educational organisations which fail to pay sufficient attention to the social phenomenon contained in organisations.

CHAPTER 3

Substantive Issues in NCD

Introduction

The preceding chapter reviewed the various functionalist schools of organisation. These structural and deterministic formulations have been criticised on many grounds but are particularly faulted in their inadequate treatment of the social and symbolic aspects of organisational life. The cumulative work of Cohen et al (1972), Weick (1976) and Meyer and Rowan (1983) amongst others, moves the focus towards a consideration of the more human, random, irrational and generally emergent characteristics of organisational processes to what Pfeffer (1982) calls a 'social constructionist' perspective. If, as Geertz (1973) maintains, "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun" (p.5), then an organisation is seen as a social creation within which man spins and generates sets of diverse meanings. This approach emphasises the importance of discovering the 'native's point of view' and is 'semiotic' [1] in character with its focus on language and symbols. The avowed intention of this chapter is therefore, (a) to explore the concept of organisation as a social construction, (b) to describe the basic social elements which aid the individual's construction of meaning, and (c) to argue that NCD can be understood from a constructionist framework.

Central to all interpretive research is the concept of organisation as a series of social constructions. Rather than having an independent existence, the organisation exists in and through its members' communicative and productive activities - words, symbols and actions. The organisational context is where the fabric of social understanding is created, sustained and re-created by the individual members. NCD is a process that should clearly reflect the multiple realities which constitute organisational life and context. It should also illustrate the varying meanings attached to these realities by the individuals engaged in the process.

In the previous chapter, mention has already been made to the way that metaphors are used by organisational theorists to portray their

conceptualisations of organisations and as descriptions of organisational reality. Koch and Deetz (1981) remind us that "metaphors are not just shared subjective interpretations of the 'real' organisation but are surface records of a basic, ordinary interpretive (seeing as) process which continually structures the organisation's reality" (p.13). Weick (1979) also states the connection but notes the over reliance and limitations of using these dominant metaphors to conceptualise organisational activities.

NCD seen from a social construction perspective embodies the phenomenal elements of culture, ideology, knowledge, structure and environment as explicated and related to an academic context. What things and events are in experience is what they are seen as in everyday activity and becomes the basis for a coherent description of the taken-for-granted mundane activities and events.

Borrowing from a framework developed by Deetz and Kersten (1983), a constructionist thesis is put forward to account for both a concept of organisation and the process of NCD.

It is that:

- (a) organisations are multi-levelled and multi-faceted social constructions;
- (b) academic work is paradigmatically orientated in terms of knowledge construction and ideology;
- (c) organisation-environment linkages are cognitively structured by members;
- (d) organisational structures are interpretive schemes which become expressed in varying provinces of meaning.

As Laing (1967) points out, "persons are distinguished from things in that persons experience the world whereas things behave in the world" (p.53) sums up the basic assumption for understanding organisations and their processes from the frames of reference of those being studied.

New courses are developed out of a richly subjective milieu of culture, ideology, knowledge and tradition. Phillipson (1983), in a collection

of papers, charts the evolving debates over the years as to the 'university-ideal' and its changing and problematic relationship to society. All the familiar issues - centres of excellence, change from elite to mass institutions, the ideal of liberal education, curricular structures and relevance, the professions, academic autonomy and the state, employment and the labour market - find current articulation in these and other related matters. NCD is born out of and evolves from such a contextual dialogue. Silver (1983) perceptually notes that "society has altered the landscape of higher education without consulting them" (p.231) i.e. the universities, illustrates the often closed nature of the debates which, in the past, took place.

Williams (1983) makes a similar point "the fundamental weakness of British higher education is that it is 'producer-dominated' ... in matters of scholarship and learning, professional academics know best" (p.239). The producer is the expert. However, as previously noted, 'producer-dominated' institutions have become more and more regulated by political and financial agencies (UGC, DES, SED) 'bureaucratic-dominated', but also colleges are now more exposed to the opportunities, threats and rigors of the market - becoming 'consumer-dominated'. Tapper and Salter (1978) state the dilemma in uncompromising terms, "the ideological challenge to the university-ideal is based on the idea that education is fundamentally an economic resource" (P.149). The normative themes which arise out of this orientation are familiarly expressed in the vocabularies of 'manpower planning', 'unit-costs', 'targets and strategy', ... New courses become expression and compromises of these manifest tensions and contested educational values. Goodson (1983) states that the current curricular debates now centre on "conflict between subjects over status, resources and territory" (p.3), which neatly portrays the critical issues and their associated dynamics which influence the NCD process.

Before detailing the contextual map of NCD with the related substantive elements of culture, ideology, knowledge and environment, it would be analytically useful to make an explicit distinction between the idea of 'deep' and 'surface' structure (Cicourel 1971, Geertz 1973, Deetz and Kersten 1983). In talking meaningfully about the multi-levels and facets of organisational reality, the idea of 'surface' structure is

where the formal reality of organisations communicates itself through the rational, ordered stable world of statements, goals and objectives. Where the ostensible and consensually shared meanings and values which pervade the organisation, are manipulated in order to sustain power and control. Benson (1977) calls this the 'prescribed ideas' which legitimises the formal structure, processes and activities of the organisation.

Deep structure includes the "material conditions of production and the unexamined beliefs and values upon which the taken-for-granted surface structure rests" (Deetz and Kersten 1983, p.158). It includes the allocation of resources, the historically developed rules and social practices, the underlying meaning structures and social relationships which define the daily events and actions.

Critical [2] and interpretive research focuses upon 'deep structure' in order to make explicit these underlying sets of relationships. It attempts to examine the activities performed in terms of rationality, technological efficiency and value-neutrality. The distinction between 'surface' and 'deep' structure is insightful as it draws attention to the interplay between the social and structural aspects of organisational life. It helps to clarify the interactional order of organisational contexts and the social elements which constitute it. The remaining sections of this chapter will address those social and 'deep surface' elements of an organisation which sustains the 'meaning base' to an individual's understanding of events and processes.

Culture

As a concept, culture [3] has been increasingly linked with the study of organisations (Ouchi and Wilkins 1985). The proliferating literature illustrates "the confusing but fascinating assortments of notions and intimations" that exist (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984, p.216). A similar observation by Smircich (1983) has led her to an analysis of the concept and its application in the organisational field. For the purpose of this study, the concept of culture will be restricted to what Allaire et al (1984) define as, culture as a system of ideas - an ideational system. Smircich (1983) uses the congruent terms, organisational cognition and symbolism.

The idea of culture rests on the premise that the full meanings of things are not given a priority in the objects themselves. Meaning arises out of an in situ process of interpretation which produces a 'shared or common' meaning for all individuals, or alternatively it becomes a highly individualistic product of interpretation (Louis 1983). A cultural view of organisation subscribes to the notion of an organisation as a social phenomena, a distinct social group having its own social ideals and a set of symbolic devices which embodies and conveys these ideals to its members.

The various models and images of academic organisations reviewed in the last chapter - collegium, bureaucratic, political, social and anarchic - all use the concept of culture, albeit in starkly contrasting ways. A collegium evokes the connotation of a fraternity of scholars seeking individual and collective fulfilment within a culture expressing values of harmony and common relatedness. Allaire et al (1984) suggests that this usage of the concept tacitly assumes that the social and structural components of an organisation must be "fully integrated, synchronised and consonant with the ideational and symbolic dimension of the organisation" (p.195). The specific ideational elements are the patterns of shared meaning and values and the system of knowledge and beliefs. A set of symbolic devices such as myths, rituals, signs and special languages, conveys the various elements of culture to the group.

This holistic image of culture is contained in Clark's (1972) idea of 'saga' as a collective understanding of corporate affairs, while Mitroff and Kilman (1978) analyse organisational 'stories and myths' to identify the common elements. The recent popularity of 'corporate culture' in the management literature tends to reinforce this unitary perspective (e.g. Pascale and Athos 1981; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Peters and Waterman 1982, et al). But Pettigrew (1979) warns that "culture treated as a unitary concept ... lacks analytical bite" (p.574), although it is conceded that it may be of some use at a departmental level, in the sense of providing some generalised orientation to organisational members.

Dandridge et al (1980) direct attention more to 'organisational symbolism' which is revealed in a diverse array of processes. The creation of stories and myths which give credibility to past critical events, or ceremonies and rituals, of logos, of anecdotes and jokes, all of which reflect the 'deeper' affective and political aspects of organisational life and experience. They maintain that these symbolic elements tap into the "expressive and deeper layers of meaning" (p.77). As such, culture is not only a stock of meanings or significations but is also a set of practices which guide the individual and group. Weick (1979), Pfeffer (1981) and Pondy (1978) have all commented on the functional utility of managing these symbolic processes in general, while Meyer and Rowan (1983) have analysed their importance to educational organisations.

As noted, these social artefacts of organisational culture, such as ceremony and ritual, are functionally and expressively useful to the individual and the group. For Clark (1970), the functional consequences are that they (i.e. saga) link "internal and external groups, and it merges ... individual and organisational identities" (p.255) so that disparate academic groups are held together to achieve some common goal. In practice, it often becomes associated with visionary and autocratic leadership which binds and directs the organisation's purpose.

Putnam (1982), however, challenges this received position when she says that such a description of symbolic meaning presents a static picture and fails to reflect the notion that members create and actively recreate their organisational culture in order to make sense of their daily tasks and realities. Man creates his culture and culture creates man, illustrates the interdependent nature of the process and requires what Bennett et al (1981) calls the 'mediating' role of human agency. The active human and social dimension of culture is captured by Leach (1956) when he says that it "consists of many semantic domains organised around numerous features of meaning" (p.11) and counters the often elitist or dominant picture presented in organisations.

Pettigrew (1979) describes culture as a 'family of concepts' - symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth - and maintains that

symbol [4] is the most inclusive of these concepts. Gregory (1983) and Barley's (1983) semiological studies analyse the 'contextually generated patterns of meaning' in which symbols are both generated and transmitted, in the individual's effort to organise his experience. This again accords with a key premise of culture that "meaning is emergent and intersubjectively negotiated" (Louis 1983, p.50). The semiotic approach gives access to the individual's conceptual world, how it is structured and given meaning through his use of language and symbol.

It is in language and through its use that meaning is created and reality becomes constructed. As Morgan (1980) points out, "language is not simply descriptive; it is ontological" (p.616). Thus reality is created and maintained in a variety of communicative contexts and experiences. Silverman (1971), Pondy and Mitroff (1979) also acknowledge the crucial role that language plays in creating meaning, allowing us to intersubjectively define and sustain the meaningful features of our social world. Culture provides a context for meaning.

If the idea of a single embracive organisational culture is less analytically useful, Van Maanen et al (1984) assert that shared understandings and values are more likely to be found among members of the same occupational group. The academic department is the physical and social locus of these discipline groups. Bhagat et al (1982) uses the term 'subjective culture' to identify and differentiate how these groups characteristically perceive their social environments. The subjective culture includes a complex of beliefs, attitudes, norms, ideologies and task definitions (Parlett 1977).

Clark (1981) distinguishes three different levels of culture in academic organisations - the total institution, the profession at large and the academic discipline. The department, while maintaining its own cultural identity, is where profession and discipline combine. Becher (1984, 1981) has demonstrated at the discipline level that systems of shared beliefs evoke the greatest meaning, commitment and loyalty. Physicists, for example, possess a strong common identity and a shared, almost 'religious', belief in the unity of nature. Disciplines are cultural phenomena with "collections of like-minded people each with their own

codes of conduct, sets of values, and distinctive intellectual tasks" (p.109). However, not all disciplines share this cohesiveness, "sociology is widely condemned as fragmented and pseudo-scientific, dubious in its methodology and open to ideological exploitation" (p.110) - such are the contrasts of academic life.

Again, it would be wrong to simplistically suggest a total unity within each discipline. As Becher's (1981) research shows, divisions can arise from the theoretical v. practical orientation between proliferating sub-specialisms, social aspects dependent on the institution's reputation and status, in scholarly pursuits between those in pure and applied research. Dill (1982) notes that for most academics the culture of the institution and that of the profession has fallen into decline, and the 'academic craft' is now the primary meaning system for the individual. He advocates the management of academic culture through the specific components of myth, symbol and ritual to bring about a greater social cohesion, identity and academic productivity. This idea is similar to what Handy (1976) calls the role and task elements of organisational culture but it still maintains a strongly functionalist and prescriptive orientation (Harrison 1972). This usage implies a 'surface' level of application of the concept.

Culture as a root metaphor promotes the view of organisations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness, and moves the consideration of the concept away from purely economic or material terms. The ideational and symbolic aspects of culture thus focus on the subjective experiences and meaning patterns. Goodenough (1971) posits an active system of knowledge against which the individual organises his "experience of the real world so as to give it structure as a phenomenal world of forms" (p.28).

As a system of knowledge, culture becomes a set of functional cognitions - a theme which is explored by Weick (1979) and others seeing organisations as 'bodies of thought' and also as 'sets of thinking practices'. The organisation becomes the context in which shared cognitive maps provide not only a 'collective understanding' but 'ways of looking' at the organisational world and its enacted problems

(Gioia and Poole 1984). The parallels with academic departments are obvious.

To summarise, Geertz (1973) conceives of culture as "... the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action" (p.145) and this orientation implies a basic phenomenological stance. The organisation is a social creation, it is a complex and inter-related set of 'interpretive schemas' (Giddens 1979; Ranson et al 1980) in which the individual creates and sustains his own meaning of reality. In other words, organisations become transient figments of meaning contexts constantly emerging out of the on-going stream of actions and interactions which take place. The social world assumes a much less concrete structure and exists only as a pattern of symbolic relationships and meanings held together by language. As Smircich (1983) concludes, a "cultural analysis moves us in the direction of questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, raising issues of context and meaning, and bringing to the surface underlying values" (p.355). Phenomenology provides insights into the expressive and symbolic aspects of academic cultures and how these social patterns relate to the process of NCD. Culture is a basic element of, and a process in, social construction.

Ideology

Few would quarrel with the basic assertion that education, per se, has always been imbued with an ideological base of some kind or other. The fashions in curriculum development over the years have centred on broad ideological issues about the purpose of education and what the curriculum should contain. Deal and Nolan (1978) comment that "ideologies reflect the intellectual patterns of any culture or movement" and go on to say that "educational ideologies become imbedded, intentionally or unintentionally, in educational organisation" (pp.11 and 13). Generalised educational ideologies have expressed themselves in the following broad frameworks - elitist (standards of academic excellence), rationalizing/technocratic (vocational relevance), romantic/individualistic (development of the individual), and egalitarian/democratic (all have an equal right). These broadly defined frameworks are each built upon an intricate structure of beliefs,

principles, values and standards. What then are ideologies and how may they influence NCD?

Thompson (1984), from a detailed survey of the literature, notes two fundamentally differing usages of the term ideology. [5] The 'descriptive' usage is contained in the idea that ideology is a 'system of thought or beliefs', of 'symbolic practices' which pertain to social action or political projects. This he refers to as the **neutral** conception of ideology. "No attempt is made, on the basis of this conception, to distinguish between the kinds of action or projects which ideology animates" (p.4). When ideology is linked to the process of sustaining domination, Thompson call this the **critical** conception of the term. Ideology operates at the level of language, which is the medium of social action and also constitutes the elements which aid the understanding of our daily life.

Dunbar et al (1982) share the live and active Althusserian imagery of ideology when they say that it is "shared beliefs which reflect social experiences in a particular context at a particular time" (p.91). Ideology is thus used to interpret, evaluate, challenge and understand all ongoing social activities. The dynamic aspect is captured by Berger and Luckman (1967) in stating that ideologies represent different interpretations of the 'same' world, hence compete with one another in defining a representation of the social world. Building upon a pre-reflective givenness of a shared world of meanings, ideologies are a type of 'interpretive scheme' by which "lived experience is ordered and integrated into the total configuration of experience" (Rogers 1981, p.148). It offers the individual a perspective. Parlett (1977) gives an example of this active role of ideology in terms of how departments communicate the 'learning milieu' to their students.

Ideology becomes the medium through which social reality, consciousness and meaningfulness are constructed. The individual not only comes to 'see the world' but also becomes part of that world (Therborn 1980). Ideology simultaneously shapes and limits the construction of an individual's social experience by including some elements, while excluding other elements in the constructed reality. In an academic

context, Kamens (1977) notes how formal structure and ideology interacted to produce membership categories. That structure and process symbolically redefined the meanings and experiences to be gained in the transitions through college - rites de passage of students. The myths and rituals perpetuate the idea of selectivity, elitism, the specialised qualities of skills, knowledge and leadership, the curriculum selection and its assessment procedures. This example illustrates how ideology works to reinforce and legitimise the dominant definitions and meanings that are being organisationally processed and imposed upon the participants. This is akin to Blau and McKinley's (1979) idea of 'work motif', which reflects the intellectual ethos and prevailing sets of ideas of a wider professional culture.

Meyer (1982) examples how organisational ideologies can be explicated from an analysis of beliefs, stories, language and ceremonial acts. He subsequently explained how, in periods of crisis, ideology could be harnessed to supplant the formal structure and procedures and guide organisational responses to external threats. Meyer (1982) has also argued that strongly shared ideologies elicit self-control and co-ordination that transcend the bureaucratic forms of social control. A similar point is made by Clark (1979), that increased disciplinary (subject) and role specialisation by academics tends to reinforce their ideology and creates tight relational networks which consequently increases the structural 'loose-coupling' with the rest of the institution.

Various empirical studies (Beyer 1978; Lodahl and Gordon 1973, 1972; Bresser 1984 et al) have attempted to relate ideology to the level of paradigm development. Areas of high paradigm development (e.g. Physics, Chemistry) are associated with widely shared and coherent sets of beliefs, whereas low paradigm development (e.g. Sociology, Political Science) demonstrated looser belief systems, less consensus and higher levels of conflict prevailed. Beyer and Lodahl (1976) reported that social science departments tended to be controlled more by their university's central administration than other departments, but that they internally exhibited a collegial form of decision-making. As Bresser (1984) comments, "ideology and the degree of paradigm development can be assumed to affect the structural dimensions of

academic departments" (p.122). Despite the extreme differentiation of departments and specialised division of labour of academics, the individual academic strives to exercise a degree of autonomy, is competitive, and subscribes to a basic and impelling subject ideology (Lance 1985).

Returning to Thompson's (1984) distinction between the descriptive and critical usage of the term ideology, the majority of research into academic departments and organisations tends to affirm the descriptive usage. It is implied in the notion of a strong paradigmatic domination exercising broad consensual beliefs within a discipline, as to theory and practice. A hint of a more critical influence is contained in those lesser developed paradigm fields where theory and practice are evolving and critical debates map out possible future directions. In terms of NCD, it is made explicit by those theorists who challenge the orthodoxy of subject selection - a concern as old as Aristotle, when he asserted that mankind was not agreed about the things to be taught.

If 'loose coupling' and 'organised anarchies' capture the essence of academic organisations, then academic departments express the ideological contributions as part of the total social construction of organisational reality. A bureaucratically orientated organisation instills an ideology of formal rationality epitomised in specialised roles and technical rules, whereas a departmental ideology may emphasise a substantive rationality based upon different value-criteria.

NCD will often mirror the conflicts and tensions of these structurally based and functionally directed ideologies - in Althusserian terms, they are the manifestation of 'practical ideologies'. Market demands and academic resources are viewed instrumentally while subject fields are expressively viewed and firmly protected by their professional guardians. The connection "between an organisational ideology and that to which it refers (aspects of organisation, e.g. goals, means, ...) are complex and subtle" (Thompson 1980, p.235) and are nowhere better exhibited than in those loose confederations called academic organisations.

Salaman (1979) reminds us that organisations 'make and use knowledge'. To a considerable extent, "what we 'know' about the world, ourselves, each other, the society we live in, and the organisations which employ us, is derived from organisations" (Salaman 1979, p.174). Selznick (1966) argues that organisations search for stability, meaning and security and that ultimately it relies upon a "set of morally sustaining ideas" (p.66) to achieve these ends. For Salaman (1979), these ideas are contained in a variety of elements which are used to justify the organisational ideology. They are: structuralism (the way an organisation is structured is beyond choice), psychologism (excessive emphasis on the individual), consensualism (overall goal and its neutrality), welfarism (neo-paternalism), and legalism (skills and commitment). Not only do they operate on a general and pervading level, these ideological elements can also be powerfully used and manipulated at the level of the individual.

NCD is a principle social arena where latent and manifest academic ideologies find forceful expression in the articulation of the diverse views presented on students, on learning and the structure of knowledge, on disciplinary priorities and contributions. Ideology actively frames and organises lived experience, interprets and directs practical concerns - it is a most basic element of an individual's phenomenal world. Thompson (1984) reminds us that ideology is not some pale image of a social world but "is part of that world, a creative and constitutive element of our social lives" (pp.5-6) and hence structures our understanding of reality.

Knowledge

If culture provides the social and environmental forces which contextualise the individual's way of thinking and guide his collective way of behaving, while ideology aids his meaning and sense of lived experience, what contribution does knowledge give to this human amalgum?

Chapter one has previewed, by way of introduction, the contentious issue of knowledge [6] - how it is structured, organised and distributed, has an important bearing on the NCD process. Davies (1971) asserts that all 'knowledge is shrouded in ideology' and

maintains that the study of educational systems will allow us to see 'what is ideological' linking structure to process.

Academic organisations contain clusters of professionals whose prime stock in trade is knowledge. Research creates it; scholarship preserves, refines and modifies it; teaching and consultancy disseminates it in a multitude of forms to meet the many functional and non-functional demands. Culture and ideology are undoubtedly important elements of the academic task, the 'craft' however, is firmly rooted in social and historical definitions of discrete domains of knowledge (Bell and Grant 1974).

The 'doctrine of the discipline' is perpetuated by university scholars who are identified with their specialist departments and this has progressively led to the compartmentalisation of knowledge areas. Blau (1973) calls this the "embodiment of the academic division of labour" (p.257) and it provides the strong orientation to pursue scholarly research. Halsey and Trow (1971), however, note the often conflicting emphasis, demands and imbalances that arise in various institutions between teaching and research. The dangers of extreme specialisations and the resulting fragmentation of knowledge were commented upon by Weinberg (1967) in his concept of 'big science' and how this influenced the secondary school curriculum, and helped perpetuate the remoteness of the subject from life experiences. For Snow (1959), specialisation had resulted in the polarisation of the literary intellectuals and the scientists - the 'two cultures', which results in the practical and intellectual loss to society at large.

If the demand for knowledge in modern society is increasing (Toffler 1981), its distribution is becoming wider and more open. For example, the learning networks of the Open University, Open and Distance Learning schemes, now provide access to many non-traditional users - small businesses, housewives, unemployed, handicapped, etc. But despite these innovations, curriculum change, in general, still tends to be a slow and conservative process reflecting all the powerful in-built forces of professional and organisational inertia. Barnett and Brown (1981) state the extreme case, "it is easier to move a cemetery than to change a curriculum" (p.13). Countervailing tensions arise out of the

lead-lag processes inherent when knowledge is continually and systematically being restructured. The obsolescence rate of knowledge in some areas may be as short as 5-7 years (e.g. professional skills in medicine, Goodlad 1984) and has become especially acute in areas of high technology like micro-electronics and computing.

As knowledge is becoming more vulnerable to the vagaries of economic, financial, technological, social and demographic forces, it is also now being assessed, in terms of its "cost-effectiveness and rationalised provision" (Mack 1984, p.2). Writing in the context of the Scottish Action-Plan, Mack (1984) states that it would provide a "modernised system which enables rapid response to new demands" (p.2). This epitomises the instrumental and technocratic rationality to knowledge and its practical use (Giroux 1980). Huebner (1975) sums the position up: "current curricular ideology reflects, almost completely, a technical value system. It has a means-end rationality, that approaches an economic model" (p.223). The quasi-privatisation of certain sectors of further education and training through the existence of new funding agencies (e.g. MSC, Scottish Development Agency, ...) outwith the traditional channels, has inculcated a strong cost-effective attitude to the provision of courses and training. Knowledge, it would now seem, has its exact market price.

Eraut (1985) makes a different point, that "knowledge is still defined according to the criteria of the research community alone - as codified, published and public" (p.129). The academic researcher is still the centre of this universe reflecting either his own research priorities, or is influenced by the direction of research funding and allocation, or by the interests of commercial organisations. In Weiss's (1977) terminology, he contrasts 'knowledge-driven' research aimed to contribute to a specific discipline, whereas 'decision-driven' research is more practical and problem orientated.

Habermas' (1971) theory of knowledge accords with the concept of 'interest' - that 'interests' shape and determine what counts as the objects and types of knowledge, as well as the modes of inquiry for discovering the 'truths of knowledge' claims. For Habermas (1971), there are three primary interests: technical (empirical-analytical),

practical (hermeneutic), and emancipatory (critical) - each of these cognitive interests are grounded in the various dimensions of human existence, namely work, interaction and power. In terms of the curriculum, there are corresponding 'modes of rationality' which represent these knowledge categories. Each mode expresses underlying assumptions which legitimises the forms of inquiry, the ways of being, and our relationship to society at large.

For writers such as Bourdieu et al (1977), Apple (1979) and Young (1974, 1971), wider concerns become the topic of their analysis. They wish to trace and make explicit the complex sets of relationships that exist between education and society. Bourdieu's et al (1977) concept of 'cultural capital' (language and other cultural forms) looks at the unequal distribution of the various cultural practices and the role that education plays in this process. According to Apple (1979), the stratification of 'technical capital' (high status productive knowledge) is directly attributable to the relationship of education to the business world. Schools and universities thus help to stratify and unequally disseminate these different types of knowledge to a society, hence preserving a range of diverse and powerful interest groups. The interpenetration of culture, knowledge and society was the basic premise of Young's (1971) original attack. [7]

Bates (1980) states that the 'new' sociology of education provides a "radical alternative to traditional views and allows the development of new insights and practices in education" (p.77), especially the previously accepted and taken-for-granted assumptions and practices regarding the neutrality of knowledge. Giroux (1983) comments that "radical educators presented a serious challenge to the discourse and logic of the liberal views of schooling ... stripped of their political innocence and connected to the social and cultural matrix" (p.258) (Lundgren 1983; Shapiro 1984). For these theorists, questions about knowledge revolve around issues such as the social distribution of knowledge and its stratification, how the subject barriers are devised, and that all knowledge is ultimately a social construction.

The Spencerian question of 'what knowledge is of most worth?' receives now a dual answer. The answer is grounded in a sociological inquiry as

to **why** knowledge exists in certain forms and to a philosophical inquiry as to **what** constitutes the various forms of knowledge. This second aspect will now be briefly addressed.

The world of knowledge has evolved, become progressively organised, and is publically codified. For Hirst (1974), there is a logical demarcation of knoweldge into seven non-overlapping sub-divisible 'forms' of knowledge, each one having its own distinctive test of truth. [8] Despite the criticisms and subsequent refinements, it "still constitutes one of the most powerful attempts in modern times to reassert the educational value of the fundamental intellectual virtues" (Harris 1978, p.81).

The traditional discipline based departments in universities and colleges are the structural configurations of a Hirstean compartmentalisation of knowledge. Many writers still today put the discipline at the centre of academic life (Clark 1983; Trow 1982; Becher and Kogan 1980). It is the discipline, according to Williams (1983), "a shared approach to an area of knowledge, which integrates individual fragments of knowledge into a coherent teaching and research programme" (p.262). A discipline arises out of three primary tasks: (a) to define the boundary of the subject area, primarily achieved through the mechanism of the 'invisible college' of scholars who define doctrine, problems, solutions and authority; (b) the regulation of the relationships between disciplines, basically done by resource allocations for research proposals; and (c) the discipline has to be interpreted to the outside world, both to students and those who ultimately employ them (Williams 1983, pp.262-263). As a process, the discipline department defines and refines what counts as knowledge and also creates new knowledge through active research. Identifiable knowledge structures which exist are further created by these intellectual endeavours. Kuhn (1970), in his concept of the paradigm, makes a distinction in those disciplinary areas which are well developed and established (e.g. Maths, Physics) and those at the pre-paradigm development stage such as Sociology and Politics. Here, there are "deep debates over legitimate methods, problems, and standards of solutions" (Beyer and Lodahl 1976, pp.47-48) which create the

conflicting schisms and sub-schools within an evolving field, e.g. Ecology, Cultural Studies, ...

Knowledge is based upon distinctive modes of inquiry and Becher (1984) notes the close connection between the disciplines and their structure of inquiry - for the Sciences, a slow incremental and cumulative building up of knowledge, for the Humanities the process is iterative, for technologies, knowledge is used for practical concerns, for the Social Sciences a mixture, dependent upon the pure and applied orientations. These generalisations give a broad picture of the character of the various disciplines. Some, being monolithic subject areas, evolved mature and clearly defined, others fragmented, ripe with conflict, identified with strong sub-schools each vying for status and authority. Goodson's (1983) research is a good example of the latter process, when he traces the development of Biology, Geography and Rural Studies as they eventually gain the accredited status and authority of an 'academic' subject. He notes the initial fragmentary state of the field, the shifting network of sub-groups and scholars organised around the conflicting schools of thought and the eventual evolution of the field into its established academic standing.

Reference has been made, en route, to the assertion that organisational structure is intimately related to the design and development of new courses. Disciplines and departments are inter-related. Becher and Kogan (1980) argue that "any full understanding of how the higher education system works must depend on an understanding of the basic units" (p.79), i.e. the individual subject departments. The identifying characteristics they take to include an administrative existence. They also argue that the department is important in terms of professional values and the maintenance and development of academic expertise. In their overall model, they make an important distinction between the 'normative' and 'operational' modes.

These two modes represent the components of everyday life in the academic world. The normative mode has to do with the monitoring and maintenance of the values involving assessments, about academic authority, resources, peer groups and procedures. The operational mode concerns itself with the business of carrying out the practical tasks

of planning, implementing policies, operating the syllabuses and research programmes. The interplay of structure with these two interacting modes of academic life will be further elaborated by considering the relationship of knowledge to the basic curricular patterns which evolve.

Bernstein (1975) reminds us that "educational knowledge is a major regulator of the structure of experience" (p.157) and essentially the curriculum largely defines what counts as valid knowledge. What then, are the characteristic curricular patterns to be found in higher education?

Important differences can be identified between departments in terms of "their sub-cultural styles, epistemological traditions ... their curricular patterns ..." (Becher and Kogan 1980, p.80) and in using their work, as well as that of Bernstein (1975), an attempt will be made to explicate the relationship of knowledge to the varying curriculum designs that are formulated in practice.

By focusing upon the 'boundary' between one subject content and another, Bernstein (1975) conceptualised a 'collection' curricula characterised by a closed compartmentalised relationship between the subjects, and an 'integrated' curriculum in which there are open relationships. In Becher and Kogan's (1980) terms, the boundary is either 'closed' excluding ideas and evidence from other disciplines, or 'permeable' to the subject matter of other disciplines. The second distinction is that of subject matter - 'cohesive' when it is coherently held together at the conceptual level, and 'discrete' where it is less coherent and often separate. Arising out of these two sets of distinctions, Becher and Kogan (1980) devised a course matrix which identifies some of the common patterns in degree construction and is reproduced below.

Boundary

		Closed	Permeable
Content	Cohesive	Single-subject specialist degree	Inter-disciplinary degree
	Discrete	Modular or joint course schemes	Open learning programmes

Source: Becher and Kogan (1980, p.87)

A single subject specialist degree is familiar in all academic organisations and is readily recognisable as the pure honours degree in a variety of academic areas - Mathematics, English, Physics, Geology, etc. These are the conventional academic degrees recognised for their identifiable and coherent epistemological structure of facts, concepts, principles and their distinctive methodological procedures. This clearly approximates to and illustrates Hirst's (1974) 'forms of knowledge', Kuhn's (1970) idea of a strong 'paradigm', and Bernstein's (1975) strong 'collection' code.

The organisational correlate is the structure of the traditional specialist academic department in which a strong sense of commitment and identity expresses itself in teaching and research activities. Becher (1983) noted the close-knit, gregarious and strong collective ethos exhibited in the largely task-orientated culture in pure science departments, e.g. Physics. Research was a group activity and gave rise to a competitive life-style with strong pressure to publish (Collins 1968; Hain 1981). In the sciences, the methodological procedures ensure that 'truth' remains absolute and that all knowledge created rests upon the foundation of public verifiable proof.

Bernstein (1975) mentions the binding intra-subject loyalty as well as the manifestation of different subject ideologies in the teaching staff

in a 'collection' curriculum where strong classification is exercised. He argues that a membership category is soon established in an educational career when choices have to be made about subjects and is subsequently systematically developed by the individual, e.g. a physicist, chemist, economist. Specialisation soon reveals the differences from other subject areas and defines people categories. One becomes a sociologist, an engineer, an accountant, ... strongly socialised into and internalising the knowledge system of the profession. Strong classifications of knowledge leads to the creation of specific personal and occupational identities - the "ultimate mystery of the subject is revealed late in the educational life" (p.165) of the fledgling professional.

But different disciplines have different epistemological traditions. If knowledge is grounded more in its social and historical context, the task becomes one of constantly refining and redefining its interpretation. Truth becomes a relative commodity, based on a series of informed judgments. This orientation would apply in the Humanities and in large areas of the Social Sciences. Again, Becher (1983) found that within these disciplines, there was a person-orientated culture and a loose social structure within which problems and issues became individualistic concerns.

Such evidence that exists (Lodahl and Gordon 1972; Hain 1981; Becher 1984, 1981; Clark 1983) shows that there are common, discernible but complex relationships, which identify "differences between disciplines that go to the heart of teaching, research and student-faculty relationships ... and the intimate relation between the structure of knowledge in different fields" (Lodahl and Gordon 1972, p.71). Where knowledge is regulated in a collection code, it is organised and distributed in a series of insulated subject heirarchies, staff at lower levels tend to have a vertical relationship with other members and a strong departmental allegiance pertains. Bernstein (1975) suggests that this type of organisational system "encourages gossip, intrigue, and a conspiracy theory of the working of the organisation" (p.170) which becomes manifest in interdepartmental attempts to open the subject boundaries for collaborative course initiatives.

Interdisciplinary degrees have arisen out of what Tanner and Tanner (1980) see as a series of various developments - 'correlation', efforts to develop certain common relationships, e.g. physical science and mathematics; 'fusion', the merging of related fields, e.g. geology and geography to produce earth science; 'broad fields', attempts made to develop some degree of synthesis or unity for an entire branch of knowledge, e.g. ecology, humanities. They all represent attempts to explicitly weave together and integrate a number of disciplines often approaching the area from a particular perspective, e.g. communication studies from either an information base or an interpersonal perspective. In Bernstein's (1975) analysis, this "disturbance in classification of knowledge will lead to a disturbance of existing authority structures, existing specific educational identities ..." (p.168) A basic problem which therefore exists, is the tendency for discipline-based groups to lay unique claims to certain areas of knowledge. This tendency is reinforced by the departmental structure, the strong sense of subject loyalty and a singular professional identity - all helps to sharpen the subject boundary and strengthen the underlying value distinctions of the staff.

Bernstein (1975) in his discussion of the integrated and the collection codes argues that integration, to be successful, requires four basic conditions to be fulfilled: (a) a high ideological consensus among the staff; (b) a well-defined body of common knowledge; (c) close relationships between staff and students; and (d) a clear definition of the criteria of evaluation. As integration reduces the authority of the separate subject contents and now makes them subordinate to some relational idea or 'supra-content concept' (p.169), there needs to exist some high level of abstraction or general principle, against which selected areas of knowledge from the contributing disciplines can be related. This process will focus attention upon the 'deep' structure of the subject and demonstrates 'how' knowledge becomes created.

At the teacher level, integration should eventually create a more common and co-ordinated approach. This interaction, however, has to be carefully fostered, to reduce the residual and prevailing subject attitudes and isolation. In terms of communication studies, the practical strictures arose more from an initial protection of the

individual subject integrity rather than its subordination to the new 'corporate concept', i.e. communication. For the teaching group, subsequent teaching exposure, experience and maturity, brought the rhetoric of integration closer to a practical reality. The openness of previously discrete subject areas requires a willing sense of adventure into unknown patterns of knowledge and new relationships with other disciplines. Arcane and obsolete mystifying practices which previously encouraged subject entrenchment, are not easily broken down or negotiated out of a sense of trust with ones' colleagues.

The radical shift demanded in pedagogic style is akin to Baker-Lunn's (1970) distinction in the 'knowledge-centred' and 'student-centred' approaches. The integrated code asks for an open partnership in the mediation and negotiation of what counts as valid knowledge and its definition.

Organisationally, the departmental configuration mitigates against the integrated code. New task relationships have to transcend the departmental boundary. Tensions arise out of the vertical (departmental) allegiances and from the strong counter-pull towards horizontal (interdepartmental) work-based relationships. As consensus has to be found, not only for the integrating idea for a course, it also has to be won from the key staff who are distributed in other departments - this means a shift in the distribution of resources (Bernstein 1975; Barnett and Brown 1981).

Pressures manifest themselves in terms of individual dilemmas about professional autonomy, career, departmental identification and also out of interdepartmental micro-politics about courses, staffing and resources. New courses, especially those attempting innovative subject combinations, clearly mobilise the inertial forces of current structural arrangements and the entrenched social networks identified in discipline based departments.

Schools of study often provide a structural response in an attempt to combine two or more related disciplines and hence reduce any incipient conflict arising between the disciplines. C.N.A.A. often lends its academic weight to the notion of a core teaching team to counteract the

inheritant pull of the individual discipline priorities. But ostensibly simple questions and solutions about appropriate organisational structures, belie more complex issues of subject specialists v. interdisciplinary demands, academic cultures and ideologies, knowledge selection and teaching resources, future course development, organisational size and structure ... (Hamilton 1973). [9]

So far, the argument has illuminated the basic elements of what Trow (1975) calls the 'private' life of education. The internal operations of academia are "diverse, arcane and increasingly shielded by layers of organisation, they are particularly opaque" (Clark 1984, p.126). Although knowledge is public and codified in many forms, it is also relatively invisible as a material, a product, and as a process. The basic work of academic organisations, knowledge creation and transmission, is often hidden: developing ideas, as in research; transmitting ideas, as in teaching, absorbing ideas, as in learning. As products or processes, knowledge is difficult to see and directly evaluate at the time it is being created or transmitted. But 'private lives' have 'public faces' (Trow 1975; Becher 1983), in that there are others, external to the organisation, who have interests and concerns with the academic task. The abstract compound of culture, ideology and knowledge is not only individual and thus a private affair, it is also an inescapable public affair, in that the traffic in ideas and symbols must be communicated meaningfully to many groups and institutions. The concept of environment thus looms large in academic concerns.

Environment

Reference has been made in Chapter 1 to the diverse external organisations, groups and individuals who transact with the college (see diagram 1, page 12). The diagrammatic representation given can only be adequate at a descriptive (surface) level in tracing the two dimensional reality of the interface between the organisation and its environments. [10] As Parlett (1977) asserts, there is an educational 'foreground' (tutorials, lectures, courses, examinations, etc.) but there is also a 'background' in education (buildings, traditions, customs, geography, etc.). It is a neat but important distinction between the content and the context.

What is required is a concept of environment which is more a construction in human consciousness than as descriptive categories. [10] Environment is the context to which college affairs, past, present and future, are addressed. But environment is also content, it is a human text which has to be constructed, organised and interpreted. It becomes an organisational discourse, and like all discourse, contains the multiple images and interpretations of its observers and participants. Before turning to a social construction conceptualisation of environment, a brief review of some of the extant literature will be given.

Due to the current dominance of the open systems/contingency paradigm in organisational thinking, the relationship of organisation-to-environment has been extensively researched since the seminal work of Burns and Stalker (1961), Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) and others.

In a review of the literature, Miles et al (1974) divided the research into four main groupings: concept of boundary; dimensions of the environment; the enacted environment; and finally, domains and strategic choice. Downey and Ireland (1979) argue the case for qualitative methods in assessing environments, especially the role of participants' interpretations. Much of the research tends to treat the environment as an imposed reality, but Pondy and Mitroff (1979) caution against this by stating that other parts of the environment are enacted by the organisation itself (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980).

Environments are often classified and measured in terms of the definitions by top executives on the somewhat flawed assumption that position and authority will redefine goals and authority (Miles and Snow 1978). If academic organisations are semi-plural, use ambiguous technologies, are loosely coupled and individuals vary in their participation in decision making (Enderud 1977), it is argued that each sub-unit will generate its own sets of environments. The varying levels of interaction and different environmental domains attended to will result in complex and multiple realities. There cannot be a unitary concept of an environment acting upon the entire organisation. What is lacking is an understanding of the organisation/environment interactions which reflect hierarchial and departmental variations. As

Crozier (1964) stated, "environmental uncertainty does not reside exclusively in the environment itself" (p.127). Environments are created through individual and social processes (Berger and Luckman 1967; Schutz 1967; Weick 1977).

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) provide a framework for analysing some of the dynamics of the individual-organisation-environment interactions. Their basic premise is the 'adaptiveness' of human beings - attitudes, behaviour and beliefs - to their social context and to the reality of past and present behaviour and to the situation itself. The social context has two general effects: (a) it provides direct construction of meaning; and (b) focuses attention on certain information which results in making that information more salient. This relates to Weick's (1977) notion of the constructed environment which emphasises that objects and events cannot become part of a person's environment without the person directly participating in the creation of that environment.

Weick (1979) extended the idea of cognitive processes in organisations by viewing organisations as 'bodes of thought' - recurrent schema, causal textures and sets of referent levels; and as 'thinking practices' - routines, preferences, dominant rules. NCD as a process would combine and capture the essence of Weick's (1979) conceptualisation. The environment(s) would be conceived of as members' perception of resources, information uncertainty and disputed interpretations. This shifts the concept away from an 'objective' environment to one which is highly 'subjective' (Linder 1982).

All theories of social cognition share two main assumptions about the nature of human information processing: (a) that individuals have limited capacity to deal with all the array of information in their environments (Miller 1956); and (b) cognitive processes - perceiving, encoding, storing and decoding, etc. - lie along a continuum (Norman 1976). According to Kiesler and Sproull (1982), three current theoretical orientations are offered - social perception, information processing and social motivation - to account for the individual-to-environment response. Their own work disabuses the notion of the omniscient executive totally and acutely aware of what is going on in

the environment, as they say, it would require "prodigious and predictable cognitive effort" (p.566).

Hambrick (1981) asserts that "organisations are 'embedded' in environments, but often loosely so" (p.253), hints at those 'given' aspects of environmental impact. Obvious examples would be the direct interaction of S.E.D., C.N.A.A. or professional bodies, but also allows for great scope in the varied definitions and interpretations of other elements in the college's environment. Given the difficulty of gathering meaningful data on a wide range of concerns in higher education (student and employers' needs and expectations, demand for new courses, emergence of new knowledge and skills, etc.), the nature of the environment and gaining information must remain speculative and highly problematic. As Manning (1982) suggests, people "tacitly and formally encode the environment, process it, decode it, and socially affirm its salient features" (p.122) in an effort to punctuate the continuous stream of raw data assailing consciousness and make it meaningful.

In NCD, it can be common practice to quantify the 'great ideas' for a new course by seeking environmental justification post the event. This tactic has the effect of heightening awareness to expediently created sections of the environment to suit a new course, conversely, it also creates 'blind' spots. To enact an environment can mean to "create the appearance of an environment, or to stimulate an environment for the sake of representation" (Weick 1977, p.278) shows the complexity of the process when attempting to discriminate between what are valid or non-valid interpretations of the environment. The greater the information uncertainty or ambiguity, the more the 'subjective' environment (Linder 1982) is open to influence and interpretation. At best, it is a random process which becomes punctuated and connected only as a series of 'organisational breakpoints' and only then to serve highly structured and selective contexts.

The differing range and balance of staff activities - teaching, research, scholarship and administration - each role provides selective and varying exposure to information both within and external to the organisation. Although there are shared ideas and common thinking

practices, nevertheless information is a valued organisational and individual resource which is used for a variety of ends. Different preferences and commitments at the individual level often clash with the demands and priorities exacted by NCD. The differential exposure to information due to the variable emphasis of teaching, research or administration, creates a selective attention to the environment and its effects.

Inglis (1975) reminds us of the dominance of a rational technology which pervades much educational thinking and whose prime purpose is to remove the "multiple idiosyncracies and deviance of human behaviour" (p.62). The alignment, adaptability and survival of organisations (presumably academic as well) vis-à-vis their environments, is achieved through some form of rational purposeful planning procedures. NCD stands at the vital intersection of the college to its environment.

Many authors (Jadot, CERI 1980; Lockwood 1981; Lynch 1981; Sizer 1979; Cyert 1978 et al) have attempted to cope with the salient characteristics of academic organisations and at the same time formulate a rational planning system. Lockwood (1981) particularly in his research concluded that both long-term planning and the management process were severely limited by the internal structure and processes of a university. Lynch (1981) adopted a strategic marketing planning approach and contended that it could be adequately applied to the university sector. Doyle and Lynch (1978), Newbold (1980) are others who offer rational approaches borrowed from the business environment and applied to educational situations. The direct transfer of business techniques to education is problematic (Duncan 1982) and little work has been done to appraise the adaptations that have to be considered given the characteristics of academic organisations.

In the case of NCD, discipline cultures and ideologies, academic peer groups, part-time participation and decision-making are important sets of internal relationships which qualify the external linkages. Enderud (1977) argues that there was little relationship between the ever-increasing discipline sub-specialisation and market needs. Barnett and Brown (1981) reviewing the mis-match of the single discipline degree to the needs of government, management, industry and commerce,

concluded that the interdisciplinary degree could provide the necessary types of knowledge that would be practically useful to employers. These two opposite positions, illustrate the tensions which NCD has to resolve, if an academic organisation has to relate successfully with the outside world. The vocationally orientated degree has always had a clear market identity. For other degree formulations, the challenge is expressed through the various debates on educational/academic ideologies and the market mechanism (Maynard 1983) with its sentiment that academic areas of expertise and activity should be tailored to external needs. The environmental pull becomes increasingly hard to ignore.

But NCD and its environment-organisation interactions are more complex and embracive than is explicitly suggested by the purely rational instrumental line of reasoning. NCD, 'as it is practised', reveals a host of issues, concerns and dilemmas. The process is a compound of opposing forces - cultural, ideological, knowledgeable and environmental.

To summarise, the day-to-day work on NCD, its taken-for-granted features and elements, its network of formal and informal relationships, its derived experiences, are mirrored in the multiple images, meanings and interpretations of individual contributions to the process. By adopting and modifying Ranson's et al (1980) framework, NCD defines and mediates itself through (a) members creating provinces of meaning which incorporate their interpretive schemes that form the basis of their orientation to the process; (b) that these interpretive schemes provide arenas of consensus as well as conflict (alternative structures of reality) defining value preferences and sectional interests resolved through power and resources; (c) these constitutive elements accommodate the internal and external contextual constraints of NCD. This framework embodies the individual and the intersubjective nature of the process and allows us to explore the constructed social worlds and the deep structure of interpretive schemes.

This chapter has delineated the detail of the outline map presented in Chapter 1. The map has now become the territory, its deep structure, and constitutes the author's representation of the realistic imagery of

NCD. Ontologically, NCD is a phenomena which exists as a creation in the conscious mind of organisational members actively engaged in the process. It is the social arena in which conceptions of social reality are created, sustained, recreated, and resustained into a series of evolving 'provinces of meaning' (Schutz 1972). As this research is committed to understand NCD as the process of socially constructed provinces of meaning, phenomenology provides the intellectual means of achieving this stated end. Chapter 4 will develop the conceptual framework of phenomenology as a necessary antecedent before exploring the members' accounts.

Chapter 3 Notes

1. Semiotics/semiology is the study of the social production of meaning from sign systems. It is a theoretical approach based upon the original work of Sussure and popularised by Barthes. See Barley's (1983) paper as an example of the application of semiological analysis to an organisation.
2. Forester (1983) provides a succinct account of critical theory and organisational analysis in Morgan (Ed.) **Beyond Method**, pp.234-246. Benson's (1977) work is a good example of a critical approach to organisations. See Burrell and Morgan (1979) for a review and analysis of critical theory, pp.283-299.
3. The term culture can be defined in a variety of ways - see William's paper in Bennett et al, eds. (1981) **Culture, Ideology and Social Process**, pp.43-52. Also Hall's "Cultural studies: two paradigms", pp.19-36 for further distinctions and debates. The articles by Allaire et al (1984), Smircich (1983), Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) review and detail the concept and its application to organisations. Becher's (1984) chapter in Clark's (1984) **Eight Perspectives on Higher Education** gives a comprehensive analysis and use of the term in educational contexts from a disciplinary perspective. In general and broad terms, culture may be defined to mean the institutionally or informally organised social production and reproduction of sense, meaning and consciousness. This emphasises the interactive 'making' of culture, as a 'process' or set of practices. Another useful book is Frost et al (1985) **Organisational Culture**.
4. Symbol is broadly a sign, object or act that stands for something other than itself. For an extended account of the nature and significance of symbols in organisations, see Morgan et al, chapter in Pondy et al (eds.) (1983) book **Organisational Symbolism**, pp.3-35.
5. Ideology in general refers to the social relations of signification (knowledge and consciousness) in class societies. Apart from

Thompson's (1984) excellent book *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, other useful works are: *On Ideology* by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham; Lorrain (1979) *The Concept of Ideology*; Corbett (1970) *Ideologies*; Abercrombie et al (1980) *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* - all of which ground the reader in the varying conceptualisations and theoretical perspectives in this vast and difficult area. Rachael Sharp's book (1980) *Knowledge, Ideology and the Politics of Schooling* provides a detailed Marxist perspective on education. Karabel and Halsey (1977) *Power and Ideology in Education* provides readings in the area. Shapiro's (1984) article looks at the idea of the school as a transmitter of ideology and the difficulties that arise.

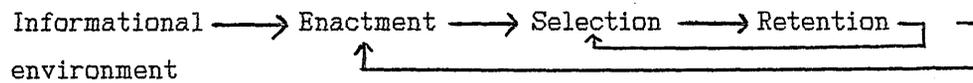
6. As with culture, ideology and knowledge, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to detail any analysis of these concepts. Their inclusion is on the basis of their contribution to an understanding of the deep matrix of social phenomena associated with NCD. They are, collectively, essential elements of an individual's phenomenal world and hence part of the subjective interpretive process of structuring reality. Knowledge is codified into many forms, Science is but one example. From a phenomenological point of view, the structure of knowledge which is of most interest is the 'subjective stocks of knowledge' built up from experience. Schutz identified three regions of subjective knowledge: (a) **elementary and tacit knowledge** (awareness of action and experience, of space and time, of the existence of others); (b) **routine knowledge** (basic skills, practical knowledge and recipe-like knowledge); and (c) **explicit knowledge** (consists of separate items of knowledge which have been acquired). For a more detailed discussion see Luckman's (1983) article.

Boulding (1956) *The Image* presents a typology of knowledge: (a) **folk** (images formed and selected from the 'ordinary business of life and social relationships); (b) **literacy** (stored and compiled information that is beyond the experience of a single individual; and (c) **scientific**. Boulding's basic idea is that knowledge consists of 'images' of the physical and social

environments in human consciousness. Folk images is the domain of phenomenological inquiry. Droge's (1985) paper explores the mediation of knowledge in society.

7. Writers like Bernstein, Bourdieu, Apple and Young all offer critiques of the curriculum and the way that knowledge is selected and transmitted. Sharp's (1980) book, **Knowledge, Ideology and the Politics of Schooling**, chapter 3, gives a good basic account of the work of these authors and its further development. Gibson's (1977) article is a basic critique of Bernstein's original work. Lawton's (1975) book, **Class, Culture and the Curriculum**, chapters 4 and 5, review the knowledge and the curriculum debates and perspectives.
8. Hirst's (1974) book, **Knowledge and the Curriculum**, chapters 3 to 6, contain the original and the revised arguments.
9. Hamilton's (1973) thesis looks at the organisational and social difficulties of implementing new curricula schemes in two schools and illustrates the range of problems and issues which have to be faced in practice. Bussis et al (1976) **Beyond Surface Curriculum** looks at the teachers' understanding of the purposes and priorities of curriculum, teaching and children's learning. Keddie's (1971) "Classroom knowledge" shows the distinction of what counts as knowledge as 'subjects' as opposed to the 'knowledge of pupils' ability' which then determines what knowledge is taught to which group.
10. At a descriptive level, Chapter 1 outlined the general and some of the specific elements of the college's environment and followed Hall's (1977) categorisation. Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) book, **The External Control of Organisations** details their premise about the external constraints on organisations and the adaptations and responses that can be made. On the other hand, Weick (1969) adopts a phenomenological orientation in his concept of 'enactment'. The individual, in other words, 'creates' the environment to which he then adapts. The environment is treated in terms of information and meaning which is more or less

equivocal (i.e. uncertain). Three basic organising processes occur. These are: (a) enactment of an informational environment; (b) selection of inputs to be processed from this environment; and (c) retention of information as a feedback function for future enactment and selection. The diagram illustrates the stages:



These three processes constitute a series of 'assembly rules' (criteria and means for assessing the uncertainty) and 'interlocking behaviour cycles' of the organisation actors. See Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) pp.264-273 for discussion and criticism of Weick's ideas.

CHAPTER 4

The Phenomenological Perspective and Method

The basic thesis of the last chapter rested upon the assumption that social reality lies deep within a network of typifications which individuals use to make sense of the situation in which they find themselves. Thus, the 'deep' structure of culture, ideology, knowledge and environment represent salient elements of an individual's social typification in an organisational context. To explore and understand the meaningful and lived experiences of individuals requires a clear, coherent and succinct statement about phenomenology [1], such that an understanding will ground the subsequent analysis of chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. This chapter is addressed to the above task.

First, phenomenology's location in sociological theorising. From a functionalist perspective, people are seen as being constrained by the social world they inhabit and this world is perceived as being composed of external objects and independent relationships. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) comment, "a purely structural or functional sociology is endemically in danger of reifying [2] social phenomena" (p.208). In contrast, an interpretive approach emphasises an essentially subjective social world and attempts to understand this world as it is constructed and experienced by its participants (Hopper and Power 1984; Putnam 1982). The basic aim of interpretive sociology is to describe how the multiple social realities become constructed, sustained and negotiated through the words, symbols and actions that members use. The everyday social world is treated as the "product of human activity, interpretation and intention, as a subject world" (Smart 1976, p.75). It is also a linguistic and cognitive world. Man is shown to live in a world created through consciousness.

Ontologically, the world constitutes a "stream of consciousness; it is experiential; the subjective is the source of all objectivities" (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p.233). The great strength of a phenomenologically informed sociological perspective lies in its point of departure. It sets out to describe the experiences of the world of everyday life. The sociologist has therefore to be 'true to the data'

and avoid the intellectual process of generating grand theories about the social world or imposing derived and artificial categories upon it. Curtis and May (1978) identify the common and distinguishing features of phenomenology as being:-

- (a) a belief in the importance, and in a sense the primacy, of subjective consciousness;
- (b) an understanding of consciousness as active, as meaning bestowing;
- (c) a claim that there are certain essential structures to consciousness of which we can gain direct knowledge by a certain kind of reflection (p.xiii).

As a theory, phenomenology concerns itself with the structure and function of consciousness and to this end Luckmann (1978) states that the "goal of phenomenology is to describe the universal structures of the subjective orientation in the world, not to explain the general features of the objective world" (p.9). The central tenets which are used to describe the structure of this subjective and social world can be briefly introduced by stating, from a phenomenological perspective, that man is viewed as:

possessing consciousness, being intentional, being social, being temporal, viewing the world from the 'natural attitude', being 'in-the-lived' world (Lebenswelt), being shaped by while at the same time shaping his world (Lynch-Sauer 1981, p.3-4).

These and other basic concepts, their description and illustration, will now be introduced in the proceeding sections of this chapter.

Consciousness

People and the world are always in a dialogue with each other (Valle and King 1978, p.8) and Mary Rogers (1983) views this 'dialogue' to be consciousness, which essentially is 'contact with things'.

Man has one basic and distinguishing characteristic, that is, his consciousness. Descartes's famous maxim 'cogito, ergo sum' recognises consciousness (cogito) as a basic irreducible fact of which man could be certain. Husserl (1965) extended the statement to include the object of consciousness (the cogitatum). Consciousness 'makes present' phenomena which 'show themselves' or are 'revealed' in the process of

being conscious. The process of being conscious can take many different forms (thinking, perceiving, dreaming) but it is always directed at something (books, people, events). Thus, "all consciousness is consciousness-of; every conscious act has an object" (Atkinson 1972, p.262). Consciousness is therefore characterised by intentionality. The world is understood as a correlate of consciousness. Consciousness, in its acts and manifestations, is essentially directed towards the world. All its acts have both a "subjective pole, consciousness itself, and an objective pole, the world" (Spurling 1977, p.7).

Intentionality implies both 'consciousness of objects' and 'objects of consciousness' (Rogers 1983). Phenomenologists are concerned to describe both these aspects of consciousness. To focus on the 'consciousness of' a given object is to describe the noesis of the act (i.e. the subjective perceiving, remembering, ...). When the focus is on the given 'object of consciousness', the description is about the noema of the act (i.e. the objective perceived, remembered, ...). In short, the noema is the 'object-in-relation-to-the-subject' and the noesis is the 'subject-in-relation-to-the-object' for each particular act of intentional consciousness (Atkinson 1972, p.279). Neither can exist without the other and no experience can exist without both.

The following excerpt from an interview transcript will illustrate the noema/noesis correlate:

... We were attempting to justify our initiative to the S.E.D., which is really another part of the environment that I haven't considered so far. We though we were being quite smart politically by carrying out a very thorough survey of employment opportunities, and what employers thought appropriate courses. But, we were not terribly clued up politically as far as the academic world was concerned ... (T4, p.295).

References to "S.E.D.", "survey", "employers", "courses", "environment" and "academic world" are all examples of the various objects that constitute 'noemas' in the person's consciousness. Perceptions like "justify our initiative", "quite smart politically", "haven't considered so far", "not terribly clued up politically" are the subjective reflections associated

with the different 'noemas' and thus constitute the respective 'noesis'. The noetic correlates represent the individual's perception of the reality of the situation.

The noesis bestows the meaning, while the noema is the meaning which is established by the noesis of a given act (Rogers 1983; Filmer et al 1972). These complementary aspects of intentionality describe the ~~meaning-giving~~ features of consciousness. Diagrammatically it can be shown:

(I) noesis → noema

Here, noema stands for what is experienced and the 'I' is the 'bearer' of the experience, the 'I' who does the experiencing (Ihde 1977). The contents of consciousness can be described as the 'outer' world (objective correlates) or the 'inner' (subjective correlates) of consciousness. However, consciousness can contact a given object with a variety of noesis and the same object can be revealed or constituted in many possible ways, e.g. a photograph.

Whatever appears to a person is always perceived within a context or horizon. For example, the idea that learning in higher education should be student-centred is one element in a complex of meanings about the educational process that has to be understood in the context of a range of individual experiences and meanings. The horizon would include a person's interpretation of his experiences, formal and informal, knowledge of the learning processes, ideas and attitudes expressed by others, problems faced in practice, and his own reflections of all these exposures. Horizon thus encompasses both 'internal' and 'external' aspects and becomes, for any object of consciousness, a "set of possibilities for more precisely determining that object" (Rogers 1983, p.25). For any object then, horizon functions as a fluid but encapsulating 'boundary of meaning' that any act of consciousness can provide to the individual.

In summary, consciousness is a dialogue with the physical and social world, has direction or intentionality, provides meaning through noetic correlates and operates within a horizon or context to meaning.

Life-world

The Life-world or Lebenswelt [3] is that surrounding embracive world that provides all the grounds of our conscious existence. It is the mundane world of everyday life as lived and experienced by commonsense men carrying on the "cognitive and emotional traffic of daily life" (Natanson 1974, p.35). The life-world is not a construction but is given directly and immediately in human experience (Spurling 1977). It is the ground or starting point for the phenomenologist. There is nothing prior to the life-world (Valle and King 1978).

"We, as human beings among fellow beings, experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them and act upon them" (Schutz 1966, p.116) represents the world to which intentional consciousness is directed. Thus, the life-world is the world in which we are always living and presume will always be there. Rogers (1983) claims that there are three essential features of the life-world: (a) that it is taken-for-granted [4], emphasising a continuity and coherence to a range of fundamental and universal features of daily life, e.g. greetings, walking, waiting; (b) that it is social, bounded by history, culture and language; and (c) that it constitutes the 'paramount reality' necessary for all human experience, communication and activity. The "life-world shapes all that is human" (Rogers 1981, p.50) forms and structures the biographical course of an individual's lived experiences.

Intersubjectivity

The life-world, the world of everyday experience, is also an intersubjective [5] world in which we attempt to know and come to understand the lived experiences of others. Intersubjectivity stresses the inherent socialness of consciousness and a shared and common experience of the world. As Strasser (1963) concludes, "man's essence is an orientation to others ... he cannot exist as a conscious being without others" (p.84). It is through dialogue that man compares his experience with those of his fellow man and out of which the different perspectives of identical experiences are thus revealed.

As a social world, the intersubjective world is a tissue of constructs and typifications. Groups, organisations, associations, institutions all

have their "anatomy of rules and relationships which the social actor must recognise and accept if he is to gain access" (Natanson 1974, p.61). For Schutz, the process for understanding the conduct of others can be understood as a process of typifications [6] whereby the actor applies interpretive constructs akin to 'ideal types' to apprehend the meanings of what people do (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

It is through the use of these constructs, derived from the experience of everyday life and the stocks of knowledge (commonsense understanding) that we classify and organise our everyday reality. The knowledge of our everyday life is intersubjectively ordered. It implies culture and history, which are progressively acquired throughout our unique biographical situation and constitutes the private world of interpretations.

The natural attitude

An essential structure of an individual's life-world is the 'natural attitude'. In the natural attitude, man suspends doubts about the existence of the outer world and its objects. It is "the commonsense, everyday living in which I accept the world and the objects in it as unproblematic, taken-for-granted and given, independent of consciousness" (Spurling 1977, p.8).

Schutz and Luckmann (1973) succinctly capture the total essence of the pre-reflective acceptance, intrinsic in the natural attitude as follows:

"(a) the corporeal existence of other men; (b) that these bodies are endowed with consciousness essentially similar to my own; (c) that the things in the outer world included in my environs and that of my fellow-man are the same for us and have fundamentally the same meaning; (d) that I can enter into inter-relationships and reciprocal actions with my fellow-men; (e) that I can make myself understood to them; (f) that a stratified social and cultural world is historically pregiven as a frame of reference for me and my fellow-men, indeed in a manner as taken for granted as the 'natural world'; (g) that therefore the situation in which I

find myself at any moment is only to a small extent purely created by me." (p.5)

The enormous importance of the natural attitude can be immediately seen - it underscores the notion of taken-for-grantedness, the existence of conscious others and the idea of a similarity between my experience and others of the same objects in the outer world (Natanson 1974). The natural attitude is not only social, it governs and directs our engagement in daily life and its pragmatic considerations.

Stocks of knowledge

The social world is infused with subjective meaning and intention. The daily interaction with the life-world is largely dependent upon a process of typification which classifies and structures our own everyday reality and categorises the actions of others. This means that we possess stocks of typifications which enable us to 'see' the world as familiar, ordinary, mundane and typical (Brewer 1984). The individual's life-world has a dialectic character - part of it is constructed by us on the basis of our personal biography, and part given to us in the form of a public commonsense knowledge.

These stocks of knowledge [6], or commonsense understandings, which typify our daily experience of the world belong to three subjective categories. Luckmann (1983) describes these forms of knowledge as: (a) elementary and tacit, (b) routine (which includes basic skills, practical and recipe-like knowledge), and (c) explicit, composed of separate items of knowledge.

Before describing these categories generally, Rogers (1983) distinguishes between stocks of knowledge **on hand** and those **at hand**. Knowledge 'on hand' consists of those unquestionable elements necessary for a coherent stream of experience of the world and are permanently present to our lived experiences. Rogers (1983) refers to knowledge of this kind as being the 'fundamental elements' and is what Luckmann (1983) calls 'elementary tacit knowledge', a "set of implications which accompany all experiences without which no experience is thinkable" (p.62). The 'on hand' elements of an individual's stocks of knowledge provide a structured and coherent set of orientations to a commonsense

understanding of the social world. It is a culturally derived and essential system of know-hows which guides human action.

Knowledge 'at hand' involves the questionable elements necessary for any specific experience. These explicit stocks of knowledge are associated with publically codified bodies of theories, e.g. science, and are evoked in order to come to terms with a particular situation.

These varied stocks of knowledge allow the individual to cope with a range of general and specific daily situations. Over time, much of routine knowledge and skills are habitually applied and become effective responses to recurring situations that were once considered problematic. In sum, each individual has knowledge both 'on hand' and 'at hand' which maps out the understanding of everyday events into meaningful experience. The world exists as a typified world.

Multiple realities

The social actor lives in a world experienced as one of multiple realities. A person's sense of what is real varies according to what he is attending to. Each of these worlds, or different orders of reality, can be described as 'finite provinces of meaning' - the world of daily life, of science, of work, of dreams, of family ... An individual experiences everyday life alternatively from a first-person perspective, a second- and a third-person perspective (Collins 1974, p.141). These finite provinces of meaning are different experiential spheres - the first-person yields the inner reality of the stream of consciousness; the second-person is a dialogue between two people who continuously reconstruct a reality that is both shared and private; the third-person is that of people engaged in institutional life.

For Schutz, in the face-to-face situation (thou-orientation), an individual experiences another human being simply as a person. As a we-relationship evolves, a mutual awareness and a sympathetic participation in each other's lives slowly occurs, e.g. tutor and student, and this should lead to a more 'genuine' understanding of the other person. Ego and alter ego create their mutual intersubjective world, but it requires time, effort and trust. We-relationships involve consociates, that is, individuals who share a relationship which rests

on a community of space and time (Rogers 1983; Natanson 1974), e.g. work colleagues.

The distinction between a 'genuine' understanding of another person (the we-relationship) and a more abstract conceptualisation of his actions and thoughts is contained in the typification of a **contemporary**. The Other becomes a 'mediated experience' dependent upon a set of social relations (a they-orientation). These relationships are the more abstract 'courses-of-action', do not involve face-to-face interaction, and are experienced only by their 'typical behaviour or ascribed pattern of motives' (Jehenson 1973, p.221). All social relationships with contemporaries are thus relationships with 'typified individuals', having a certain role or status. The Other becomes an object and emerges from the individual's inferences about these 'personal ideal types' related to some social or cultural context.

These distinctive relationships and the varying social contexts illustrate the different orders of reality that we experience. In the face of a "multi-faceted and ambiguous reality, one needs a conception, an idea of it. It stands between us and what we think is reality" (Greenfield 1978, p.95). Reality, which is created by our intentional consciousness, links the experiences of an outside world to the behaviour and intentions of Others in social contexts.

Experience

Human beings expect that their experience will reveal the nature of human existence and action. Language conveys the notion of experience as a unitary stream. Luckmann (1983) states that experience is "those events in the stream of consciousness which stand out as topics to which the self attends and which are memorable" (p.62). All experience, by definition, contributes to our knowledge creation. It is the "reflective glance of consciousness backwards which makes aspects of the stream discrete and well defined (Brewer 1984, p.743). The punctuated stream of conscious experience contributes to meaning and understanding.

The natural world itself possesses no intrinsic meaning structure, but in contrast the "social world is a world constituted by meaning"

(Filmer et al 1972, p.17). The everyday world is experienced and interpreted by its members, as an organised universe of meaning, which takes the form of a series of typifications of all the objects which constitute our physical and social world. A process of first-order and second-order constructions creates both meaning and a social world: they are a subjective and an intersubjective product of human activity constituted largely out of these taken-for-granted sets of meanings.

It is through the lived experiences of commonsense men that the sociologist gathers the raw data of investigation. Broadly, phenomenology aids the investigation of human experience and its objects.

To summarise, phenomenology contains a body of key concepts which define the structure and features of the inner world of conscious experience. The unbroken stream of human consciousness contacts the external world. Meaning and understanding arise out of the active and intentional focus on objects. An individual's life-world constitutes the ground of his human existence and is made comprehensible through the natural attitude and the process of typification. The social world achieves its meaning and relevance through intersubjective understanding and sharing common experiences of it. A Schutzian actor inhabits a world of multiple realities, diverse 'object worlds' with varying modes of attending to them. His world has to do with commonsense, language and pragmatic action. [7]

The phenomenological method

Phenomenology attempts to study human experience, it is also a philosophy and an approach. A characteristic feature of the phenomenological method is that it is a process of inquiry whereby assumptions regarding the concept of a person, the nature of the curriculum and views of knowledge, are constantly pushed to the surface, wherein they can be examined and reflectively clarified (Hultgren 1982).

Van Manen (1979) provides a summary of the overall approach as follows:

"The challenge for phenomenology is to make available, through a reflective use of method and description, 'opportunities for seeing' through the surface structure of everyday life the ground structure of common educational phenomena and experiences ... It requires a repeated 'back to the things themselves' ... from simpler experiences to the pure phenomena." (pp.9-10)

The phenomenological approach is therefore an inductive, descriptive research method in which the researcher does not seek to validate any pre-selected theoretical framework or operational definition of the phenomena to be studied. Rogers (1983) maintains that an effective method of inquiry demands 'freedom from preconceptions', otherwise if we "carry those preconceptions into an inquiry, our results bear their weight" (p.67). Phenomenology and its underlying assumptions contrasts starkly with the accepted prescribed rules of empirical methodologies and their associated statistical analysis which purport to define the objectivity of events in terms of causal relationships. [8] A general critique of the basic assumptions of functionalism and its research methods has already been presented (chapter 2, pp.32-39). Deetz (1983) animates the general argument against the slavish adherence of these functionalist methodologies by saying that "modern phenomenology ... represents a radical shift in Western thought - a shift so fundamental that the assumed relations between man and the world and man and man are put into question for re-thinking" (p.1). It is in this spirit, that the phenomenological method pursues its excursus into the world of human experience.

The phenomenological researcher must 'suspend' or 'bracket' any personal presuppositions about the topic, to exclude his own stock of knowledge at hand so that the phenomenon being investigated is as it "truly appears or is experienced" (Omery 1983, p.50). The sole purpose is to examine what is given, not to relate the phenomena to anything else or go beyond it. Phenomenology as a whole can be understood as a methodological elaboration of its slogan 'returning to the things themselves' and with 'consciousness-of' (Atkinson 1972). As Morris (1977) concludes, the prime concern is to understand both the cognitive

and subjective perspectives of the individual who has the experience and its effect on that person's lived experience or behaviour.

In order to describe the total systematic structure of a lived experience, there are three essential operations which have to be carried out: first, the 'bracketing' of the investigator's own 'essential attitude'; second, the epoché or bracketing of the conscious experience; and third, the eidetic reduction to abstract the essences of the experience.

In the epoché, the investigator's 'essential attitude' is suspended so that he can apprehend the individual's life-world. One temporarily suspends all existing personal biases, beliefs, preconceptions or assumptions, in order to analyse the experience in its context of consciousness. Stevenson (1979) calls this "an open mind to all the possibilities" (p.60) so that a pure and unalloyed vision of what the objects 'essentially are' is maintained. Epoché is the essential first step to opening up the world of meaning of things and to recognise and examine the mental acts by which objects are perceived in consciousness and how they are experienced.

The idea of 'bracketing' the conscious experience, is an attempt to keep out the external presuppositions which would influence the identification and description of the themes (invariants) of an individual's perceptions. The subsequent analysis of the noema (what of experience) and the noesis (how of experience) provides the noetic correlates of the emergent themes in which the objective statements are paired with their subjective reflections. Ihde (1977) conceptualises this descriptive analysis as beginning with **what** appears, and then moves reflectively to **how** it appears in consciousness.

The eidetic reduction is the process of abstracting the essences from consciousness or experience. 'Eidos' means an idea or form (essence) which Husserl designated as universal features. It is the act which leads from the concrete expression of a particular phenomenon to the universal 'pure' essence of it. The process of eidetic reduction goes beyond, behind or underneath, the conventional patterns and structures of thought and action in order to locate their common grounds. To

describe "the essence of any noema or noesis stands as the central aim of this reduction" (Phillipson 1972, p.129). It is accomplished through intuition and reflection and furnishes the *why* of experience (Sanders 1982).

In order to extract the 'essence' of an experience, the technique of 'imaginative free variation' is used. This procedure consists of reflecting on the constituent parts of the experience - cognitive, affective and conative - by systematically 'imagining' each part as present or absent in the experience. By contextual comparison and elimination, one is able to reduce the description to those parts that are essential for the existence of the conscious experience (Ianigan 1979). For example, the 'imaginative free variation' of a table: imagine it to be large or small; change colour; made of many materials; have four, three or one legs; be round, square or oblong in shape; be elevated or low; but it cannot be a cone-shaped object or a sphere. The presentation of "an elevated horizontal surface, then, is the 'essence' of a table" (Atkinson 1972, pp.267-268). For Brooks (1980) the eidetic reduction is analogous to the extraction of the attar of a rose - the attar is the 'essence' of the rose.

There are, then, obvious limits to which the investigator can freely vary the objects of conscious experience without loosing its 'necessary core' (Phillipson 1972) or, as Rogers (1983) states it, 'exceed its eidetic limit'. The objects of experience are considered to be the 'exemplars' and they become the 'essence or eidos' after the process of 'imaginative free variation'.

Sanders (1982) poses four basic questions that the phenomenological researcher has to answer:

1. How may the phenomenon or experience under investigation be described?
2. What are the invariants or themes emergent in those descriptions?
3. What are the subjective reflections of those themes?
4. What are the essences present in those themes and subjective reflections? (p.357)

The methods employed are designed to open up the realms of understanding in a graded manner. Successively, they represent (a) phenomena as phenomena, (b) the world itself as phenomena, and (c) even our own thinking ego as phenomena (Atkinson 1972). The social world becomes explored through an individual's first-order typifications and idealisations, the phenomena of this social world exists only in the meanings attributed to it. It is captured in Gadamer's (1979) notion that it is not simply a question of "defining a specific method, but rather, of recognising an entirely different notion of knowledge and truth" (p.13).

Chamberlain (1974) asserts that "there is no orthodox procedure which can be held up as the authoritative phenomenological method" (p.126) and reminds the researcher that the choice or modification of method will vary according to the particular phenomenon being researched and the thematic attention given to it. This echoes Mill's (1959) exhortation to sociologists to avoid the fetishism of method and technique when he said:

"Let every man be his own methodologist, let every man be his own theorist; let every theory and method again become part of the practice of a craft." (p.224)

Phenomenology allows such a degree of freedom to meet Mill's precept.

However, certain commonalities can be ascertained in the various phenomenological methods [9] (Omery 1983; Oiler 1982; Sanders 1982; Lynch-Sauer 1985; Van Manen 1978; Reinharz 1983 et al). The author's own 'method' will be detailed in the next chapter.

Basically, all methods begin by examining the individual products of human conscious experience (phenomena) and then move through to an analysis of how and why these meanings develop in the process of consciousness and experience. Omery (1983) charts the historical evolution of the phenomenological method in philosophy to the current range of phenomenological methods employed in the social sciences.

Van Manen (1978) and Lynch-Sauer (1985) describe and illustrate the phenomenological method of the 'Utrecht' School. The aim of this

method is to uncover the 'ground structures' of certain phenomena by analyses of situations (e.g. being in hospital, coping with an illness, teaching in a school, ...). Van Manen (1978) describes such situations as "any worldly complex of meanings in which a person finds himself and to which he simultaneously assigns meaning" (p.59). By analysing the descriptions of these experiences, the 'ground structures' of the situation are uncovered. The concept of a 'ground structure' is "an interpretive instance in an ongoing dialogue of interpretive method by which phenomenology is characterised" (p.54). The proponents of the Utrecht School say that the descriptions arising out of their analyses are 'practical' in the sense that they may contribute to a teacher's pedagogic orientation - insights, rather than useful prescriptions or technical rules.

Method in a phenomenological sense can only be approached in an indirect way, and certainly no single methodology exists (Hultgren 1982, p.54). This brings us full circle to a recapitulation of phenomenological research. It is 'knowingly' condensed in the following quotation:

"Phenomenology begins with experiences as people have them, consciously, though not always with awareness, in a world which is both personal (we are not alone) and intersubjective (with others) ... Intersubjective agreement is achieved by bringing out meanings so they can be recognised. Phenomenological research tries therefore to describe an experience from the point of view of the experiencer. Language is the tool of description and analysis. Finally, all experience exists in consciousness 'of' ... the royal road to understanding is paved with the irreducible, dialectical meaning of consciousness in the world. The trick in doing phenomenological research is to follow this royal road."

(Barritt et al 1979, p.8)

In concluding this chapter, the final section will briefly restate the *raison d'être* for a phenomenological research orientation as a platform to its further consideration in the next chapter (5). It is not

intended to rehearse the many debates which arise about the advantages/disadvantages of quantitative v. qualitative modes of inquiry, as these have already been extensively reviewed by many authors. [10] It is deemed more purposive to look at phenomenology as a mode of inquiry and as a research strategy.

Returning to the earlier analogy of maps and territories, Van Manen (1979) notes that "the map cannot be considered the territory simply because the map is a reflexive product of the map maker's invention ... [but that the aim] ... is to construct a good one by moving closer to the territory they study" (p.520). Phenomenology does just that. The map is not only represented by static contours but also by dynamic isobars. The researcher attempts to attain a degree of immersion in the organisational life-world of the individual and share "their experiential involvement and existential commitment to it" (Evered and Louis 1981, p.387).

This 'emic' (Morey and Luthans 1984) orientation [11] denotes a singular commitment to the informant's view of reality, his categories and meanings become centrally important. Such data is symbolic, contextually embedded, reflexive, and subscribes to meaningful interpretation and action. The material of research is therefore generated *in vivo* close to its point of origin. The people who are studied, have a "form of life, a culture that is their own, and if we wish to understand the behaviour ... we must first be able to both appreciate and describe their culture" (Van Manen 1979, p.522). We have to uncover the practices, meanings, languages and distinct patterns, which characterise their daily life experiences and interactions. The implicit, hidden organisational realities are multi-faceted, multi-sensory and rooted in the complexities of the subjective practices and sense-making in the organisation.

By becoming immersed in the ongoing stream of daily events and activities, the research comes closer to sharing and knowing the researched's world. Heidegger (1962) uses the term 'Dasein' which means 'being there'. Being-in-the-lived world means understanding the world from the individual's standpoint of his natural attitude. Too often in orthodox research, the research becomes detached and distanced

from the individual's life-world in that he (the researcher) uses the objectifying language of operational definitions and statistics to describe, explain and understand the motives of human beings. The behaviour which might not be rational, is too often explained as if it were. The lived experiences have little part to play in the synthetic rigor of these concrete methodologies.

Phenomenology does not present a new view, but is a new way of viewing the organisation, its processes and its actors. It gives primacy to the view expressed by Schutz when he said: "Our everyday world is ...intersubjective because we live in it as men amongst other men ... understanding others and being an object of understanding for others" (p.134).

As praxis, phenomenology operates with an investigative method that explains experience. Van Manen (1983) sees this "in our everyday practical concerns as parents, teachers, educators ..." (p.ii). The next chapter will detail the context in which the everyday issues and problems associated with NCD are variously experienced by its principle participants.

1. Phenomenology is mainly used as a name for a philosophical movement, the primary objective of which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol.14, p.210. The movement is associated with names such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty et al.

It was Alfred Schutz, developing the concept of the life-world from the philosophical work of Husserl, that firmly established phenomenology in sociology. For social phenomenology, the most characteristic and enduring disposition of human beings has to do with the fact that they live in a reality built out of their own subjective interpretation (Jehenson 1973, pp.219-220). Weber's concept of *Verstehen* - subjective interpretation of meaning, was used by Schutz as a basis for his theory of social action. To understand social action is to grasp the meaning which the actor gives to or bestows upon his action (see Hargreave's (1980) chapter, pp.215-225, in *Models of Man*, edits Chapman et al). Schutz believed that the cardinal problem for the social sciences is the study of the world of daily life, of commonsense reality that each individual shares with his fellow men in a taken-for-granted manner.

The general articles by Collins (1974), Dale (1973), Van Manen (1979, 1978) and Willis (1979) all directly relate phenomenology to education, as does the doctoral research by Brooks (1980), Hultgren (1982), Sanders (1980) and Stevenson (1979). Denton's (1974) ed. book, *Existentialism and Phenomenology in Education*, contains useful papers. General books by Filmer et al (1972), Ihde (1977), Luckmann (1978) ed., Natanson (1973, 1970), Psathas (1973) ed., Rogers (1983), Spiegelberg (1975) and Spurling (1977) et al give a grounding to the field.

Chapter 8 of Roger's (1983) *Sociology, Ethnomethodology and Experience*, gives a succinct argument for a phenomenological sociology.

2. Reification is the view that human products are entities which have an existence independent of man.
3. Branco (1981) asserts that there is substantial potential for confusion in how the term 'everyday life-world' is used by different authors and his paper attempts to clarify this area. Basic articles which deal with the concept, see Schutz, Luckmann and Berger in Luckmann (1978) ed., *Phenomenology and Sociology*.
4. Mary Roger's (1981) paper rigorously reviews and critically appraises the term 'taken-for-grantedness' from both a sociological and a phenomenological perspective.
5. The 'problem of intersubjectivity' can be posed as the following question: how can two or more actors share common experiences of the natural and social world and, relatedly, how can they communicate about them? (Heritage 1984, p.54). Schutz's basic answer is to say that human beings cannot have 'identical' experiences of anything, but they 'assume' that their experiences are similar and 'act' as if they were. The 'general thesis of reciprocal perspectives' contains two idealisations: (a) interchangeability of standpoints (change places with an individual, hence his 'here' becomes mine); and (b) congruency of the system of relevances (an assumption that 'we' interpret the common objects and their features in an identical manner). In essence, intersubjectivity is an achievement based on these two idealisations of a shared apprehension of an external world.

Eden et al (1981) explore the issues of intersubjectivity in the organisational context.

6. Mention has been made in the previous chapter (3) to the varying typologies of knowledge and the various bases upon which they are formulated. Phenomenology deals largely with "subjective stocks

of knowledge, built upon from experience" (Luckmann 1983, p.61). This is an appeal to Polanyi's (1966) 'theory of tacit knowledge', which itself borrows ideas from Gestalt psychology. Tacit knowledge is knowledge gained from experience and includes a multiple of 'inexpressible associations' (basically non-propositional) which can, nevertheless, give rise to a host of new meanings, ideas and applications. In other words, the 'theory of tacit knowledge' does not require things, objects or events to be empirically verifiable, it offers an alternative epistemology.

7. Having presented and described the basic concepts of phenomenology, like all theoretical structures, it is open to critical appraisal on many counts. The following is a selected critique of phenomenology for the reader: (all fully recorded in the bibliography) Armstrong (1981), Best (1975, 1973), Bogart (1977), Gorman (1975, 1975a), Hall (1977).
8. See chapter 8 in Bolton's (1979) ed. book, *Philosophical Problems in Psychology* for an interesting discussion of phenomenology and current psychological practices. Also, Valle et al (1978), *Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*. Also Hudson's (1972) *The Cult of the Fact*.
9. As noted in the text, there is not one single authoritative method. The articles by Atkinson (1972), Oiler (1982) and Sanders (1982) provide overviews of the general method and approach. Omery (1983) details and compares the steps of the phenomenological methods of Giorgi, Van Kaam and Spiegelberg. Lynch-Sauer (1985) uses the 'Utrecht' approach and includes a resumé of the criticisms of the phenomenological approach.

Van Manen (1978) gives an account of the Utrecht School and its approach to the analysis of life-world material. They employ three distinct but inter-related facets to their investigative studies. Briefly they (a) gather life-experience material, (b) then investigate the material for its descriptive-analytical forms or 'ground structures', and (c) make recommendations or orientations which subsequently formulate future practical action.

10. There are many books and articles which review the debates on quantitative v. qualitative research methods and issues. The following is a basic selection: Administrative Science Quarterly, December issue 1979 (subsequently published and edited by Van Manen (1983) *Qualitative Methodology*), Downey and Ireland (1979), Evered and Louis (1981), Hari Das (1983), Luthans and Davies (1982), Morgan and Smircich (1980), Myles (1979), Smith (1983) and Stone (1978).

Gareth Morgan's book (1983) ed., *Beyond Method*, is an excellent collection of papers illustrating the range of qualitative strategies that can be used. The recent interest in ethnography as a research framework is contained in Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) book, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*.

11. With a growing disenchantment of the mechanistic quantitative frameworks of research, social anthropology is contributing its research methods to the organisational field. The terms 'emic' and 'etic', borrowed from linguistic analysis, denote two orientations to research. The term 'emic' is ascribed to the 'informant's' view of reality. 'Etic' designates the orientation of the researcher and his categories which are then used to describe the subject's world.

CHAPTER 5

The Research, its Context and Procedures

Introduction

The previous chapter delineated the concepts of phenomenology and generalised the stages of its method. It is now germane to briefly restate for the reader the basic tenets of this thesis which are: the problematic nature of the NCD process (Chapter 1), the inadequacy of the functionalist perspective in organisational analysis (Chapter 2), the central importance of key substantive organisational elements and the need to explicate an understanding of NCD from the experiences of individuals engaged in the process (Chapter 3). Given these developing lines of argument, the objectives of this chapter are: (a) to review the salient factors which contextualise the NCD process; (b) to articulate a case for an interpretive strategy in the light of educational and organisational research; (c) to sufficiently detail the organisational locus; and (d) to describe the design and the procedural method employed. Collectively, these objectives will furnish the *raison d'être* of the research, its strategy and methodological procedure.

The sector of higher education covered by the Scottish Central Institutions [1] is both distinctive and diverse. With the advent of Robbins, the initial opportunity arose to convert college diplomas into first degrees within the C.N.A.A. framework. From this previously ordered progression of developing courses to meet predictable and clearly defined markets, the current scenario is characterised by a volatile and capricious demand behaviour. Institutions are now faced with these highly irregular pressures, created from the vicissitudes of political, economic, technological and other forces. These multiple and conflicting demands, placed upon an institution by such a diverse array of masters - political, academic, employers, professional, etc., have to be somehow reconciled with, in the design and creation of new courses. (Chapter 1 outlined this set of relationships.)

NCD, it is argued, is far from being a rational, mechanical or largely predictable process. The parameters and ground rules may, in some

areas, be clearly defined and bounded by S.E.D. and C.N.A.A., while in other areas they are less so. Clearly, staff can be faced with great ambiguity, diffuse syllabus selection criteria, conflicting definitions and interpretations of how to develop a degree - as Greenfield (1980) says, "organisations are essentially arbitrary definitions of reality woven in symbols and expressed in language" (p.44). All these features and forces, contextualise the NCD process and produce its underlying social complexity.

This piece of research attempts to make a contribution to what Clark (1984) calls an organisational perspective on higher education. As he says, it sends researchers in search of what academics do ... "allowing us to see the world through the eyes of the main actors" (p.106). In other words, it explores an important activity in the 'private life' of an educational organisation, namely new course development.

NCD is 'private', in the sense that it is an explicit intra-organisational process which is known intersubjectively to the individual member, but it is also known as part of his own subjective stock of knowledge. As a 'public' process, it can be distinguished on two counts. Firstly, it is a public on-going organisational discourse between the involved members, and secondly it takes the form of an organisational text, the series of documents produced during the process, for use by S.E.D., C.N.A.A. and, if required, professional bodies.

For the individual, these overlapping private and public worlds reflect the differing realms of awareness and knowledge of 'what' is going on and arises out of the interplay of being both an observer of, and participant in, the process. An awareness of, and knowledge of, the 'common' process (i.e. NCD) can only be differentially sustained by its participants. Organisations are variable meaning contexts, and therefore NCD will exist as varying levels of awareness, knowledge and interpretations - the 'public' exchanges in committees and the more 'private', ad hoc and informal sessions. These collectively constitute the multiple realities of NCD and exist as differential experiences and interpretations, some shared and agreed, some actively constructed, and others not shared. In sum, phenomenology is eminently suited to

explore these multiple life-worlds and educe how the members engaged in NCD construct their underlying meanings of this process.

Interpretive research and organisations

The preceding section has restated the basic assertion that the NCD process is grounded in a complex, dynamic and emergent social fabric. In exploring and describing these socially constructed multiple realities, it is explicitly hoped to contribute to what Mary Douglas (1982) calls an 'active voice' piece of research. For her, 'passive voice theories' include "all sociological and psychological approaches which imply a passive human object influenced by impersonal forces" (p.1), whereas "active voice language is appropriate for a phenomenological theory ... fully sociological in its intention ... recognising the active independent agency of the people we are studying" (p.9). The principle idea is to let the researched speak for themselves and not, as is common in some other forms of research, become abstract second-order constructs of the researcher. Phenomenology allows the researched and the researcher to share, temporarily, the same social world. [2] Morgan (1983) expresses this idea, seeing research as a conversation, a form of reflective discourse with the subject matter of the investigation.

Best's (1973) resumé of the three basic features of phenomenological sociology contains the central assertions of an 'active voice' strategy in research, which are:

- (a) its subject matter is found in the commonsense, taken-for-granted life-world of the natural attitude;
- (b) the significance of bodies of socially constructed and socially distributed knowledge;
- (c) the conception of man as being both subject and object, initiator and initiated, constructor of reality yet constructed by reality, both 'I' and 'me' ... (p.15).

Given the social complexity of organisational contexts (Chapter 3 reviewed the critical elements of this social world), the phenomenological perspectives allow us access to view the currency of everyday events and their meaning. The prime emphasis is on social, rather than structure, and NCD is regarded as an eminently social

activity. Becher (1984) cogently notes the existence of under-researched areas in higher education and argues that such research could contribute to a "more sophisticated awareness of the different varieties of academic enterprise and their associated functions ..." (p.195). An 'active voice' piece of research would acknowledge some of these gaps.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the dominance of functionalism in organisation theory is reflected in the research of educational organisations. Recent articles by Allison (1983), Bell (1980), Davies (1981), Willower (1982) and Tyler (1985) have collectively attempted to synthesise the perspectives and varying organisational models applied to education. The ascendent model and image of school as an organisation, is associated with the work of Weick (1976), Meyer and Rowan (1978) and Cohen, March and Olsen (1972). [3]

Turner (1977) notes that these models do subscribe to the non-rational aspects of organisational functioning and hence identify and acknowledge the social, as opposed to the purely rational elements in organisations. The ordinary business of organisational life is reflected in these variable social processes, they constitute what Boulding (1966) calls the 'folk images' of the individual. By tapping into these images, one can build up valid knowledge about the experienced reality of organisation events and practices as meaningfully lived by members (Allison 1983; Greenfield 1979; Hodgkinson 1978). This strategy would overcome the objectifying, predominantly rational, ascriptions assigned to human behaviour in organisational contexts.

Phenomenology would thus allow us to scrutinise the everyday organisational discourse created and shared by the members actively interpreting their daily events. It would capture the world of mundane experience, emphasising the subjectivity and immediacy of the meanings located in unique social contexts. In essence, NCD would be explored through the practitioner's understanding and experience of this activity.

In the past and currently, functionalism and its positivistic methods still dominates educational research. This is not to discount a voluminous and insightful body of research, but to note its ubiquitous methodological orientation and knowledge base. However, and especially in the secondary school sector, a recent thrust in educational research has been the adoption of ethnographic-type strategies. [4] The hallmark of such studies are, according to Hargreaves and Woods (1984), that it "brings to life by close observation and/or depth interview the internal workings of an institution or culture, to reveal the perspectives of its members ... to make explicit the routine and taken-for-granted features of institutional life ..." (p.1). As such, it shares a kindred concern with, and a descriptive orientation expressed by, phenomenology in its quest for knowledge and understanding. The 'why' of research is translated into the 'how' of its achievement.

To conclude the argument for this section [5], the impetus of interpretive approach is to generate data that is grounded in the participant's understanding of his context and is premised on the belief that people are "active participants in the making of experience" (Smircich 1983, p.161). The researcher is committed to the epistemological view of the primacy of human consciousness and meaningful lived experience as the source of knowledge. Each participant will bring to a situation a repertoire of behaviour, a system of meanings and knowledge to interpret and make sense of that situation, its events and people. Collectively these frameworks constitute the individual's stocks of knowledge used to construct his social reality - a world infused with subjectivity, meaning and intention.

NCD (the focus/setting) is, par excellence, a process of social interaction contained within a specific organisation (context) in which a series of on-going daily events are noticed, recorded, checked, exchanged, and all results in changes to the phenomenological streams of consciousness of each actor. The organisation, its processes and environments, are the contexts for multiple sense-making. Phenomenology attests to unlock the door of these lived experiences.

Finally, Hultgren (1982) usefully summarises the basic assumptions of the interpretive paradigm which informs this research as follows:

1. **Social and cultural phenomena (including educational phenomena)** are qualitatively different from natural phenomena, i.e. they are person made.
 - (a) the qualities of individual persons are a product of each person's interaction with culture and society
 - (b) the intrinsic meaning of social phenomena develops in relation to how individuals preselect and pre-interpret commonsense constructs.

2. **Methods and techniques for investigation** necessarily differ from those used in the investigation of natural phenomena.
 - (a) the area of concern or unit of analysis is **meaning** rather than overt behaviour. It is necessary to retain the integrity of the phenomena (rather than distort it by imposing investigator's meaning). Observation requires entering into the frame of reference of the person or persons who are sharing, through dialogue and empathic sharing.
 - (b) validation procedures involve constructing meanings which are intersubjectively shared by the subject and investigator.

3. **The aim of interpretive science** is that of making sense out of everyday action. X
(p.72)

This framework is embodied in the stated aims of the research contained at the end of Chapter 1, pages 21 and 22.

The organisational locus and its participants

Having articulated an argument for an interpretive orientation to organisational research, the primary intention of this section is to provide the reader with a sufficient background description of, and contextual information about, the focal organisation in which the research was carried out. This background information will highlight certain germane points relating to the college - size, interdisciplinary X

and vocational nature of the degrees, structure, academic staff, rapid growth and constraints.

The organisation will be designated The College, to preserve its anonymity and to maintain the confidentiality and trust of those members who kindly participated, formally and informally, in the actual research. It is geographically situated in one of the principal Scottish cities and exists in a local higher education sector consisting of two universities and a sister Central Institution. Education has had a long tradition and association within the cultural milieu of the city and its proximate environment.

The College was initially established in the latter half of the 19th century and became a Scottish Central Institution at the beginning of this century. A new site was developed in the early 70's and a self-contained campus was built to house originally some 500 students. Growth over the subsequent years has resulted in a current student body of approximately 1,200 persons. The growth during the first ten years (1972-82) has been achieved in two main directions: (a) the progressive incorporation of local professional training schools, and (b) a general increase in the student numbers across the courses. Parallel with this expansion, there has been the collective upgrading of basic diplomas into unclassified C.N.A.A. degrees and also an extension in the range and levels of courses offered.

The initial phase of this exercise, and the avowed organisational policy, ensured an active commitment by staff to new curricular development experiences. "Course development would take place on a college basis rather than a departmental basis" and the "two main factors influencing this decision were the overall size ... and the interdisciplinary nature of our courses" (commentary on Focii Report 1984, p.4). This policy decision dates back to 1972 and still guides the exercise of raising unclassified degrees into future honours formulations.

The resulting courses mix, which has been developed over these years, is distinctive in its predominantly service-based professional/vocational orientation. This development strategy has allowed a

certain degree of freedom from direct and acute inter-college competition. However, course development must also accommodate to the changing and future modes of educational provision, namely distance, open, part-time, evening and possibly week-end.

If strategy is to remain flexible, it has to realistically work within the externally imposed dictates of the direct relationship to S.E.D. The S.E.D. can constantly manipulate the parameters which hedge the practical process of developing courses - financial control and cutbacks in real terms, freezing new staff appointments, changing SSR's ... Also, a plethora of external professional validating and examining boards bring their influence to bear, at present no less than 12 now affect the various courses offered. Finance and physical resources additionally impinge upon the realism of future course development plans. Staff is another crucial parameter.

Over the initial period (1972-82), during which diplomas were upgraded to degrees, the staff, a combination of non-graduates and graduates, were largely inexperienced in this work actively. Experience was gleaned through the direct involvement in developing the degrees and the subsequent exposure to the validating procedures. The learning process for staff was one in which academic expertise had to be translated into viable learning experiences for students and this exercise has, in the past, often proved a tortuous and troubled path. Submission refusals and re-submissions have borne testimony to this activity.

An appraisal of the current staff alerts the College to what is immediately available in terms of in-house expertise and also identifies where the gaps exist. Staff development has to be concomitant with new course development, otherwise in-built restrictions will occur and be self-perpetuating. For a small college (119 staff), imbalances will inevitably arise due to a combination of historical factors, to individual subject preferences, narrow specialisms, to the inability to release staff in certain areas, to the time-frame required to develop staff ... and the dictates of S.E.D. replacement/non-replacement vagaries. Where and how to develop staff

are important practical questions which often have to transgress the delicate relationship of individual v. college needs.

Inter-related to the manifest problems of staff development in any college, is that of research. The S.E.D. clearly see Central Institutions as "primarily teaching establishments and differ from the universities in this respect" (The Scottish Education System, S.E.D. 1979, section Research). C.N.A.A.'s expectation is expressed, "Council is convinced that research and other compatible activities are essential elements in the academic health of institutions ... expects institutions ... to ensure that a significant proportion of their staff ... are engaged in such activities." (C.N.A.A. Handbook 1985, p.325)

Clearly, potential and actual tensions can arise. With no established in-house tradition of research to build upon, the practical exercise is one of slowly building up a reputable research base and inculcating a research desire and attitude in those staff who previously have had no experience. For C.N.A.A.'s purpose, an honours degree proposal should amply demonstrate valid research reported in refereed journals by members of the proposed teaching team.

The fabric of NCD is thus interpenetrated by many types of theoretical and practical problems varying only in degree, intensity and importance. Resolution in one area is often compounded by the shifting and unpredictable nature of others, e.g. demand, finance, political policy, ... The dynamic and social nature of the intra-organisational, as well as the environmental contexts ensures that NCD can never be just a manageable and rational process. The College also colours the particular situation in terms of its history, its personalities, its culture and ideologies, its currently perceived exigencies or dictated priorities. X

The College context, consisting of 13 departments, 119 academic staff and 1,200 students, provides the single organisational field research setting. This context, multiple small departments, is the social and cultural milieu out of which the products of intersubjective work arise (i.e. NCD) and become known to its members. The above, briefly outlined pertinent characteristics, broadly define the 'working milieu' and some

of its associated realities. The research task is to demystify how this 'social situation' is differentially constructed and interpreted by those actively engaged in NCD. Exploring this sphere of educational experience should inform us about the process itself, albeit defined within this circumscribed organisational context.

As the intent is to provide understanding and increase our awareness of NCD, the bases for this is realised through the meaningful experiences of some of the principal participants engaged in the process. The following sections will provide the rationale and make explicit the assumptions behind the choice of subjects for this research.

Having been actively involved in a variety of new course proposals over the last 8 years, it is inevitable that in a small college certain individuals and their disciplinary areas tend to contribute with greater regularity than others, viz. Social Science, Management and Communication. By the nature of the types of degrees offered, mostly in the paramedical field, their academic bases are substantially built upon the Social Sciences and other contributing disciplines, like Science.

Size not only helps to condition the choice and frequency of disciplinary contribution, but also often tends to draw upon the same cadre of individuals to contribute their knowledge to differing course developments. This somewhat incestuous grouping of individuals has, collectively, invested many hundreds of hours over the years to the debates, arguments and conflicts which have arisen over a wide variety of issues surrounding NCD. The attempted crossings of subject and departmental boundaries has constituted an arena of educational experiences rich in myth, ritual and anecdote.

The choice of research individuals has, in one sense, been dictated by the size of the staff complement. But other criteria have equally prevailed. An attempt has been made to deliberately choose individuals who have had a range of curricular and organisational experiences in terms of their contribution, both to NCD and related academic committees (academic council, academic planning and research).

From an academic disciplinary view, their representativeness of 'pure' disciplines, like sociology and psychology, was balanced with those of 'hybrid or applied' disciplines, viz. Management, English Language and Literature. It was assumed that the varying epistemological traditions associated with these disciplines might affect the individual's perception and contribution of his subject area to NCD.

Over the years, the disparate philosophical and ideological orientations of the individuals have often found consistent and distinct articulation in the debates associated with NCD, e.g. on educational issues such as student learning and assessment, curricular content, student progress ... The traditional and the contemporary voices of education are contained in the selection of individuals. All the individuals have also had varying experiences in industry/commerce and/or other educational establishments.

The research group also reflects the more 'active voice' of the organisation in as much as they tend to seek out elected membership of the higher committees. The arena of academic council and its various committees is where power, advocacy and information interact to produce the political face of the organisation. Micro-politics, be they individuals, groups or departments, find this corporate platform to pursue and express their concerns. Incipient ideas for new courses require not only the logic of their case, but also influence if they are to survive and find favour.

Collectively, these criteria deliberately influenced the composition of a heterogeneous group of academics, greatly experienced in the various issues and problems associated with NCD. (See Appendix B, page 246, for a succinct biographical note on each participant in the research.) [6]

Design and procedure

Having described the features of the organisational context and defined the criteria upon which the research group was selected, this section turns to a consideration of the research design, its data gathering method and a description of how the data was analysed.

As has been asserted, phenomenology is basically concerned with the explication of human experience and actions. It aims to expose the fundamental elements which constitute an individual's experience (Stone 1978).

Giorgi (1975) has emphasised the following characteristics of phenomenological research: first, there is a fidelity to the phenomena as lived; second, the method respects the primacy of the life-world defined; third, through describing the phenomena as it is lived, phenomenology attempts to determine in a rigorous manner the structure of meanings inherent in the description of the phenomena; fourth, the expression of the lived phenomena is given from the subject's point of view and includes his context; lastly, the search for meaning emerges from the data of the subject's lived experiences.

With these general precepts in mind, a set of general research instructions were framed around the assumed critical axes of NCD. These are diagrammatically represented below.

Principal Dimensions of the Research

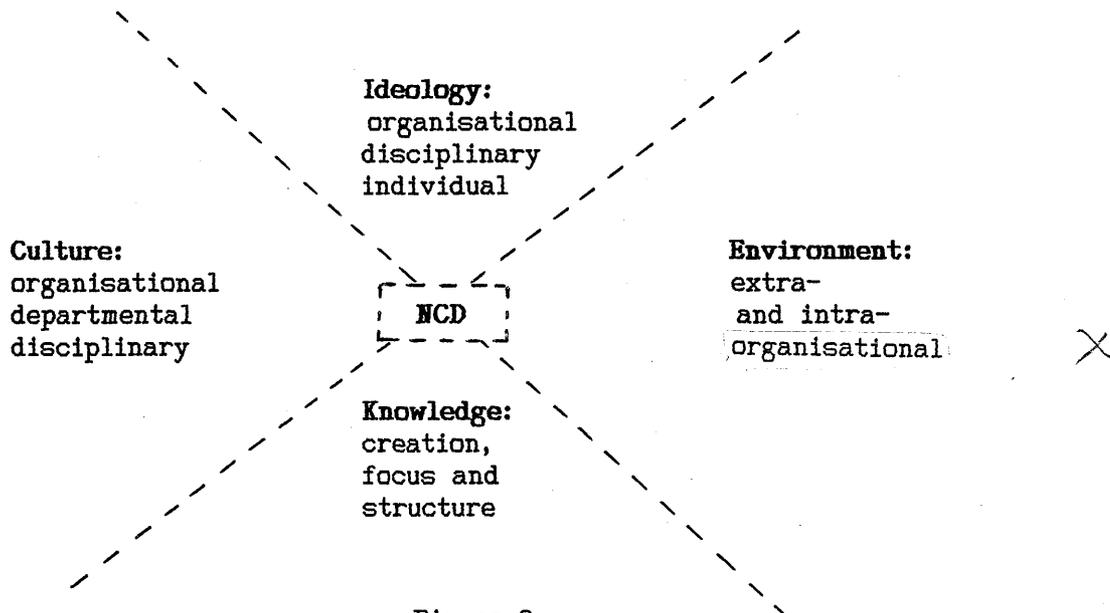


Figure 2

NCD is the focus of the reflective experiences around which members reconstruct their meanings and interpretations. (The dashed

intersection lines represent the open, dynamic and interpenetrating nature of the member constructs and have been compartmentalised only for analytical expediency.) The 'constructed social reality' has a compound existence and horizon.

A loose-leaf booklet was produced (see Appendix A, page 236) which contains a 'candidate note' outlining the **what** and **why** of the research and **how** it would be carried out. Each participant was invited to openly ask any question about the research or to clarify the general procedures prior to the recordings.

The booklet evolved out of a three person pre-test trial situation in which the general instructions, the wording and phrasing, the layout of the diagrams and the general format were refined and adjusted in the light of this practical experience. The 'work pages' emerged after it had been noticed that all the pre-trial participants jotted down aide-mémoires to themselves when recounting their experiences. This idea was consequently incorporated into the booklet as a 'doing' method of visually representing and subsequently exploring their own thoughts and ideas in the oral mode. [7]

The serial sets of instructions represented an attempt to identify to the participant the 'main areas' to be explored. To indicate a broad focus, while maintaining a sufficiently loose framework to recount the experiences, the underlying notion was to strive for this balance - to provide an outline map for the participant while allowing him the freedom to chart his own path, to self-define and detail its topography. [8]

The final format of the booklet served the following purposes: (a) it gave the individual a set of serial and coherent instructions about the theme of NCD; (b) that each page could be given out separately which allowed the individual a degree of self-pacing and control; (c) it allowed the individual to operate in two information giving modes - oral and visual. The assumption was that these features would elicit extensive information from the subject while exercising a minimal direction from the investigator. It would aim to achieve Dexter's (1970) guidelines:

- (a) stressing the interviewee's definition of the situation;
- (b) encourage the interviewee to structure the content of the recording;
- (c) encourage the interviewee to structure what he regards as relevant. (p.5)

All the data was tape-recorded in the six individual sessions. Each participant was given 'control' of the machine by means of the on/off switch on the hand microphone, which allowed them to dictate as and when they actually recorded their experiences. It was again assumed that this aspect of self-control would facilitate the information gathering process.

The recording sessions all took place in a quiet undisturbed tutorial room within the college library, well removed from any distractions. The room was booked in advance, at a time convenient to each participant. The recording sessions lasted from a minimum of 55 minutes to a maximum of an hour and 20 minutes.

At the end of the session, I asked each person to immediately reflect upon their research experience. This experiential material should be of benefit to other investigators and help critically improve the research procedure in the future. A summary of their experiences is contained in Appendix I, page 338.

All the oral material produced in the six recording sessions has been transcribed into authentically reproduced type written protocols. Appendices C, D, E, F, G and H contain this material.

The gathered data reflects the following general properties: it is "symbolic, contextually embedded, cryptic and reflexive, standing for nothing so much as its readiness or stubbornness to yield to a meaningful interpretation and response" (Van Maanen 1979, p.521). The procedural task is to reveal its 'thick descriptions', its composition of underlying essences, and this was achieved by carrying out the following steps (Brooks 1980; Herrick 1977; Omery 1983; Sanders 1980; Valle et al 1978).

The task of the phenomenological description is to provide an understanding and increase our awareness of the meaning an experience has for those who have undergone it or lived through it (Hultgren 1982). This requires that we begin with the experience itself. In phenomenology, the term 'lived experience' is used to indicate that there are different 'spheres of experience' and this research explores these conscious worlds as reflexively recounted by the six college lecturers.

The procedural steps [9] which systematically examine these human experiences are presented here so that the reader can familiarise himself with the exhaustive and iterative process involved in getting the "phenomenon to reveal itself more completely than it does in ordinary meaning" (Squires 1978, p.110). Because the material was orally recorded, the first step of the process was greatly aided by re-listening to the tapes and noticing the speaker's self-imposed 'nuances' to his own comments. This provided an additional dimension which facilitated the initial identification of themes (invariants) from the written transcripts. The analysis subsequently proceeded as indicated below. X

- Step 1** Read all transcript protocols thoroughly in order to acquire a feel for them.
- Step 2** For each protocol, extract the significant statements or phrases which are directly relevant to the phenomena being studied, i.e. the various dimensions of NCD. Repetitions were eliminated. Highly specific statements are transposed into more general formulations.
- Step 3** Attempt to formulate the meaning of each significant statement (creative insight). Valle et al (1978) comments that "this is a precarious leap because, while moving beyond the protocol statements, the meanings he arrives at and formulates should never sever all connections with the original protocols" ... the formulations must "discover and illuminate those meanings hidden in the various contexts and horizons" (p.59).

- Step 4** Repeat the above for each protocol and organise the aggregate formulated meanings into 'clusters of themes' (invariants) for each dimension of NCD. As stated for step 3, the difficulties noted apply to an even greater extent in this step as one attempts to articulate themes **common** to all the participants' protocols for each dimension of NCD. The identified clusters of themes were referred back to the original protocols to **validate** them. At this point discrepancies may be noted among the various clusters. One has to accept that what may be "logically inexplicable, may be existentially real and valid" (Valle et al 1979, p.61) and hence must be incorporated.
- Step 5** The results from the previous steps were integrated into an 'exhaustive description' of the NCD experience.
- Step 6** The 'exhaustive description' of the NCD experience is then formulated into a 'statement of identification' of the fundamental structure of these experiences. This step was accomplished through reflection on the themes contained in the fundamental description and constitutes the final reduction of the data into its components, its essences.

The results of the analysis of the varying experiences of NCD are presented in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. [10]

Limitations of the study

This research is necessarily limited in its scope and implications by the choice of content and method. It is basically delimited to the NCD perceptions of a select group of college lecturers who were identified as being actively engaged in the process over many years and who were willing to participate in this study.

The data of this investigation is confined to the collection and phenomenological analysis of oral history interviews. The findings can only be interpreted in terms of the lecturers under investigation and which related to a specific college context. No generalisations can be made beyond the selected group and organisation concerned.

Summary

This chapter commenced with a restatement of the basic tenets of the thesis. It is now appropriate to present an overall précis of the underlying sets of assumptions which frame this piece of research:

- (a) NCD merits a holistic approach. As it is an organisational process, it is embedded in a social context, which is itself the focus of a wide range of inter-related phenomena external to its organisational locus. This research attempts to ground itself in the 'total social milieu' of an educational organisation.
- (b) The meaningful lived daily experiences of the organisational members is an area eminently worthy of research. It subscribes to the notion of an organisation which is socially constructed, interpreted and experienced as the result of the intersubjective negotiations of daily life. This process affords the basis of 'in vivo' data.
- (c) As education (broadly defined) is a human social practice, it becomes subject to the conscious and unconscious action of its participants. NCD is the process of creating new educational programmes designed to meet some aim or objective. The process is socially and culturally complex and in this research it is treated as problematic. Insights about the process will be explicated through a meaning-centred analysis of the participants' lived experiences.
- (d) Education, per se, is imbued with culture and ideology. NCD will reflect these societal processes through the selection of knowledge areas defined within academic disciplinary boundaries. Participants in NCD will generally subscribe to these culturally defined meanings of their subject area.
- (e) This research is a detailed study of NCD within a single educational organisation. It is primarily concerned to accurately describe the experiences of those engaged in this process, and hence the investigator makes no a priori assumptions about what he may find in the location. Phenomenology provides the

theoretical framework for this investigation and guides the methodology.

- (f) The researcher has attempted to adopt the role of the 'total stranger' in the setting, to observe and record events, people and contexts from this perspective and evoke an intellectual capacity to sufficiently distance himself from the subsequent analysis.

Finally, the author has consciously chosen a research project which reflects not only his own professional teaching concern (organisational studies), but also his preferred intellectual stance to this area. The active involvement in this research allows a central place for oneself in the unfolding process of inquiry. [11] Mooney (1975) states it in these words:

"Research is a personal venture which, quite aside from its social benefits, is worth doing for its direct contribution to one's self-realisation" (p.176)

coupled to a long realisation that, within a phenomenological perspective, there can be no single and correct 'reading' of the external world, nor preconceived and objective base to the understanding of human knowledge. Social reality is a transient, complex and constantly self-defining process, encompassing space, time, personal relations, nature, emotions and values.

Chapter 5 Notes

1. The diversity of the Scottish Central Institutions is reflected in the range of course provision - art, business, communication, drama, home economics, health service management, languages and exporting, nautical, nursing, physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapies, social work, etc.
2. Morgan (1983) reminds us that research is a process of 'engagement' in which the "researched and the researcher must be seen as part of a whole" (p.14) and seriously questions the idea that the researcher can remain objectively detached from the process. Van Maanen (1978) talks about the reader being invited to "collaborate in the construction of analytic descriptions" (p.59).
3. Weick's (1976) initial concept of 'loose coupling' is comparable with Meyer and Rowan's (1978) term 'decoupling' but they also identify the process of 'institutionalisation' in schools. Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972) description of 'organised anarchies' challenges the notion of a pervasive rationality in educational organisations.
4. Wilcox (1982) says that ethnography is first and foremost a "descriptive endeavour in which the researcher attempts accurately to describe and interpret the nature of social discourse among a group of people" (p.458). She identifies the cardinal tenets as follows: (a) set aside one's own preconceptions of what is going on and explore the setting as it is viewed and constructed by its participants; (b) attempt to make the familiar strange, the commonplace extraordinary, and question why it exists or takes place; (c) to understand the relationships between setting and its context; and finally (d) utilise one's knowledge of social theory to guide and inform one's observations (p.458). For further discussion, see Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). Delamont and Atkinson (1980) review the field.

5. The detailed arguments for the application of qualitative research to the study of complex organisations has been made by the following: Morgan and Smircich (1980); Evered and Louis (1981); Luthans and Davies (1982); Smith (1983); Morey and Luthans (1984) et al.
6. Sanders (1982) and others remind the potential researcher in phenomenology of a critical rule: "more subjects do not yield more information" (p.356). The aim is to engage in in-depth probing of a limited number of individuals which should provide a rich descriptive data base. In this study, six individuals (for all the stated selection criteria) were considered to be the maximum number required to produce sufficient information for analysis.
7. Only one person in the research group talked extemporaneously. The others tended to pause from time to time (stopping the recording), quietly reflect, jot down aide mémoires to themselves, and then recommence their monologue.
8. Engwall's (1983) research note examines the pros and cons of open and closed questions issue.
9. Phenomenological research examines human experience and from this examination, derives consensually validated knowledge. Reinharz (1983) sees this as an important transformation process involving five steps:
 - (1) A person's experience is transformed into actions and language that becomes available to him/her by virtue of a special interaction he/she has with another person(s). In this case the other is a phenomenological researcher who creates a situation or context in which the person's inchoate lived experience becomes available to him/her in language. That's the first transformation.
 - (2) The researcher transforms what he/she sees or hears into an understanding of the original experience. Because we can never experience another person's experience, we rely on data the subject produces about that experience, and we produce

from that our own understanding. That is the second transformation.

- (3) The researcher transforms this understanding into clarifying conceptual categories which he or she believes are the essence of the original experience. Without doing that, one is simply recording, and recording is not enough to produce understanding.
 - (4) The researcher transforms those conceptual categories that exist in his/her mind into some sort of written document (or other product such as a picture, poem) which captures what he/she has thought about the experience that the other person has talked about or expressed in some way. That's another transformation. In all these transformations, something can be lost and something gained.
 - (5) The audience of the researcher transforms this written document into an understanding which can function to clarify all the preceding steps and which can also clarify new experiences that the audience has. This is where the inductive principle leads. (pp.78-79)
10. As a relevant aside, Turner's (1981) article presents sound practical advice on handling qualitative data, in this case associated with the generation of grounded theory. Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) book *Field Research*, chapter 7.
 11. Both Marshall (1981) and Bailyn (1977) look at the 'personal' process in doing research. Martin (1981) sees it as a 'garbage can model' for the individual.

CHAPTER 6

Presentation and Analysis of Data: The Environment

Introduction

The presentation and analysis of the research data will be organised and standardised in this and the following three chapters. Each chapter corresponds to one of the four sub-sections of the research topic - new course development. (See Appendix A, page 236, for a copy of the research booklet and its sub-sections.)

To aid the reader, the format of presentation for each chapter of analysis will be uniform and as follows: (a) statements of the invariants of perceptions, which are the emergent themes from the perceptions of the subjects; (b) an analysis of these invariants; and (c) the essence of the findings. The final chapter of the thesis, chapter 10, will attempt to draw together the emergent themes and illustrate their interconnections, as well as point towards future research issues in the area of NCD.

The note at the end of this chapter will describe the standard reference notation to be used throughout the analysis so that the reader may quickly and accurately refer back to the original source material.

The first sub-section of the research, the environment or outside relationships of the college, was explored at two different levels. The first was designed to tap the general experiences of outside relationships, while the second aimed to provide a more focused experience. This chapter will address these two levels of the research in that order.

Invariants of Perception (general environment)

The environment perceived as a source of specific and functional resources.

The environment seen as an arena of social forces of variable impact.

The environment becomes focused through the practices of various organisations.

The perceived style of college-to-environment relationships.

Analysis of Invariants (general environment)

Source of specific and functional resources

Arising out of a set of individual and critical experiences of NCD, the environment becomes qualitatively distinctive. This can be illustrated within the context of a failed degree submission and the consequent intensive and purposeful relationships that were created.

Scott Hogg records:

"... that within the college no one really had any idea of what a communications degree really was ... there were a number of people outside who did have experience, who did have knowledge, who did have ideas ... get in touch with such people, speaking to them and learning from them and ripping off as much usable information as possible ..." (T5, p.311)

and goes on to note the experience, publications and general standing of these people in their academic fields.

This example shows how the environment was typed, records the specificity of the link and its functional use. The necessity for this external orientation has been stated, but is further justified:

"I didn't think that any of my colleagues had anything like this kind of stature ... virtually no publications ... were extremely difficult to work with ..." (T5, p.311)

The texture of the subsequent external experiences is expressed as follows:

"... the external relationships were much better ... they were generous with their knowledge, and very, very positive. They were

unfeelingly positive, totally unlike the internal college relationships ... The outside environment was tremendously stimulating, absolutely essential and far, far too small because of the pressure ..." (T5, p.311)

These quotations capture the individual sense of intellectual stimulation received from the exposure to the various experts in the field and contrasts vividly to those of his colleagues in their shared attempts to construct a degree.

Another example, drawn from the same context, is given by John Wilson who illustrates environmental specificity and use by focusing on C.N.A.A. board members:

"... whatever course we are developing ... (we have to) talk the same language as those people from whom we must seek approval ... gathering intelligence ... so that we know who we are talking to, what their interests are, what they have written, which conferences they are attending ... the worse thing in course development is to appear being very naive ..." (T4, p.294)

As a result of the failure of the first submission, the above strategy was put into practice:

"... we bumped into them (i.e. specific C.N.A.A. board members) ... in an environment which they had determined ... when it came to a visit ... enabled us, we thought, to register with them as familiar faces ... people they had seen around ... as part of their scene legitimately ..." (T4, p.295)

For Wilson, the environment is typified on a political basis. As he says:

"I think that course development has to be gone about in a fairly political way ..." (T4, p.295)

Both examples give the strong impression of a calculated assessment and a clinical and practical intervention in the specifics of the college's environment. Initially activated out of the spur of failure, the proactive search and use of the environment served to meet different ends. Firstly, the environment provides the information

resource necessary to close the academic knowledge gap required for course content. Secondly, the environment is a valuable source of influential people who potentially can be persuaded to validate 'our' academic credence in their field. Expediently, the two needs are supplied by the same group of people.

In contrast, a more general experience of the outside environment as a resource supplier is contained in a diffuse awareness of new and emergent categories of students. Livingstone sees the unemployed and housewives as useful resources due to:

"... there is going to be a drop in the number of 18 year olds ... getting more mature students ..." (T2, p.262)

with the resultant implications that this will undoubtedly have for NCD:

"... means getting away from the full-time model towards part-time education ... developing a new style of courses which are part-time, evenings, Summer holidays ..." (T2, p.263)

But for Wilson, the immediate concern is more with current 'student qualifications and aspirations', such that:

"... we develop a course which is likely to have relevance in terms of potential students' aspirations ... something built into the course that they feel is worthwhile ... and match ... their likely qualifications ..." (T4, p.294)

The environment, as a source of resources, would seem to take on qualitatively different characteristics depending upon the degree of urgency experienced by the various individuals. The strength of focus or awareness reflects the time span in course development, from urgent practicalities for resubmission purposes, curricular relevance, to longer term trends and potential areas of development.

Arena of social forces

The nature of the social forces experienced varies in terms of time and the implications they may have for NCD.

Livingstone sees both immediate and near future consequences. The 'now' arises out of the context of a course review and identifies various concerns:

"... a radical review ... nobody in the college has a clear idea of the way Home Economics should be going ... big development in schools, Munn and Dunning, the 16-18 Action Plan ... radically affecting school curriculum ... no great debate (i.e. within the college) or bring in any outside people who can feed into this course review ..." (T2, p.263)

The future, as previously noted, was expressed by Livingstone in terms of new categories of students requiring different attendance modes. As far as the patterns of education in the future is concerned, he says:

"I think we have to get very much more into the area of continuing education ..." (T2, p.263)

These varying concerns share a common underlying realisation. Degree planning has to accommodate to external influences, while the dictated changes in schools have implications for current degree content and may be more readily identifiable. But degree content will also be influenced by the future, if yet somewhat ambiguous and unspecified, like the demands and needs of new student categories. Livingstone sees the clear need to involve others outwith the college in the definition of future course content.

In a more indirect acknowledgement of these underlying change constructions, Strachan makes a much more basic and fundamental point. For NCD, he says:

"... in terms of new course development work I sometimes wonder, and again this is my own perception, to what extent are we actually responding to genuine assessed needs of adults and individuals within our community, and to what extent we're really concerned with survival ..." (T3, p.280)

and goes on to further reflect that survival seems to take precedence over academic ambitions. Paradoxically, survival demands an informed and sensitive 'reading' of the environment and the possible future social trends that might affect NCD.

Practices of various organisations

Mention has already been made of a direct but unofficial and informal engagement with one critical organisation, namely C.N.A.A.

A prior organisation, prior in the sense of the more frequent interactions that it has with the college, is the S.E.D. In terms of its link to NCD, MacGregor sees the following issue:

"It would appear that colleges have a licence to indulge in the development of new courses at an early stage, and then it would appear to be told by the S.E.D. that the college may not get involved in this kind of work ... the S.E.D. sits ... some kind of bureaucratic fence ... instead of entering into an agreement with a particular college or sharing an involvement in the overall organisational planning ..." (T1, p.250)

The experienced dilemma for the new course developer is 'how' to know what kind of course would be acceptable to the S.E.D. An organisational ambiguity exists, in terms of a college's own sense of autonomy, to independently develop new courses based on its own environmental and academic assessments which are balanced against the knowledge of the constant and explicit threat of a potential S.E.D. veto to the proposal. The resolution, as proposed, gives up a degree of autonomy to enter into a N.C.D. partnership, otherwise the equivocality of course and market segment remains. This construction of an organisational practice can be contrasted to Wilson's attitude and view that external institutions themselves can be 'managed' to some extent.

The experience of other significant organisations who influence NCD, according to MacGregor:

"... act in a limiting way ... I believe that they do not think through enough the effects of the constraints they put on colleges in terms of syllabus development." (T1, p.250)

In essence, NCD is largely dictated by the parameters and preconditions laid down by all the 'authorising or validating bodies', and thus constitutes direct environmental influence. Here, specific organisational practices are the key construct in the environment.

Style of relationships

So far, the invariants of perception about the general college environment have illustrated the range of individual constructions and their underlying assumptions. A persistent theme, which variously emerged, was a perception that the college's environmental relationships were constrained and less than open.

The following selection of perceptions characteristically describe the nature of the relationships:

"I get the impression ... over the years ... been an unwillingness to encourage college-to-outside environment relationships ... have experienced a kind of resistance in senior management ... people outside ... except under fairly strict conditions and limitations ... college policy at the highest level ... to remain as a separate independent institution ... experience on a number of committees ... that whenever one suggests getting together with other organisations ... tremendous caution expressed by members on these committees and by senior management about the nature of the relationships and the kind of courses that might be developed ... creation of doubt and suspicion ... find courses stolen or students pinched ... perception of that sense around ..." (T3, p.279)

while another academic remarks upon the relationships as:

"... real problems ... with our outside relationships ... don't think we have sufficient relationships with the community ... should start to consider very carefully our outside relationships ... not been an important item of college policy ... academic council starting to think about it ... fairly slow manner ... relationships between college and the outside are very formalised, very standardised ..." (T2, p.262)

These quotations cogently capture the general concern about the internal style and influence that is exerted upon the college's external relationships. The overall sentiment is expressed in Livingstone's words, "very formalised, very standardised".

If the words and phrases reflect an overall guarded reluctance by the college's senior management to engage with the environment, except under controlled circumstances, what does individual experience reveal?

Strachan cites the current formal involvement of outside people contributing actively to the Physiotherapy degree planning process and this again contrasts with the example given by Hogg of the intensive but informal involvement with people in the communications field. At the individual-to-individual, and even the individual-to-committee level, the outside relationships exhibit a functional utility in their external contributions to NCD. Relationships at these levels can be either formally sanctioned or informally encouraged. It is, however, not a uniform practice.

Livingstone notes the lack of outside involvement in a Home Economics degree review while MacGregor generally states:

"... that not enough account is taken of what society ... individuals' ... and the employers' needs are ..." (T1, p.250)

which supports the tenor of an overall 'isolationist' stance to NCD.

The combined perceptions suggest that the college policy and its practices exhibited in formal committees, broadly defines and actively encourages a largely self-reliant philosophy with regard to the environmental linkages. This 'closed approach' tacitly implies a self-sufficiency to develop adequate and relevant course content - past experiences challenges this notion. Exchange or interaction, when it does take place, still bears the hallmark of Strachan's observation, 'under fairly strict conditions and limitations'.

If style conditions the extent of the interactions, it may also reduce the scope of the environmental classification process, and hence focuses down to what Wilson defines as "at least three components" (T4, p.294) - students, employers and the academic world. This constructs the environment on strictly functional and restrictive lines. These typifications are generally repeated in the other perceptions and tend to suggest a serious limit to the extent of the awareness and knowledge of the outside world.

Summary of Invariants (general environment)

The basic themes which have emerged from the perceptions of the general environment have arisen out of concrete experiences of NCD. These experiences have provided examples of the 'what' and 'how' the environment is constructed and is related to various course developments. The environment is seen and understood in terms of specific resources useful to both the organisation and individuals. The style of involvement is officially prescribed and formally regulated but it also allows for periodic informal engagements. The environment has functional utility but is circumscribed in scope.

Essence of the General Environment

The preceding sections have described the **noemas** (whats) of the general environment perceptions and the **noesis** (how) of its construction. The noetic analysis has explored the structure of the individual experiences of the environment. This section will present the 'essence' (the 'why' of the experience) or universal of the general environment.

The essence which underlies the structures of the environment is **autonomy**. This essence describes the basic ground structure of the college-to-environment link. The interpretations of the statements of senior management, the cautious activities of the formal committees engaged in course development, and the controlled and managed college interactions all provide evidence of this essence.

If the environment is perceived to potentially threaten the college's self-survival and self-direction - the dictates of authorising bodies, the vagaries of social and other forces, the ambiguity of information - the answer is to create a process of managing and isolating these stimuli. Many mechanisms can be employed in this process. For example, control exercised through college policy and formal committee practices, a conservative approach in responding to outside forces, a philosophy of self-reliance ...

Autonomy is both a desired end-state and is also a continuous everyday practical achievement. A degree of internal stability and direction prevails through the organisational practices which attempt to mediate

the on-going environmental influences. Autonomy is sustained by the entrenchment of traditional courses built upon those student categories attracted to them, while short-term goals are accommodated by innovatory initiatives and new student types. A balance is continually being achieved through this process.

But autonomy is also a method of constructing the various segments of the outside world and 'reading' the sectors in relation to NCD and the college's future strategy. If powerful voices and organisational practices reinforce the recurrent messages about events in the environment, challenge to this information is difficult to achieve. Unwillingness, doubt and suspicion, become the techniques of discrediting the value of alternative data and thus sustain the preferred interpretations. Necessity, however, does allow for uncharacteristic and crisis interventions into the environment, for example, when a submission fails. Success re-establishes the status quo of formalised and standardised relationships.

College autonomy cultivates a conservative approach to the assessment and clarification of the often ambiguous and contradictory information impinging upon the organisation. This approach also aids the definition of the parameters of attention and selection of the environmental data.

The essence of autonomy is that it provides a basic frame of reference from which others are taught to view the significant affairs of course development. It is a coded word in the organisational vocabulary and is used by senior management to sustain an image of the college's stance in relationship to outside affairs. As this image is sufficiently re-created at different formal levels of NCD work, it becomes a dominant and a prescribed view of college reality. By defining the college's role vis-à-vis the general environment, the environment then becomes interpreted from such a focus and NCD subsequently fits into this corporate but selective assessment. Autonomy is the central essence or universal of college-to-environment relationships.

Invariants of Perception (specific environment)

The S.E.D. is experienced in **political terms**, exercising power through the control and allocation of resources.

The C.N.A.A. exercises **academic influence** on course content and staff activities.

Professional bodies are instrumentally concerned with **practice and training** and the academic support of these functions.

The specific environment also consists of a heterogeneous assortment of significant individuals and groups. X

The internal college environment is differentiated into **senior management and formal committees**.

Conflicts arise out of formal organisational practices and individual concerns about NCD.

Analysis of Invariants (specific environment)

Political role of S.E.D.

Reference was made by MacGregor, in his perceptions of the general environment, about the 'bureaucratic fence' (T1, p.250) aspect of the S.E.D's approach to the earlier stages of NCD. The political role was also noted by him:

"The Government, because of its policy in regard to our sector of education and its effect on staff availability or indeed total resource availability, does influence what can be done within existing resources". (T1, p.251)

Others see a gradation in the political power spectrum, for instance, Wilson says:

"... the S.E.D. has the power to accept ... to further or to block any kind of course development ..." (T4, p.296)

but then presents his own experience of two occasions when acceptance of a proposal was a relatively easy process.

Livingstone records his thoughts about the S.E.D. as:

"... very important because it provides the funding ... don't think there is a need for a course then we don't get the go ahead ... seem to influence from a distance ... probably operates at the level of college management ... hear a lot about their influence, their policies ... role is greater than merely the provision of finance ... decide which courses will get off the ground and which won't." (T2, p.264)

MacGilvrary sees the S.E.D. as a 'veto' organisation:

"... increasing influence and a much more powerful influence than perhaps they did several years ago ... influence ... concerned with two factors ... will the new course as proposed require any increase in resources ... S.E.D. are much more concerned now with employment opportunities and employment potential for the new course ... are subjecting courses to much more rigorous assessment ... beginning to pay much more attention to syllabus content ... and evaluating how these syllabuses would ... contribute to employment opportunities" (T6, p.325)

and notes the extension to their previous role in the course approval process.

For Strachan, the importance of the way that Government policy currently operates is reflected in S.E.D. practices:

"... if we were interested in developing honours degrees or postgraduate degrees ... the S.E.D. view is that we would not be encouraged to do this simply because of the financial implications ... other educational development going on ... continuing education in the adult sector ... could feed new course developments ... S.E.D. action does have quite a considerable effect ... quite often individuals are blocked ... because their ideas don't fit comfortably into the bigger scene." (T3, p.282)

Hogg sees the key organisation as undoubtedly being the S.E.D. but often, for contradictory reasons,

"... they have a terrifying amount of power and to my mind no intellectual credence whatsoever ... are under pressure

(themselves) to look and see whether course should continue (i.e. like Communication Studies) ... make assessments ... less, I suspect, on academic grounds than on numbers and educational politics in a very narrow sense of where grants go ... they make me extremely nervous ... suffer from tremendous inertia ... harder to shift courses ... they (i.e. S.E.D.) obviously are absolutely crucial ... confirmed in my subsequent experience of two other courses which were killed ..." (T5, p. 312)

All see the S.E.D. as being an organisation of great significance in the specific environment. A central construction is its role in applying the edicts of government educational policy. This is seen as an ever increasing rigor in the assessment of the initial college course proposals, both in terms of resource implications (primarily financial) and the courses' contribution to employment opportunities.

The S.E.D. is seen to wield an absolute kind of power - power to 'kill off' courses it considers not to be viable for various reasons, and to arbitrate on those that will receive approval to proceed on to the C.N.A.A. As both MacGregor and Hogg note, the difficulty is to know what criteria are being applied at any given time. If the S.E.D. will not guide, however informally, the direction of a college's new course development, then a power game is being played in which only one side is ever sure of which rules apply. The direct implications for NCD are several - what market area to develop, the internal expertise available to create the course content, how to present the case, gather reliable and acceptable data ... - the entire enterprise from a college-to-S.E.D. perspective, thus remains a highly speculative process in the light of the experienced practices of S.E.D. Overall, the common perceptions about the S.E.D. remain largely negative about its role and current practices.

Academic influences of C.N.A.A.

This is another major and singularly influential organisation to NCD. Its direct importance is adjudged in two spheres, the academic content of a syllabus and the related academic credibility and activities of those members of staff who will teach the syllabus.

Hogg sees this institution in the following terms:

"... they (i.e. C.N.A.A.) are as positive as the S.E.D. are negative ... ask a lot of the right kinds of questions via a lot of the right kind of people, in the right way ... tend to be tremendously traditional, e.g. lectures and seminars ... whereas new teaching methods (would receive scrutiny) ... I have a tremendous respect for (particular board) ... facing a kind of pressure ... more utilitarian ... would be unfortunate ... hopefully they will resist ... help us to improve the quality of the teaching and lead us on in ways to develop." (T5, p.312)

C.N.A.A. is seen as a personal stimulant to ideas about teaching and syllabus development and also as an on-going kind of working partnership.

Strachan sees the C.N.A.A. to be "less stringent in some ways" (T3, p.283) in comparison to some of the professional bodies, but does agree that we are required to meet certain academic standards. In contrast, MacGilvrary says:

"... C.N.A.A. is probably the organisation that has most influence ... power of approval or veto ... always be seen as the major hurdle that degree course planning initiatives have got to get over ... fairly rigorous ... and increasing their rigor very very considerably ... with regard to research and staff development activities as well as with the academic content of a course ... looking increasingly for evidence that staff are academically lively ... goes a long way to making them accept what you write down as course content ... do see them as posing a major problem ... with regard to academic activity (i.e. research) for this college ... (T6, p.325)

A similar sentiment is expressed by MacGregor who says:

"... my perception is that they (i.e. C.N.A.A.) have become a very rigorous taskmaster, far more rigorous than other autonomous bodies, such as universities, have to go through in their NCD ...impact ... in terms of staff research, staff publications ... very limiting ... as to what can be done ... setting a tone for the

conduct of degree support ... that staff give to degrees ..."
(T1, p.250)

Wilson accords with the above quotations, he says:

"... C.N.A.A. has a very very much bigger impact (than S.E.D.) ... lay down very tight parameters for course design ... not a monolithic body ... understand the anatomy of individual boards ... what ideas are acceptable ... have a tremendous impact ... on what is eventually acceptable ... will substantially modify what the course team wishes to do ... individual boards have a tremendous impact ... in this institution (i.e. the college)." (T4, p.296)

Finally, Livingstone sees the influence of C.N.A.A. in terms of validation and their approved examiners in the college examination boards keeping a check on standards. As he says, they are much more involved at the academic 'coal face' and hence less remote in their practices.

For an institution relatively new in running C.N.A.A. courses (6 years +), the common perception is still one of an institution exercising demanding academic standards in course content and pushing for greater academic involvement in research. The orientation is one of academic standard-setting to people whose prior experience of academic work has been at a lower level. From a slight sense of defensive awe, to a positive sense of practical engagement, seems to capture the experiences of this invariant.

Practice and training

The third specific focus which emerged centred upon a collective grouping of assorted professional bodies - British Dietetic Association, various therapy institutions, and the National Board for Nursing etc. This focus reflects the nature of the many vocational links to the current range of degree courses.

For those more involved in this arena of course planning, the basic perceptions relate to several specific concerns, like 'standards', in this context, to the numbers of students that can be taught on a particular degree (e.g. 12 per year in Nursing), dictated hour

allocations in various subject areas, concerns with the 'safety to practise'.

Strachan sums up the practicalities of the professional bodies concerned and the resulting implications as being:

"... we have to pay particular attention to the professional bodies' requirements ... if we cannot meet ... the requirement, then we have no course to develop ... creates tensions ... between the external professional body making demands and the college staff who may wish to try something innovative ... have an impact at the point of planning ..." (T3, p.283)

The general experiences of planning vocational courses are that they have to meet first the training requirements of the professional body in question, then the academic component instrumentally underpins those stated requirements.

Assortment of individuals and groups

This last invariant of the external environment involves a range of experiences which illustrate how individuals variously construct the environment as a result of either specific events or general concerns.

At a general level of experience, Strachan reflectively ponders:

"... that within the college and the external organisations ... are in the business of trying to assess the market ... the needs of society ... what the community will bear ... to look at the extent to which individual staff who have ideas ... that these ideas fall on stoney ground ... their assessment ... does not fit with ... a professional body or S.E.D. officers ... it's a difficult area to get hard data ... it is a matter of opinion at the end of the day." (T3, p.284)

and addresses the central question of whose assessment carries weight - patently, the interpretation is with the dominant external sources of influence. However, despite the potency of the external influences, Livingstone's experience in course review matters, points to a contrary experience:

"... because of the way that Munn and Dunning operates ... we're going to have students ... taught Home Economics ... from a skills basis ... different from the traditional treatment we've given them ..." (T2, p.264)

and also, in the context of a piece of Ph.D. research, relevant to the Nursing degree:

"... our students are given a highly theoretical ... introduction to nursing ... a completed Ph.D. in Nursing Education ... showed that this type of course ... does very little to fit students for working in hospital ..." (T2, p.263)

It seems that, despite the scale of the external influence - one a major report and the other, a relevant piece of research to a current course - both had received little internal interest or effect on the respective courses.

Wilson is acutely aware, from the experience of using 'significant individuals', of those prominent academics who proved essential to 'successful course development':

"... we have relied very heavily on their advice and have been lucky. So their impact was overwhelming." (T4, p.298)

MacGilvrary reflects on past practices in researching the environment:

"... we've had a tendency to pay lip service to researching potential employers' attitudes ... sent out questionnaires ... not done too much with it ... an area where we've got to pay much more attention ... enable ... employers to have much greater say in the selection of materials, depth of treatment and the provision of practical opportunities ..." (T6, p.328)

proposes a close involvement and partnership with employers in course development. This idea, if practised, parallels the use by Wilson and Hogg of outside individuals, the difference being that they were involved only to create and approve course content and were not the end-users of students.

Other environmental influences impinge upon new courses:

"... given the pressure of C.N.A.A. towards research ... we have to ... publish in relevant journals ... means a different kind of thinking ... within this institution" (T5, p.314)

and Hogg also sees this continuing in two further directions, firstly by involving other institutions:

"... go to the Glasgow University Media Group ... a good thing, an exciting development ... it was radical work, it was stirring things up ... to tie us into that organisation ..." (T5, p.314)

which, for a newly established course, offered an infusion of stimulating inputs and exchange of people, research and ideas. But, there are also on-going and future concerns which become expressed in various environmental dialogues:

"... material forces ... those people who interpret demographics ... the climate of education ... endangering the education of students ... social change ... seen most vividly in Information Technology ... leads to interesting work in the near and long future ..." (T5, p.315)

Hogg is clearly aware of some of the deeper currents in the environment and their potential to bring about quite fundamental change to courses, both established and developing. A constant, yet fluid and dynamic situation prevails.

For each individual, the environment, when related to NCD, is sharply differentiated in their experiences. There are, however, common perceptions and agreements on certain shared features, e.g. S.E.D. and C.N.A.A., which differ only in the degree of commonality, but also, they show a marked difference in orientation to these organisations. Collectively, these invariants thus delineate the fine structure of the environment and how it is reflectively constructed for the individual, distinctively shaping his response to it.

Senior management and formal committees

For many, the outside world is reflected back and related to the 'internal' environment and processes of the college. The conscious experiences are firmly anchored to these internal practices.

NCD is the central remit of a formal course planning committee (CPC) and one pragmatic issue is:

"... the composition ... is crucial because it will determine whether or not an initiative is likely to be successful ... I am aware of instances in the college ... CPC itself has not had the ability or the imagination or the will in fact to capitalise on a favourable situation." (T4, p.298) X

let alone the quality of the working relationships, as experienced by Hogg, who asserted that the lack of intellectual credence and the problematic relationships made initial degree planning very difficult. But CPC's have also other sets of relationships which exhibit other dynamics:

"... college committee system and the CPC has to receive approval for its actions from various committees ... I think have ... a potentially blocking impact rather than a facilitating impact ... do represent another kind of a hurdle ..." (T4, p.298)

"... college committees aren't necessarily working as effectively as they might ..." (T3, p.282)

These comments present a general background notion of how committees are seen to perform. Another group, however, are seen to exercise influence in many directions and which can qualify the general tenor of how NCD is carried out; they are senior management.

"... feeling is that senior management have a considerable impact ... not so much in the creating of new ideas but in the determining the extent to which certain ideas would be backed, in others which will not ... perceived blocking of certain ideas ... of neutral apathy ... because these (ideas) do not fit in ... senior management see the way the college developing." (T3, p.282)

"... very important point here are the personality clashes that arise between heads of department ... be remarkably unenthusiastic about another head's proposal ... translates into obstruction as it gets further up the college into committees ... reluctance to release staff ... to support someone else's initiative ..."
(T4, p.299)

"As far as senior management is concerned, their impact is considerable ... has in fact taken over the role of the CPC ... acted as initiators ... been responsible for securing successful course development by compensating for the inadequacies of the formal CPC ... have five degree level courses running, I think, that senior management could be held responsible in a sense for, in quotes 'engineering three of those' ..."
(T4, p.299)

In terms of current influence, Wilson blames the recent and relative lack of success in NCD to the fact that senior management are no longer able to help course planners 'cut the corners' any more. For others, this would be seen as a highly controversial practice.

Conflicts

The internal formal processes of the college have reflected a variety of impacts on NCD. As has been alluded to in one of the previous quotations, conflict plays a part in course development. For instance, Strachan remarks that:

"... NCD comes from people's ideas ... who have got ideas, expertise, creativity, energy, a bit of luck ... one of the problems ... tension in a sense between the formal and the informal ..."
(T3, p.280)

and whom Wilson identifies as:

"... the initiators ... one or two people who have the vision to see what is required to be done and to have the energy to persuade the CPC to fall in with that vision and to pursue it to success."
(T4, p.298)

At the incipient stage of NCD, these people have to get acceptance of the idea at departmental level. Then, the departmental proposal goes

forward for consideration to the academic planning and development committee.

It is clearly the experience that, in this college, this assessment stage of the idea and its practical implications can create levels of conflict. Departmental course ambitions directly impinge upon the staff resources of other departments and call into play various strategies, either to back or block the furtherance of the course proposal. The initiator, it would seem, requires the not insubstantial support of a sufficient number of the senior managers to make the proposal or idea viable. Conflict is manifestly a product of this 'getting support' process and, in the past, has coloured the subsequent experiences of those who were exposed to these covert 'engineering' activities. Ideas, initially, are the contributions of individuals to NCD. They quickly, however, require the advocacy of some influential group who then have to acquire the human resources necessary to pursue and formalise the original idea into a course development process. Time, effort and micro-politics are the main ingredients.

Summary of Invariants (specific environment)

The specific environment invariants revolve around the differentiated perceptions of three principal spheres of external influence. The S.E.D. is experienced as operating on various levels of political constraint, the C.N.A.A. effects course content and staff academic affairs, the professional bodies in terms of training and practice. A heterogeneous collection of individuals, groups and material forces, further distinguishes the segments of an individual's perceptions of the specific environment. The internal college environment is portrayed in terms of senior management actions and formal committee processes, both of which contribute to elements of conflict in NCD.

Essence of the Specific Environment

The essence which structures the specific environment is control. Underlying the collective experiences is the basic realisation that the common ground structure is some aspect of control.

Although experienced in different forms, viz. political, academic, instrumental - all express its fundamental function. The impact and

direction of these forces of control are perceived of as having varying degrees of influence.

A general political control on NCD is seen as operating at different levels. It can be used by S.E.D. as an aegis to create a 'common' climate of understanding of educational policy and practice. A rationalising language creates an unambiguous preconditioning element which then inculcates a college's assessment process. Practices become evident only through the submission of a course proposal and these often exhibit a variable and expedient decisional process. What is allowed, what isn't allowed, or what might be allowed, remains in a constant state of doubt. Justification for acceptance or rejection can discretely mobilise a range of arguments - of academic relevance, of financial restriction or employment prospects ... This S.E.D. control is patently a direct one.

Equally direct in control is the C.N.A.A. The parameters of course design have to embody academic aims fulfilled through academic content. Content, its selection, coherence and, especially for interdisciplinary degrees, its integration pre-supposes a thorough knowledge of the state-of-the-art of one's own discipline. Research, in its many manifestations, is taken as the criteria of both knowledge of and relevant activity in an academic field. Academic control is therefore a linked process, directly affecting the prime human resource available for NCD.

The strictures imposed by the professional bodies emanate more out of practical and instrumental concerns with training. Nevertheless, they still constitute design control parameters and exercise enough rigor on the NCD process.

Intermediate between these direct control influences are individuals and groups which can be harnessed to mitigate positively against the extremes of the external demands. Research groups, eminent academics, provide support in the short-term, and also judicious solutions to the imposed immediate demands. This practical response buys time and expertise and importantly allows for a greater exercise in attempted

self-control over the external impositions. The authorising body influences are thus less negatively perceived.

The internal aspect of the NCD equation exhibits strong elements of micro-political control over the process at its various stages. Incipient ideas are not only resources but are owned. The ownership of an idea creates wider implications. It quickly becomes associated with and formalised into a departmental proposition which then requires active negotiation with other departments.

The image of 'course engineering' in some of the experiences reflects a departmental and a corporate control aspect to NCD. The conflicts experienced reinforces a picture of control arising out of the processes to secure advocacy and dictate the priorities of the resources required for a particular course. Other conflicts illustrate counter-control processes, when ideas do not receive a sufficient level of support.

The universal of control is varyingly reflected in the NCD process. It can be identified at many levels, individual, departmental and senior management, and occurs in different contexts. The degree of conflict which is generated throughout the process manifests the dynamics of internal college politics focused around issues of strategy, priorities and resources.

The internal nature of the control process has also to accommodate the external invited controls in NCD, some of which can be ambivalent in practice, i.e. S.E.D., while others have known direct implications. The essence of control is pervasive in the experience of the specific environmental elements.

In summary, this facet of the research - the environment and college relationships - has described the emergent constructions to be:

The environment -

- (a) source of specific and functional resources
- (b) an arena of social forces
- (c) focused through the practices of significant organisations
- (d) perceived against the style of college relationships

(e) defined by the influence of senior management practices and formal committee processes

(f) as conflicts between individuals and formal organisational practices

subsumed from the essences or universals of autonomy and control. Chapter 7 will now focus on the constructions and essences of the next research area, the academic task.

Chapter 6 Note

- (a) This note applies inclusively to Chapters 6-9. In order to safeguard the anonymity of those colleagues who voluntarily agreed to take part in this research, a series of pseudonyms was invented and attached to each person's transcript.
- (b) Each transcript, Appendices C-H, has been accurately reproduced from the recorded oral material.
- (c) Each transcript quoted in the text will be referred to by the following code: T1 (James MacGregor), T2 (Graeme Livingstone), etc.
- (d) Each quotation of original material from a transcript will carry an abbreviated notation, e.g. T2, p.263, which indicates Transcript 2, page 263.

Presentation and Analysis of Data: The Academic Task

As in the previous chapter, the format of presentation of the analysis will be adhered to. The focus of this analysis is the 'academic task' which itself will be addressed in the following subsections: (a) the academic discipline, (b) the implications it has for teaching and research, and lastly (c) what inter-relationships does the academic task have with other disciplines.

Invariants of Perception (academic discipline)

Academic discipline is seen as a largely irrelevant and restrictive base for NCD.

Academic discipline has an essentially ubiquitous and a practical contribution to all new degrees.

Academic discipline is subservient to the needs of the degree being planned.

Concern about the coherence and contribution of the academic discipline in NCD.

Analysis of Invariants (academic discipline)

Largely irrelevant and restrictive base

For two academics, sharing a common and at times intensive experience of NCD, the following perceptions were expressed about their relative academic disciplines:

"... don't think that I can claim to have an academic discipline in the conventional sense ... original discipline is so far behind me ... what I have done has really become irrelevant in my work ... have to be prepared ... to learn new skills or to develop new academic interests ... academic discipline as such can in fact be a barrier and a hindrance to course development ... people ... try to

cling to their discipline ... attempt to preserve disciplinary integrity ..." (T4, p.300)

This quotation from Wilson, reflects his experience of other academics and their academic task behaviour on an original and complex degree planning exercise. This first attempt failed. He goes on to note that in the second and successful submission,

"... many of the old disciplinary boundaries had actually to be broken down ..." (T4, p.300)

However, the identities and practices with an academic discipline still present potent problems:

"... we have difficulty because some of the course team are still wanting to teach the discipline ... rather than use their background understanding in order to teach a new field of study ... so the academic discipline ... certainly be a hindrance rather than a help in the development of a new course ... new courses are at the forefront and academic disciplines tend to be some way behind ... tendency for people, who say graduated twenty years ago, to want to teach what they themselves were taught and new courses are not really interested in that kind of thing ... do not benefit from that kind of attitude." (T4, p.300)

Arising out of the same context of NCD, Hogg's experiences and attitudes are succinctly stated:

"... I no longer see an academic discipline as a particularly sound basis. My academic discipline is English. I actually don't think that's an academic discipline. Universities disagree, I think it's about as much credence on phonology ... absolutely antediluvian approach working from academic subject areas ... nothing more than a departmental power juggernaut ..." (T5, p.316)

Essentially, both academics view themselves as being liberated from any prescriptive dictates of the knowledge base of their 'original disciplines'. They have, however, been exposed to the somewhat forceful and restrictive practices of other academics who patently see their contributions to a multidisciplinary degree (Communication Studies) more as a boundary protection and sustaining exercise.

It could be argued that Wilson and Hogg's basic concern, to transcend the potentially narrow traditions and perceptions of an academic discipline, are themselves founded in the hybrid and multidisciplinary nature of their own original subject areas - English and English Literature. Their orientations to and preferred styles of contribution to NCD, is also reflected by the type of degree that was being planned - Communication Studies. It bears a close structural affinity to and draws heavily upon, a rich cultural and literary tradition, which itself is dependent upon multidisciplinary perspectives. In a converse sense, the criticisms they level at traditional discipline strictures, can equally apply to the new structural coherence demanded of an emergent field of study.

Certainly, the above constructions presented in their experiences, capture the tensions between those who see NCD as a more 'open' structure where disciplines discard their protective boundary to those who see the exercise in less open and intrusive terms. In this specific planning context, the theoretical traditions and foundations of the academic discipline, greatly influenced the individual's orientation to the degree development process. Irrelevance and restriction may reflect a particular curricular stance, for others, the discipline base is still largely sacrosanct.

Ubiquitous and practical contributions

In contrast to the fundamental concern with a discipline's theoretical integrity, a relatively new discipline which itself depends upon elements of established subject areas, different concerns are expressed. Both management studies and computers have a mostly marginal role to offer the spectrum of vocational degrees. The latter area, however, does contain a future potential which awaits exploitation. At the present time, these subject areas present similar characteristics:

"... Statistics ... to develop an ability ... enable them to critically analyse data and present the results of that ... to allow them to critically interpret research papers ... the second area that I'm involved in ... Computer Appreciation ... should have an awareness of computers and information technology ... just a general education level ... the applications packages that are suitable for certain other students ..." (T6, p.330)

and for MacGregor:

"... management studies does contribute to some of the, or a lot of the existing courses ... we are very much vocationally orientated in our (degree) work that some appreciation of management in general is included ... an awareness across a wide variety of disciplines ... the other area ... a major contribution is in the development of new courses at post-degree and postgraduate level ..." (T1, p.253)

In both the above areas, there is a common feeling that some minimum background knowledge and awareness of the subjects are necessary in all degree formulations. The peripheral but practical contribution of these areas is acknowledged.

There are no deep concerns about the internal structure or coherence of the field. The NCD experiences relate to the simple utility of their fields, integrated into other more major areas. Both disciplines are accorded a descriptive status with little intellectual development other than providing some basic tools of analysis for the main subject areas in a degree. Only at postgraduate level does management studies hint at some weightier contribution.

Subservient to the needs of the degree

A recurrent invariant is the notion of the subservience of the academic discipline to the needs of the degree. Although the 'needs of the degree' are not specified themselves, they are explicitly referred to in a variety of degree planning experiences.

At a very general level, computers and management studies both express the invariant. Hogg states the 'needs of the course' in plain and unambiguous terms:

"... you need to look at the uses, the needs of the course and fill it from the academic discipline ..." (T5, p.315)

Strachan sees the service nature of the Social Science department as contextualising their contribution to the development of new degrees:

"... the first thing to be said is that our kinds of inputs ... is as a service department ... we are not developing new courses ...

which have as major aspects these three academic disciplines (i.e. sociology, psychology, social administration) ... not in the game ... of developing in that sense, pure degrees ... having said that, I think that there are major contributions that these three disciplines can, indeed do make ... to all new courses ... have to develop the discipline according to the needs and demands of the students ... on a particular course ... means two things ... one has to select the material from within a wide range ... there is competition for hours on any new course ... have to relate it to the vocational focus ... one would want to orientate the academic discipline ... needs of these groups ..." (T3, p.284)

Needs of the course become focused through student learning needs and experiences and are sufficiently pragmatic to warrant the selection of material from within a discipline. Subservience is also related to 'competition for hours' and presumably refers to the claims of other subject areas. The academic discipline becomes functionally orientated and related to the vocational thrust of the course and its students.

Livingstone, from the same department, distinguishes between two salient experiences in relation to the needs of the courses:

"... depends very much on what course you're talking about ... the Communication degree, I think the discipline contributes a great deal to that ... broke new ground ... both the sociological and psychological aspects of communication became central ... how we contribute to that degree, I think it was very important ..."

In contrast:

"... How we contribute to ... new professional courses is a different matter because the professions have their own traditions ... we will have a sort of subsidiary role in the development of these courses ..." (T2, p.266)

In essence, these extracted quotations illustrate the variety of perceptions that exist as to how the academic discipline is seen to contribute to NCD. Discipline identity and contribution seems to be strongly conditioned by the role ascribed to it by the host department designing the degree.

Concern about the coherence and contribution

This invariant stands as the extreme pole of the first one analysed in this chapter. Some academics argue for the tyranny of the discipline to be removed completely, seeing it as a serious impediment to the design of any new course. Others perceive their academic base in quite a different light:

"... I think that the academic disciplines that our department is concerned with are clearly central and important to ... new courses ... There are contributions that are vital really, across the board, in all our existing courses ... I would foresee developing and continuing in any new course ..." (T3, p.285)

For Strachan, Social Science has an unequivocal, significant and crucial contribution to offer to the college as a whole. Given the nature and vocational orientation of the majority of the courses, this department's academic contribution is deemed essential. However, this generalised self-perception of departmental affairs is counter-balanced and tempered by Livingstone's practical experiences:

"... professions ... staffed by non-graduates who lack experience in course planning ... have a certain sense of threat ... there's a lot of conflict goes on ... a lack of understanding ... I don't think that the professionals ... really have an understanding of the Social Sciences ... about education and not training ... that (ie. the disciplines) can be hacked about at will ... not realising the inter-connected nature of the staff ... can't hack pieces out of it ... of differences in perspectives ... I see us being kept at arms' length as much as possible ... wheeled in on the day when C.N.A.A. ... comes along ... then wheeled out again ..." (T2, p.266)

These cumulative experiences sharply contrast with the previous quotation but do relate to the previous two perceptions about academic relevance and restrictive practices.

Academic discipline coherence is central to this experience and is obviously a cardinal issue. The internal structure of the subject area represents a logic which becomes destroyed when its contribution to a degree syllabus is either poorly understood by other professionals or is perceived as being available as some form of discrete package

amenable to the quirks of course design. Clearly, for Livingstone, both circumstances are unacceptable. As such, this invariant stands in opposition to those who see disciplines in less holistic and cohesive terms.

Essence of the Academic Discipline

The essence of the academic discipline is integrity. All the invariants analysed in relation to this sub-section of the research collectively subscribe to the universal of integrity.

It can be demonstrated by looking at the subjective experiences of those who strongly criticised the entrenched view of the traditional academic discipline base. The core concern was to break down the knowledge structure and its purported unity. Disciplines achieve their identity and authority out of their recognised domain of knowledge. An emergent field, like Communication Studies, has to initially derive some base of knowledge whereby it can establish a form of recognition in an academic community. NCD is such an area, shares the broader concerns of the emergent field. If the knowledge base is a multidisciplinary one, new sets of relationships have to be demonstrated which will illuminate the field. By inter-relating the knowledge contributions of relevant disciplines, a new recombination produces the coherence for the subject area. A new unity is thus developed and demonstrates its subjects integrity.

For those academics initially exposed to and socialised into hybrid discipline areas, the value-shift in orientation is negligible. Constant adaptation and incorporation of knowledge from other disciplines assumes a natural progression. Likewise, NCD in a multi-disciplinary area should contain these underlying assumptions and expectations that other disciplines will frame their contributions from such a conceptual orientation. But traditional discipline integrity is a counter-force to the design and development of multi-disciplinary degrees.

The counter argument was echoed in the concern expressed in the experience of how professionals in the health field failed to recognise and understand the nature of the contributions from a coherent Social

Science discipline. Two sets of integrity were opposing each other, one from the health professionals themselves, the other from sociology. The dictates of professional course design impinged upon the perceived coherence of the contributing discipline. Conflicts arose out of the demands for subservience, from new areas of professional practice on a mature and authoritative academic discipline. The value-shift for the established academic area is of a greater magnitude in this case. X

Both examples illustrate the universal of integrity, albeit from opposite perspectives. The new knowledge, created out of a multi-disciplinary course as well as older established inter-relationships of conventional courses, simply constitutes distinctive knowledge bases and integrity of the subject material.

The process of NCD itself accommodates a degree of integrity, even from the most marginal subject contributions. Here, the peripheral area demonstrates either its practical applications or its relevance to some form of understanding necessary for the degree. A degree course, through its curriculum, manifests a knowledge integrity in its selection of subject material and its subsequent progressive conceptual development. As a result of professional concerns for practice and subject instrumentality or a multidisciplinary unity, the boundaries of disciplinary integrity become visible. The articulation of the various forms of integrity map out where the boundary is perceived to exist.

Invariants of Perceptions (teaching)

Teaching has to be allied to the needs of the course and its students.

Teaching in new areas offers great scope for development.

Analysis of Invariants (teaching)

Allied to the needs of the course and its students

All academics state the common and the basic need to relate their subject area to the course being taught.

MacGilvary, both in statistics and computers,

"... preparation of teaching material, the unearthing of suitable illustrative material ... trying to make it a live subject ... application packages that are suitable for certain groups of students ... have to make sure there is sufficient time allocated ... to be done properly, it's something that does require time ..."
(T6, p.331)

clearly attempts to make his material relevant and ensure that it is both practical and interesting. His concern for time neatly portrays his teaching orientation.

Still within the encompass of the need for relevance, Strachan sees other issues:

"... developing the curriculum in such a way that the teaching reflects the particular expertise that exists within our department ... if ... new course demands a cognitive emphasis in psychology ... a psychologist who has this orientation ... involved at that point ... same curriculum might demand ... social areas ... require a different teacher ... would want to put the best people forward at the appropriate time ... leads to questions of time-tabling ... sometimes difficult to do ... a feeling that in some areas, anybody can teach anything so long as they've got the book ..."
(T3, p.285)

In attempting to closely relate the appropriate staff with their subject area on a course, this creates practical problems in time-table allocations. Compromise is not seen as a totally adequate solution and 'anybody can teach anything' frames his basic objection to the prevailing suggestions on staff allocations.

Teaching methods are another aspect:

"... we're not actually developing sociologists or psychology graduates ... students don't perceive our subject inputs as being the primary core of the course ... teaching methods used have to reflect the need to link the input to the vocational orientation of the course ... lecturers ... have to know quite a deal about ... the course ... and should be involved in small group teaching ... seminar or tutorial work ..."
(T3, p.285)

The realisation is that, although the Social Sciences are important elements in a vocational course, the students have to be taught in such a manner that reinforces the relevance of the discipline to their primary study area. It is insufficient to merely articulate the subject relevance, it has to be demonstrated to the vocationally orientated student.

New areas offer great scope

If vocationally orientated new courses provide less opportunity to develop variety and offer scope in teaching, then an innovative and non-vocational course offers great potential:

"... involvement in new courses offers a great potential both for re-thinking teaching methods and improving them ... as far as Communication goes (i.e. the degree) ... the spin-off has definitely been in terms of teaching. We've all to question our methods, what we teach, how we teach it, and I believe that this has led ... to us probably becoming better teachers. It's certainly made the job more interesting ... get into areas we probably wouldn't probably got into before ... In terms of our teaching ... on other courses ... as long as these barriers between us and them exist ... be no great developments in teaching ..." (T2, p.267)

Livingstone's enthusiasm is also shared by Hogg:

"... If you take away the academic discipline base or bastardise the academic discipline base, this takes away a lot of the academic protection, it opens up many more fundamental challenges ... implicitly means that one goes towards team teaching ... teaching becomes more interdisciplinary, you need to rub off your own subject discipline against others and try to get it right, try to weld them together ..." (T5, p.315)

Both academics positively welcome the in-built challenges created by an innovative degree. With the discipline protection largely removed, both perceive the many benefits accruing to themselves - teaching becomes enriched, new areas are evolved, and amalgamation of ideas and subjects, etc. ...

This picture of interaction is, however, contrasted by Livingstone, to the entrenched status quo of subject provision in vocational degrees where practice and history condition the ambiance of involvement and constrain any potential for development. The two invariants contextualise the different development aspects of teaching. On the one hand, teaching is dictated by vocational demands to have a strong relevance focus, and on the other, is allowed to evolve relatively unfettered from its discipline base. The latter situation, for some, is a stimulating and rewarding break from the traditional path.

Invariants of Perceptions (research)

Staff research has to be related to and dictated by the course.

Conflicts in the perceptions of research areas and needs.

Analysis of Invariants (research)

Related to and dictated by the course

"... general view in our department ... that research work ... have some fairly clear link or direction in relation to the courses that ... we might be involved in ... research in our areas ... would be applied rather than pure ... the development of new courses ... demands our research base in anticipation of the development of that course rather than following it." (T3, p.286)

"... finding out ... what state the art is actually in the professional areas ... trying to identify areas ... an opportunity for the effective application ..." (T6, p.330)

"... individual lecturers ought to be conducting research in the interests of the course ... a significant number of people in the course team whose choices and decisions about what research to do, should really be conditioned by the courses upon which they are teaching." (T4, p.301)

The above sample of quotations generally expresses a common view on the relationship between individual research and their course teaching

commitments. For an institution like the college, with no previous or credible history of research, the thrust of research is directly driven to sustain each C.N.A.A. degree. This direction of commitment will ensure the active feed into the degree of fresh material, add credence to the lecturer's subject area and aid the future development of the course. Few in the college would disagree with this general policy. However, there do exist conflicts over other research matters. The analysis of the next invariant explores the nature of these issues.

Conflicts on research areas and needs

Hogg frames the issue:

"... you need to go towards interdisciplinary research ... research will tend to cross boundaries ... goes into a large number of areas, all of which are marked by the intersection of at least two or three disciplines." (T5, p.316)

and further highlights the implications for this type of research.

Strachan further comments on the practice of inter-departmental research and notes:

"... our department (i.e. Social Science), Management and Science are three departments that have people with considerable research experience and there is a very happy marriage between individuals within our department and members of other professional departments who perhaps don't have the same level of research background ... we've certainly tried to develop this approach in the past few years." (T3, p.286)

But practical combined research has proved problematic:

"... potential I don't think has been realised (i.e. Communication Studies) ... while the present restrictions which operate at college level, in terms of teaching hours, sabbaticals, this sort of thing ..." (T2, p.267)

Livingstone provides further evidence of past conflicts and the effect that these have had on research efforts:

"... don't think that being involved in courses like O.T. or Speech Therapy or Physio., given the current relationships between us and the professional, really leads to very much in the terms of

development in teaching or research. Where there's not the enthusiasm, where there's not this respect and co-operation ... If your area is not particularly valued ... if the relationships between you and the professionals are awkward, this doesn't really generate joint research." (T2, p.268)

His experience was crystalised further in one departmental context:

"... recently I went to a particular department and said I was thinking about doing a bit of research in their area. I was told I would get no support because what right have I, a Sociologist, to be delving into their department." (T2, p.268)

In MacGilvrary's case, he finds problems of a different kind:

"... a lack of awareness of the expertise ... leads to great difficulty in firming up or hardening of ideas ..." (T6, p.331)

Here, the research inter-relationships are blocked by the ignorance of the host department's knowledge of how to use and apply the expertise from another field. Perhaps it also relates to an earlier point, that the professionals lacked the research experience of other disciplines and that there is a slight defensiveness being exercised by them in terms of relationships. Departments are also territories.

The diverse experiences show that the unanimity expressed about course related research can be difficult to achieve in some degree areas. It could be suspected that these problematic areas are themselves contexts of past course development difficulties and that there has been an overspill of history which colours current attempts at research collaboration. Professionals are perceived by some academics as being the 'junior partners' and this is possibly communicated as such. At the same time, the professionals are attempting to exercise autonomy in their new degrees and create an independence away from the servicing departments. These interactions collectively affect the climate and practice for joint research ventures.

Invariants of Perceptions (subject inter-relationships)

Subject inter-relationships exist on a range of levels, from simple practical support to attempted theoretical integration.

Subject inter-relationships are largely problematic.

Analysis of Invariants (subject inter-relationships)

Range of levels

These subject areas which have a minor contribution to a degree course tend to have practical yet integrated relationships with other disciplines:

"... in Physiotherapy ... Management Studies which ... includes the teaching of research methodology and statistical support for research ... much inter-related with not only Physiotherapy itself but with the Information Technology ..." (T1, p.253)

While at postgraduate level, MacGregor sees a different level of inter-relationship:

"... takes on another meaning ... fundamentally one has to ensure that the behavioural sciences base for management is adequately built on ..." (T1, p.254)

For MacGilvrary, inter-relationships with other disciplines are experienced in broad practical terms:

"... Information Technology and Computer Appreciation ... has opportunity for application in almost any area that you care to mention ... for a professional or a practical nature ... improve the service offered ... there are so many opportunities for application ..." (T6, p.331)

The ubiquitous nature and broad level of the inter-relationships is further stated by Wilson:

"... the inter-relationships I think are considerable ... just about any course that I can imagine, there ought to be a contribution from the field of Communication Studies." (T4, p.301)

Moving away from the superficiality of some of the discipline inter-relationships, Livingstone sees the potential theoretical linkages:

"... strictly theoretical inter-relationships, they're obviously many ... in terms of Sociology and Psychology there is a great deal ... we often look at different aspects of the same thing, which is the human being ... between the social sciences ... the cultural studies people ... each area does illuminate the other ..."
(T2, p.268)

and also further gives examples of disciplines in science, like Biology, which could inter-relate in many ways. The potential certainly exists but, as he reflects, "how much you are allowed to" (T2, p.268) prefixes the next invariant which emerged out of the inter-relationship experiences.

Largely problematic

This theme identified itself basically out of the experiences of the Social Science academics. The service nature of their department and the academic subject areas guarantee an automatic selection process on any NCD programme in the college. The resulting wide experiences reflect this high level of practical involvement:

"... it depends on how meaningful these inter-relationships are in terms of the courses that are taught in this college ... a more open relationship in ... Home Economists or the nurses who try to use what we've got ... than there is ... English Literature or even cultural studies, there is a tendency to say 'look, this is ours, this is yours' ... each group ... have an identity problem ... how they see themselves in terms of their discipline and they feel that you're encroaching on their area ..."
(T2, p.269)

"... main inter-relationships come through in terms of the formal structure through sitting on course planning committees or groups ... our main perception of the nature ... because of comments I made earlier about, say, research background and the depth of knowledge that our staff must have of academic areas ... find particularly in professional areas ... a feeling of mild threat that we have a depth of knowledge which they do not share ... often is translated into defensive behaviour of various kinds

within the planning activity ... in other more classic disciplines ... there is quite a degree of respect and good relationships ... are able to understand the kinds of contributions ... our problems arise where the disciplines have been developed rather shambly ..." (T3, p.286)

Both academics perceive that their subject areas have great potential use in the evolving professional domains. The nub of the problem, according to Strachan, is the lack of academic maturity in the professional field - their 'depth of knowledge'. Relationships are based upon a distinctive knowledge contribution and its social dimension is expressed through specific persona. The perception of mild threat and the observation of defensive behaviour undoubtedly signal the problematic quality of these subject relationships. Other departments are seen as understanding equals in terms of their knowledge and research experiences. Newer professional subject areas and their staff would seem to be afforded a junior status in the academic working relationships.

Essence of Teaching, Research and Subject Inter-relationships

The unifying essence is relevance and it finds collective expression in all three areas - teaching, research and subject inter-relationships. Each area will be analysed in turn to demonstrate how it sustains the universal of relevance.

In teaching, a strong sense of relevance pervaded all the researched disciplines. Irrespective of the width or narrowness, depth or level, all teaching material contributed to some form of holistic relevance to the degree courses. The mechanism, which resulted in teaching relevance, varied in the way it operated. Marginal subject areas demonstrated their utility in practical support and applications for either specific areas or as a general but necessary subject understanding. Vocational degree areas require the academic support disciplines to underpin their practical training orientation. Relevance is obviously achieved through the highly selective process of judiciously choosing those disciplinary elements which are seen to contribute in a germane manner. The NCD process assists in this

preliminary 'screening subjects for relevance'. The many drafts and redrafts attest to this process.

Once the course runs, teaching from the service areas attempts to ensure that the relevance of their subjects is perceived by the students. The mechanism here is one of the teaching techniques adopted. These methods further relate the subject relevance to the core professional areas.

In a multidisciplinary degree, relevance becomes a new set of knowledge formulations. Some unifying theme provides a locus around which disciplines make selected and appropriate contributions. Here, the exercise is to open up the discipline base and subsequently create a new integrity out of elements from the many disciplines. The principle of subject relevance still applies.

The key teaching activity is to adapt established material and address it to new concepts and develop it around a new thematic centre. Although less bounded to the original knowledge base, teaching has to be still anchored to knowledge but in this case, it is an evolving one. Teaching not only transmits the new knowledge, but has to demonstrate that it also has new relevance to old issues and problems.

Equally, research has to tie into and feed the degree courses in a very functional way. All the invariants in this section provided evidence of this overall aim. The voices of conflict, which created the debates about the perceived needs and areas of research, sharpened the focus and definitions of research relevance.

The intersecting nature of either joint or multidisciplinary research highlights a host of basic difficulties associated with such efforts. The relevance issue in these areas of research is compounded and is not nearly so easily resolved. The ground structures of the research areas are poorly identified and necessitate careful consideration. The relevance factor becomes more ambiguous but is yet pursued, if less directly.

The subject inter-relationships are the boundary intersections of attempted or achieved relevance. A crude analogy illustrates: the interfacing pieces of a curricular jigsaw, the closer the fit between the pieces (i.e. subjects), the greater is the degree of assumed relevance. The lines of intersection map out the subject areas and 'depth' of relevance existing between them.

The conflicts and unresolved problems nurture the debates about what constitutes the acceptable levels of subject relevance to a course. In the newer developing professional areas, they desist the dominating influences of the older established disciplines and seek to attempt to make their own germane contributions. Subject autonomy and territorial claims continue to fuel the arguments and further entrenches the suspicion and doubt about the veracity of some of the professed relevance claims.

Summary of Chapter

The academic task was explored in three inter-related dimensions - the academic discipline itself, its teaching and research activities.

The experiences and reflections arose out of two basic degree planning contexts. The innovatory degree created a new set of disciplinary relationships. It called for new orientations in how disciplines were conceptualised, how their knowledge could be used, and how their historical inter-relationships with other traditional subject areas was largely artificial and irrelevant. New and radical relationships had to be formed. The implications forcefully impinged on knowledge, teaching and research. It was a largely traumatic and problematic experience.

The professional degree context contains elements of a more traditional approach to discipline integrity and its fundamental use. This is not to belie the fact that even conventional NCD creates problem areas. The direction and magnitude, however, rarely threaten the basic structure of disciplinary knowledge. The tensions more reflect a growing professional identity and autonomy.

Whether the degree was a hybrid formulation or more standard in its structure, the activities of teaching and research were remarkably

consonant in practice. Both were strongly orientated to and allied with the instrumental needs of the specific degree courses. These needs seem to transcend any discipline or individual requirements.

NCD, teaching and research do explore problems and conflicts. The range and depth vary, from issues of discipline coherence, practical application and subject relevance, lack of support in joint research, suspicion and doubt, to engineering course submissions. Collectively, these locii of concern illustrate the pragmatic, the fundamental and the political thrust of the debates. The experiences provide a rich texture to the NCD process at the individual level of understanding. The next chapter will now move the focus into the formal structure of the organisation - the context of the NCD process.

Presentation and Analysis of Data: Organisation Structure

This chapter has two prime objectives: to present the data and analysis on (a) academic goals and (b) formal organisation structure. A summary of the findings will be presented at the end of the chapter.

Invariants of Perception (academic goals)

Academic goals are primarily concerned with the upgrading of existing courses and the parallel development of staff and research.

Academic goals are secondary to institutional independence and survival.

Academic goals lack explicit direction and are vague.

Analysis of Invariants (academic goals)

Upgrading of existing courses/development of staff and research

The upgrading of the range of diploma courses which previously existed in the college has been seen as the primary goal over the last few years:

"... increase the academic level of the courses located in the college ... achieved by upgrading ... courses from diploma to degree level ... establishing degree courses ..." (T1, p.253)

"... NCD recently and currently is, has to do with, the upgrading the courses from diploma to degree level and then from ... ordinary degree level to honours degree level ..." (T4, p.302)

"... major academic goal ... that the college has had for the last ten years and will continue to have is to upgrade as many courses as possible to degree level ..." (T6, p.332)

These statements are representative of the basic thrust of the college's academic goals over the last few years. It has been a progressive, self-contained and uncontested exercise of converting diplomas into degree courses.

As a corollary to this action:

"... is an attempt to increase academic rigor, an attempt to increase academic respectability and also to promote research activity by staff in areas of relevance ..." (T6, p.332)

"... The raising of the standards as before, it also has an effect on research. We're beginning to think more seriously about appointing research assistants and are beginning to get a kind of reputation for some research activity ... identified as being a big weakness within this college for a long time now." (T4, p.302)

"... created the need for existing college staff to upgrade their inputs ... increased inputs from a research point of view ... increase in a number of people who have gone on to take higher degrees ... affected the appointment of new staff." (T1, p.253)

In the instance of explicit academic goals, NCD is largely a functional response - the attainment of C.N.A.A. validated degrees in a variety of vocational areas. The consequences of the increasing involvement of staff in this exercise are seen in their own personal academic development and initiation into related research activities. If these perceptions are illustrative of past practices and the common acknowledgement of academic goals, what are the current interpretations?

Secondary to institutional independence and survival

The answer to the above question is contained in the following perceptions which occur in this invariant:

"... some discrepancy between what are stated to be the academic goals overall of the college and ... if you like, the hidden goals which are not necessarily academic ... have heard expressed at senior management level ... the need for us to retain separate

identity and to survive into the 90s and beyond 2000 ... don't necessarily see that as (a) as an academic goal, nor (b) as necessarily a desirable goal ... held by those who do have very strong influence within the college ..." (T3, p.287)

"... probably this is too simplistic and naive but ... survival was the goal ... Survival has always been the name of the game ... there may have been some idealistic notion, producing good students and academic excellence ... because of survival ... greatly influences course development ... need new courses, we need an improved SSR ... prime goal here is not the standard of the course ... it is a new course ... allow us to survive ..." (T2, p.269)

"... the academic goals of the college are subordinate to the basic organisational goal which is simply to survive as an autonomous college ..." (T4, p.301)

These perceptions indicate a strong awareness of an orientation contained in a linked policy with regard to institutional autonomy and future survival. Senior management is seen as constructing an 'ethos' out of which subsequent NCD is conceived. NCD becomes part of, and is inextricably bound up with, wider concerns. At the same time, NCD is also an instrumental part of the demand-response cycle of external impositions and this potentially limits the future scope of possible developments.

The constructions of this invariant show a shift in the perceptions about academic goals. The singular prescriptions of past endeavours now becomes translated into a super-ordinate concern with self-identity and survival which almost transcends academic considerations. Wilson expresses it succinctly as:

"... the institutional goal is the end, the achievement of intermediate academic goals is a means to that end ..." (T4, p.302)

Lack explicit direction and are vague

At first sight, this invariant seems to stand in opposition to the previous one. Autonomy and survival offer direction and are explicit.

But Strachan in a prior quotation says "... nor as necessarily a desirable goal" and hints at the possibility of disputes about the utility of such goals. He also questions the meaning of academic goals and their basic method of achievement:

"... the pursuit of 'excellence' is one academic goal ... when one actually sees the operation of that in detail, it's very questionable whether we are in the pursuit of excellence or rather in the pursuit of maintaining student numbers which at times means that excellences ... perhaps are dropped." (T5, p.287)

He proceeds to argue that future goals can be pursued in the evolving continuing education field. He returns, however, to the 'hidden' aspects of goals which are really institutional and not academic in nature:

"... the effective use of the institution in terms of its human and physical dimensions ... using the buildings during summer ... developing summer schools ... would fit ... with the idea of short continuing education modules or courses ... maximise those resources. If one could call that an academic goal, then that is an academic goal. It seems to me rather muddying the ground between academic and institutional goals ..." (T3, p.288)

Others, like MacGregor and Hogg, experience great difficulty in explicating any stated academic goal and note the lack of informed discussion in this area.

"... I am not sure that I am 'off the cuff' fully aware of the overall academic goals of the college." (T1, p.253)

"... I wish I could perceive the overall academic goal of the college. It's totally imprisoned by practice and the new Vice-Principal has freed the possibility of actually discussing what academic goals might be and whether we should shoot for them ... it's very sad to say that I don't think the college has academic goals ... I think the climate has changed and is changing and we've a long way to go before we score any." (T5, p.316)

Acknowledging an awareness about a corporate survival orientation, Livingstone notes the conflictual elements which arise out of its pursuit and the reactions that can result:

"... management has the goal of college survival, obviously many departments have the goal of departmental survival. If these two things are compatible, I'm not quite sure. I can give an instance of where at Academic Council we were told we were to discuss overall college staffing ... looking in detail to the academic requirements of different departments. And when we tried to question whether a particular department needed as many new staff ... if in fact our department couldn't take over some of the teaching ... there was a very angry and violent outcry ... we were just trying to protect our own position ... there can be a conflict between college goals as defined by management and departmental goals ... the momentum seems obviously to protect your own ... for many people ... an understanding that we are in a changing and a competitive market ... there just might be a growing willingness or understanding that we have to work together ... I'm quite pessimistic about that ..." (T2, p.270)

Academic goals thus embody a range of perceptions, from the difficulty of extricating them from institutional goals, their imposition by management, the inbuilt protectionism by departments, to a somewhat ambiguous sense of direction. In sum, the past and relatively clear comprehension of academic goals is now juxtaposed to the present constructions and orientations of management and their contested implications.

Essence of Academic Goals

The essence of academic goals in intentionality. It is the universal structure which sustains the experiences.

Past experiences point to this essence of a generally non-disputed and rational approach to evolve each diploma into degree status. This programme is now complete. The academic goal in this instance was achieved through the successful validation of the degree submissions, the public accreditation of requisite academic standards and the continuing development of staff and research. NCD was the prime

vehicle of intentionality which harnessed and sufficiently unified during this period the institutional, departmental and individual efforts of drive and direction.

Towards the end of this programme, an internal degree initiative expediently exploited a gap in S.E.D. policy and was successfully validated by C.N.A.A. This was, in conventional college terms, an aberrant achievement of intentionality.

From a current perspective, intentionality is contested. Senior management combined with past practices has contrived to frame the context and content of intentionality. Autonomy and survival are compatible and powerful elements in a dominant vocabulary of intention. They structure the typifications or descriptions of a future scenario. Intentionality is now translated into a rational procedure of auditing the college's resources, human and physical, and the proposed future selective use of these resources. Institutional goals take on a means-end relationship to academic activities and are consistently sustained against the exigencies of the outside environment.

NCD is now seen in prescriptive terms. If its past activities were related unproblematically to existing diplomas, its future intentionality reflects a direct market orientation. Survival and autonomy become part of a new legitimating vocabulary used to shape its future role and direction. Rational academic planning and internal auditing are the technocratic forces used to define context and content of academic goals.

But futures are conditioned on judgments, factual as well as value based, and hence can be variously constructed and interpreted. They are arenas, as much of debate as they are of agreement. Intentionality hence should reflect these multiple realities and not only the imposed constructions of senior personnel. The *cri de coeur* of the experiences exhibit the need for debate and active participation in the definitions and agreement on intentionality. This universal reflects the basic element in the reality construction of academic goals.

Invariants of Perception (formal structure)

The formal structural arrangements of the college plays a pervasive role in NCD.

The formal structure is the locus for a variety of problems which hinder the NCD process.

Informal structural arrangements aid the NCD process.

Analysis of Invariants (formal structure)

Structural arrangements pervasive role

"... this particular college has developed a formal committee structure in overall terms and that our NCD has been put into the hands of committees, course development committees ..." (T1, p.253) X

"... the formal structure has a very important part to play in evolving new courses ... the Principal who said we had to change ... made us embark ... moving from primarily diplomas towards degrees ... the formal structures, if we include management, if we include Academic Council, Academic Planning, certainly pushed as much as possible the departments ... evolving new courses ... fit into the context of that formal declaration ... formal structure does play a very important role ... the formal structural influence is quite great ..." (T2, p.271)

"... the formal structure, here defined as both the management structure of principal, vice-principal ... heads of departments and so on and the committee structure that overlays that ... these structures ... have a very important role in evolving new courses ... if ideas ... don't get support within either the committee structure or within management ... the chances of them getting anywhere are very, very slim indeed ..." (T3, p.288)

Strachan further elaborates on other aspects of formal structure and its pervasive role by saying:

"... the formal structure, when it works well, for example staff development and research committees ... can be extremely supportive and helpful in the evolution of new courses ... provide the institutional settings in which the detailed work can take place ... one sees a blooming and a development of new courses that is very encouraging ... the formal structure is really a means ... ideas can then be developed into some kind of concrete reality ... The benefit of having an academic structure ... is that those who share certain disciplines and backgrounds tend to be together and this does create a synergistic effect in terms of ideas ... The formal structure itself is unlikely to produce those 'ideas to order' in some kind of way. I think if one pursued that line of reasoning ... would lead to a fairly sterile organisation."
(T3, p.289)

The structural web of committees inter-relate and affect the whole process of NCD. Livingstone and Strachan state the relationships and the need for such a system of committees and the varying roles accorded to them. Both also acknowledge the key part played by senior management in the NCD process. For Livingstone, the setting of a change tone which subsequently permeated the formal college structures and initiated the drive for new courses. Strachan notes the necessity for 'getting support' from senior management on these committees as being fundamentally important. Presumably, the process of obtaining support for an incipient new course idea is developed through the appraisal or screen mechanisms which internally assess its future viability.

New course ideas have to be processed within the formal structural arrangements, but Strachan makes the perceptive observation that the ideas emanate from individuals identified within departments and do not arise out of the structural processes themselves. For him, the individual is ascribed the crucial role of the initiator of new course ideas and organisational committees act as the formal facilitators to its subsequent development.

Formal structure is the locus of problems

If formal committees and management structures can be seen as generally aiding NCD, they nevertheless can equally be experienced as being highly problematic. The following constructions illustrate the types of problems which have been experienced in some practical NCD contexts.

"... The influence of formal structure fairly negative about this one because I've long had the feeling ... that Course Planning Committee ... reporting to Course Committees or Academic Scrutiny. I reckon they hinder the development ... amount of time that can be taken up in developing new courses ... a very lengthy process before a piece of paper can be prepared and accepted by the college as part of a document ..." (T6, p.333)

"... one key break which occurred ... was in fact the destruction of formal committees and that the energy and direction came from a forum which broke down the hierarchial organisation and got in some people who had some initiative, some drive, some energy, some ideas other than the dead wood which inhabits the heads of departments and many of the senior lecturer posts ... I think this college is a unique institution in the sheer deadness of its dead wood ... the formal structure is a serious drawback. It needs in many ways to break it ..." (T5, p.317)

"... formal structure in my view represents more of a hindrance to the process of evolving new courses rather than, rather than assisting it. The difficulty with the formal structure is that the formal structure is committee based ... individuals don't really feel responsibility ... course planning committees ... formally instituted ... composition is formally determined ..." (T4, p.302)

"... the organisation that we have at the moment, in terms of line management into departments, is often experienced by staff as being a limiting factor in the evolving of new courses and one has to work quite hard to cut across the boundaries that the departments tend to create ... some experience of developing new

courses which cut profoundly across the departmental structure ... Principal was very, very critical of this ... a haphazard way of developing new courses ... shows some of the tensions that exist ... those ... seeking to cut across these kinds of boundaries ... and those ... from a management point ... easier to control if people are held and controlled within their various departmental settings ..." (T3, p.288)

"... course development committees and therefore one has tended to get a representation across the disciplines ... because the committee seems to identify the areas in which input is required rather than perhaps the talent that individuals have ... So that the formal structure does influence the people who are involved in developing new courses ..." (T1, p.253)

The disadvantages of the formal structure are experienced in the inordinate length of time taken up in producing new course documentation, the idea that the NCD process is stultifying in terms of initiatives and energy, the lack of individual responsibility, the dictation of new course planning membership and the territoriality exercised by academic departments.

The experiences of structure centre around the perceived structural limitations which themselves impose various practical process strictures. The sense of prescribed inertia that formal structures convey is alluded to in the protracted time span to necessarily create new course documentation. This time imagery is also contained in Hogg's description, but in two contrasting ways. The 'dead wood' analogy suggests circumspect thinking and action, while 'drive and energy' conveys the opposite notion - creativity and action. Formal structure is seen as being synonymous with the former process, and hence structure has to be dismantled in order to allow the latter process to flourish.

The dictated membership of new course planning committees is seen to qualify the process in terms of the potential quality of a member's contribution and the propensity of some to abrogate their individual responsibilities. Both factors are considered to affect the process.

NCD is structurally affected by the departmental orientation. This form of structural limit, although previously noted for its synergistic effect on people and their ideas, now seems to contain the process at certain phases in new course development. The cameo example presented illustrates the perceived tensions.

Collectively, this invariant testifies to the negatively perceived attributes of formal structure. The previous invariant expressed the positive and apparently essential functional characteristics of structure necessary to sustain a NCD initiative.

Informal structure aids NCD

"... where individuals have ideas ... I think it is the informal preparation, the informal ground work ... the basic belief is that the secret of successful course development lies in having a nucleus of compatible energetic individuals with some imagination, some ability, who have the skill to push the idea ... when our first submission failed, we chose to move to a less formal arrangement ... recruited individuals informally on the basis of interest and willingness to participate ... able to tap the energies of people who had not been nominated formally by their heads of departments ... bulk of the planning ... in a much less formal forum and that did seem to achieve much more success ..."
(T4, p.302)

"... a forum to allow the kind of free ranging discussion without interfering too much with territories ... there has to be some breaking of the formal structure ... sanctioning from the top to make this work ... giving people their head ... to let loose a kind of structure which they (senior management) basically detest but which, to their credit, they allowed to run ... delivered much more than they expected."
(T5, p.317)

"... much more is achieved through working parties, working and meeting on an informal basis much more frequently and much more regularly ..."
(T6, p.333)

Here the experiences which had crystalised out of a failed submission clearly demonstrate all the characteristic problem areas associated with the formal course planning system as opposed to the benefits accrued from a more informal approach.

This new informal forum broke the conventional formal NCD practice. The experiences capture the sense of invigoration, interest and sheer dynamic of being able to harness the energies of committed individuals. The planning context now fostered a conducive *esprit de corps* which sustained its own independent structure. This situation was the exception, the formal course planning committee with all its dictations remains the rule.

Essence of the Formal Structure

The essence of the invariants of formal structure is **control**.

One aspect of this essence, is the formal structural experiences of control. It is exercised through the linked system of committees whose interdependence regulates the whole process of NCD. The initial approval of a new course proposal and its subsequent support relies singularly upon the structural arrangements of formal committees. They are the prescribed channels of the process.

But the formal structure is also used to control NCD in other directions as well. The formal and authoritative declaration, by the Principal, to embark upon a NCD programme was not only relayed through the committee structure but also inculcated control on a departmental basis. This firmly allocated the responsibilities and ensured greater overall organisational control. Any attempt to cross departmental boundaries is resisted. The experiences clearly illustrate these basic elements.

The gross nature of structural control also reveals a fine texture. It is specifically experienced as a slow process consuming time, of hierarchical committee relationships, of imposed departmental representatives and so on. At the departmental level, organisational control is qualitatively different. It is perceived more of as a form of self-control of their own ideas. The difficulty arises when these

idea-products have to be then submitted to the scrutiny of a wider and senior college based committee. Internal regulated peer control now becomes transferred into an inter-departmental peer assessment and control process. New levels of control become practised.

The collective negative and defensive experiences of structural control are the expressions of an opposite force. It is a voice which proclaims its own independent control of NCD affairs. The vocabulary of dead wood is contrasted to energy and enthusiasm. Another form of control, that of committed individuals, is its functional base and preferred style.

Here, the tyranny of formal structure has to be broken to allow a forum of self-selecting individuals to pursue NCD. It is seen and experienced as encompassing all that is creative and productively rewarding for the individual. Importantly, it is both self-controlling and directed.

The experiences presented are illustrative of the polar extremes of control. At one end an anti-bureaucratic sentiment, while at the other a yen to exercise forms of self-control. The substitution of one form of control for another is not in any way ambivalent, but is clearly an explicit and a desired state of affairs. The universal of control in these sets of experiences are simply two different expressions of the same ground structure.

Summary

This chapter has presented the experiences of the formal organisation structure and how they relate to NCD.

In the area of experience of academic goals, there has been a consensus about the past programme of upgrading the various college courses into degrees. The parallel development of both staff and research is also broadly acknowledged. Differences in perception, however, become apparent as to the distinction between institutional and academic goals. Independence and survival goals are disputed in terms of their avowed priority and the role of NCD in the attainment of these goals. The ambivalence about the institutional vis-à-vis the academic goals and their inter-relationship is expressed in the experiences as a sense

of vagueness and a lack of direction. The essence of intentionality is the sustaining structure of the experiences of academic goals.

Formal structure is clearly experienced as a pervasive yet restrictive framework in developing new courses. It becomes the focus of a series of problems which generally limits the NCD process and seriously qualifies its different stages of development. A more informal and self-directing structural arrangement was experienced as being immensely more practical, stimulating and productive. The essence of control illustrated the root of the experience of the college's formal structure.

Chapter 9 will now explore the processes arising out of both the formal and the informal structural arrangements, and their effect on the NCD process.

Presentation and Analysis of Data: Organisational Processes

The objectives of this chapter are to present the various experiences relating to both formal and informal organisation processes which affect NCD. A summary of the findings will conclude the chapter.

Invariants of Perception (formal organisation processes)

Formal processes exhibit a **variety of contextual problems.**

A range of **behavioural consequences** arise out of the interactions of the formal processes.

Analysis of Invariants (formal organisation processes)

Variety of contextual problems

The pre-eminent and pervasive problem, as defined by Hogg, is:

"... I've never seen an institution like this in any country or higher education establishment that I've worked in, studied in, or been involved in anywhere at all ... people involved in college try hard to make the formal organisational processes extremely formal ..."
(T5, p.318)

Consequently, this extreme and rigid formality is expressed in a variety of organisational processes. Some of the implications are clearly experienced by MacGilvrary:

"... my feeling about course planning committees is that they are very slow in operation and that they consume a lot of time before results are produced. In that sense, I think they are very inefficient ... Another criticism I've got of course planning committees is that they tend to be large and very often what's under discussion is not relevant to all the people actually attending ... internal validation committees, I think, are a very good idea ... people involved in syllabus development ... can get too close to their work, 'they can't see the wood for the trees' ... however, I have encountered feelings of resentment between ... CPC

members when criticism, even intended ... best will in the world ... anyone has actually ever clearly defined the power that an internal validation committee actually has ... members would like to have the power ... over-ruled by the CPC if they choose not to take advice on board ..." (T6, p.333)

From a departmental perspective, formal processes create an enmeshing set of problems which subsequently effect a range of other allied processes.

"... as a service department ... has been heavily involved in this. I think, to our cost in terms of other things like research ... We've been involved in nearly every new course that has been developed ... It leads to big problems in terms of our ability to concentrate on any one course ... have to spend so much of our time between different courses ... At the level of ... CPC at any one time, several of our members are involved in this ... we're having problems staffing and commitments ... also several of our members ... have been on Academic Council and Academic Planning ... how effective ... CPC are, this is one thing that I feel quite strongly about ... at the moment ... CPC ... a small body of people ... I don't like this ... there would be debates, discussions and arguments that fed back to course planning ... the dominant view seems to be that CPC should be a small body ... course planning should be an organic process ... continuous review, updating your ideas, building up ideas ..." (T2, p.271)

Wilson continues Livingstone's concern about the inter-related nature of the formal processes and the type of associated problems which arise:

"... it should be fairly clear that I'm not a great fan of formal organisational processes ... occur within the setting of the committee ... members ... tend to come unprepared, not having thought through the issues ... not having read or understood the papers ... within the formal setting a great deal of talking goes on ... off the top of the head ... the formal setting is being used for what is essentially an informal function ... the formal process is itself dependent upon a kind of prior informality ... There is

another feature of formal organisational processes which I find very frustrating in new course development and that is the time lags which occur between one stage and the next ... may be a time lag of several months ... I'm quite sure that within the last two, perhaps three, years this time lag has proved a very serious barrier to getting some course development ideas through. Also the number of formal stages ..." (T4, p.303)

MacGregor relates his experiences to both the internal formal organisation process in NCD and these interactions to the external formal validation processes:

"... once developed a degree ... have a rigorous management component ... C.N.A.A. ... completely rejected this ... criticised as being at postgraduate level ... second attempt ... diluted the management input ... told it did now not have enough management in it ... also ... staff ... who would be responsible for the technical core ... C.N.A.A. rejected this ... not have the qualifications acceptable to them ... my assessment, that C.N.A.A. panels are variable ... there were some political factors in the situation ... not getting the support from the S.E.D. nor in fact from the C.N.A.A. membership panel ..." (T1, p.255)

He also notes that on another degree submission, the formal processes dictated that he had to represent a statistical input and that on the day of the visitation the C.N.A.A. panel member knew little of the subject area. This is another form of variability to those already noted.

Lastly, Strachan returns to a common theme on formal organisational processes:

"... is that they are incredibly slow ... there are times when one feels that that kind of bureaucratic support is grinding quite slowly ... people can be critical of them for that reason ... unless staff have ideas ... know what these processes are, in other words, to play the game by the rules, they find themselves in some difficulty ..." (T3, p.289)

identifying the processes as a form of 'organisational game' in which the players have to be readily familiar with the associated rules.

As can be seen from these various constructions, the formal processes exhibit a variety of characteristics. The frustrating slowness of the process, the perceived inadequacies of course planning committees which perpetuate endless and uninformed debate, the compound interactions between college and external validating committees, the demand of NCD and the staffing implications ... The structural configurations and their allied process activities variously constrain the planning of the new courses and often perpetuate the inefficient practices.

Behavioural consequences

The preceding invariant pointed up the problematic nature of the formal processes and, as a direct result of these problems, various types of behavioural patterns emerge.

MacGregor notes contrasting types of behaviour in NCD:

"... I think that this is the first time that I had appreciated how much politics really plays in the development of courses. Politics in the sense of internal politics. It is not easy to see why we have a degree in Communication Studies in a college of this nature, where we're fundamentally into the therapy, caring and sharing type of vocational degree ..."

and further recounts:

"... A more recent experience has been the new course development in terms of Information Studies ... The Director of the Information Technology Unit ... operated her chairmanship in an autocratic way saying this is what you have to teach, these are the hours which I have decided should be allocated and used. A much more directive approach, less consultative ..." (T1, p.256)

Hogg's strategy is one of subversion:

"... formal organisational processes, they have been extremely wearing. I have tried wherever possible to subvert them ... I've tried to get working parties out to do the job and turn committees into rubber stamping machines ... involve all the

people I saw as having something to say ... not a way of eluding any democratic thing ... committee itself became a useful ginger group for pushing ideas out into the college ... challenging the formal power struggles. The heads of department became less important ... the work is done and the knowledge is held much at the bottom of the lecturers' scale, in fact most of the real decisions and work is being done, is going 'ya boo' to formal organisational processes ..." (T5, p.317)

MacGilvrary also previously notes the tensions between the formal processes of two committees, one a course planning and the other an internal validation, in the exercise of their respective power. Resentment and defensive behaviour were the outcomes.

Strachan acknowledged that 'bureaucratic support grinds slowly' but also articulates a basic issue:

"... the main concern with this college is teaching, clearly this is the priority and planning tends to be done within a fairly busy teaching situation ... NCD work, like lots of other work that may be perceived as secondary to teaching, does actually get put to one side because one is simply responding to the demands of courses and students that we currently have ..." (T3, p.289)

Nevertheless, he does see the long-term and effective support being provided by the various formal organisational processes, despite the short-term frustrations that many people experience.

Livingstone supports a more active participation in NCD which he sees as being largely inhibited by formal practice:

"... course planning should be an organic process ... of continuous review, updating your ideas ... a process that grows with new developments ... with joint discussions ... there should be debates, discussions and arguments that feed back to course planning ... I don't think this is a dominant way in the college at the moment ..." (T2, p.273)

Wilson neatly sums up the basic behavioural consequences as follows:

"... I think that coping with formal structure and the complexity of formal structure adds to the frustrations experienced by course developers and increases their disenchantment and lowers their motivation." (T4, p.304)

Essence of Formal Organisational Processes

The basic ground structure of all the invariants associated with the formal organisation processes is **inefficiency**. This essence is the recurrent and common schema of the diverse experiences.

Inefficiency is the common denominator revealed in the variety of social constructions about the formal processes. NCD is conditioned upon the decisional processes which are formally linked to a serial hierarchy of committees which inevitably constrains the development of new courses. This ordered and presumed rational series of interactions between the committees is perceived and experienced as being largely inefficient.

The inefficiencies are diverse - the extreme time consumption of the process itself coupled to the laborious formal CPC sessions, the inbuilt progressive inhibitions to the development of course ideas, the overcommitment and wide deployment of service department staff, the mostly unprepared, uninformed and ad hoc debates of the CPC ... The bureaucratic process is bounded by its own set of complex and formalised rules and procedures which further exacerbates the speedy development of new courses. These corporate inefficiencies find expression in the individual experiences.

But equally, the behavioural patterns which emerge, as a result of these formalised processes, provide an alternative mirror to the inefficiencies. The dysfunctional consequences, which arise out of the formal practices, give varied and pragmatic responses. From a back cloth of disenchantment, lowered motivation and resentment, a political will is fostered which aims at a strategy of circumvention of the formal processes. This is illustrated in the setting up of productive working parties, largely self-selecting, and an ongoing informal daily liaison between people who collectively make pragmatic decisions

outwith the formal system. These and other responses voice a rational concern about the perpetuated inefficiencies of the formal processes and how they impinge upon the critical aspects of NCD.

Invariants of Perception (informal relationships)

Informal relationships are **situationally sustained and socially preferred.**

Informal relationships provide a range of **purposively functional** uses in NCD.

Analysis of Invariants (informal relationships)

Situationally sustained and socially preferred

The following quotations adequately illustrate the perception common to this invariant.

"... that the most important informal relationships are those within our own department ... We tend to work very much as a group ... informal relationships with other departments ... are often quite useful ... do point to the way we work best which is as a team ... Other courses don't fit so easily into this ... much more formalised ... there are certain styles of planning that fit very well ... into the informal relationships in our own departments ... very rigid formalised way of planning does tend to have an effect ... doesn't seem to engender the enthusiasm and interest ... don't get a chance to debate and argue ..."
(T2, p.273)

"... I have a few informal relationships which keep me partially sane and therefore have an important part to play ..."
(T5, p.318)

MacGregor clearly states for himself and on behalf of the others, his experience of the situational aspects of informal relationships:

"... the informal relationships ... that I have listed apply only in a situational sense. I think that one needs to look at the specific informal relationships you would develop with people in terms of a specific situation ... if one was planning a new degree in Institutional Management, the informal relationships you developed in relation to that course would be different than if you were planning a new course in Information Studies ... I recognise very clearly that I do use the informal structure or I do create it ..." (T1, p.257)

Wilson comments both on the positive and the negative aspects to informal relationships and notes the respective balancing effects on his own set of relationships.

Strachan is unequivocal about informal relationships when he says:

"... I personally find that I can work better if I had a network of relationships of this kind where I know people as people rather than representing a particular departmental interest or particular discipline ... So I work well within an informal situation of this kind and personally consider it fairly central to the development of new courses ... by knowing people I am aware of the fact they actually exist ... and perhaps have a particular expertise or knowledge or experience that would be of value in terms of NCD ..." (T3, p.290)

There is little doubt that a strong informal preference is expressed by all the academics and is a common recurrent experience in the many other facets of this research, as Wilson finally comments:

"... I'm not a great fan of formal organisational processes. I much prefer to work with people of like minds as informally as possible ..." (T4, p.303)

Purposively functional uses

Again, the experiences all describe a range of purposes that informal relationships necessarily provide for the individuals. But first, a wider organisational context is the setting in which Hogg grounds his own experiences:

"... I cannot express it diagrammatically apart from the formal relationships ... the diagram encompassing the formal relationships and showing how that, within that, informal relationships form patterns ... work within the existing power structure and in ways that can often challenge it ... at the top there needs to be a management team and at the other pole there needs to be an opposition ..." (T5, p.318)

This basic organisational framework is then used to focus the specific experience of how informal relationships were used in the context of a degree planning situation:

"... The major force field within which this degree has had to work is the tension between the management team and the Social Science department ... within that force field there are other departments like Consumer Studies ... I had a very strong informal relationship and one of the few people on the staff I feel I could share any kind of difficulties and problems was in that department ... I gained a lot of personal solace and was able to talk about academic matters to people who were outside the force field. They were less sucked in, less powerful ..." (T5, p.320)

This use is strongly contrasted by Hogg with the more conflictual aspects of informal relationships. He says:

"... With Information Technology, which is a considerable power structure within the college ... I have a very good and informal relationship with the head of department whom I have spent a considerable amount of time fighting ... with a couple of notable exceptions, have a pretty good informal relationship ... although sourness, there certainly was ... The other relationship ... access to the Assistant Principal with whom I have a very good informal relationship. We have quarrelled publically and frequently and even violently on a number of occasions ... has allowed me a latitude and in return for that latitude ... put an absolutely disproportional amount of energy and time of my life into it (i.e. the degree) ... The management team were tolerant ... a benevolent despotic relationship within the thing they actually hate (i.e. informal system) ... Interaction between the informal and formal is the core of progress. I think it is essential that there is

conflict and where possible this can be depersonalised ... This still unfortunately remains rare within the college."

(T5, p.320)

These specific experiences show how, on a number of occasions, despite the strength of feelings exhibited around the issues, the individual informal relationships have been subsequently sustained. They were used to progress the issues without overly personalising them and the quality of the relationships were such that they survived the intensity of these conflicts. It provides an interesting and quite opposite picture to the generally conceived notion of informal relationships.

Wilson charts the extensive and varied use that he makes of the informal system within the college, both with academics and non-academics. He especially acknowledges the specific and powerful informal support given to him in the early phase of a new degree initiative:

"... the already existing close informal relationship between my own head of department and the (then) Principal and I came in on the fringe of that ... as far as course development is concerned, very helpful ... had that relationship not existed some time ago, the idea might never have been put to me by the Principal ... so I am quite sure that the informal relationship had something to do with the Principal's belief that there was the possibility of developing a course in my area ..." (T4, p.304)

The positive activity afforded by the net of informal relationships is redressed by Wilson in his consideration of the negative ones:

"... Negative informal relationships are very strong ... As far as course development has been concerned, I would say that the negative friction existing between myself and one head and between myself and staff in that same department has been a considerable hindrance ... were all sucked into a kind of wider conflict ... crosses we have had to bear over the last few years can be the origins of these difficulties. I think can be traced back to a kind of an informal state of war which has existed between parties within the college ..." (T4, p.304)

This particular contextualisation of informal relationships is also experienced by Strachan, who notes the potential for the wider organisational negative aspects to colour these relationships:

"... I believe that a lot of NCD has to happen within an atmosphere of trust and respect from one member of the planning group to another. I've had a lot of experience with the reverse of that, where new course ideas have been difficult to develop because there have been underlying attitudes, tensions between people that have been unhappy ..." (T3, p.292)

but given such a reality, Strachan sees the incomparable strength of the informal system in positive terms and uses:

"... From a positive point of view, I believe that if one can create good relationships within the college before you can get to a committee, that that will carry over a positive effect in terms of your work within the group ...when one has a series of informal relationships of this kind it is possible to think, to find ways of overcoming what might be seen as academic difficulties in a planning situation ... NCD doesn't stop once one is outside of a committee ... discussions continue over a cup of coffee or lunch or at the end of a telephone ... really requires some knowledge of the other folk within the organisation ..." (T3, p.292)

Lastly, he relates how the informal can be used to attempt to overcome a block in the formal context:

"... I had some direct experience of negotiating ... out of the situation ... getting into an impasse within the formal planning group by using the informal network in a quiet sort of backroom way, to change, perhaps to explore, attitudes, to try to resolve the particular issue outside of the forum ... on two occasions ... has been very successful, on one occasion it was totally unsuccessful, but you can't win them all ..." (T3, p.292)

MacGregor, MacGilvrary and Livingstone share fairly common perceptions about the use of the informal:

"... I do use the informal structure ... the prime reason is, one, to guarantee that what I might be contributing is correct and respectable. Two, that if I am not putting over my meaning and

my ideas to other people, what I do is to indulge in a bit of lobbying in an informal way ... in many cases one tends to develop a clique of informal relationships ... leads to possibly separate camps developing in the work of NCD ... a thing to be avoided ... the development of these informal cliques ..." (T1, p.257)

"... Perhaps the most effective informal relationship in NCD is the, I think, increasing practice to set up small working parties ... other informal activities ... can sound out a particular idea ... provide a useful sounding board ... have offered initial criticism and have offered suggestions as to what should be done ..." (T6, p.334)

and finally, Livingstone:

"... the value of these informal relationships ... important means of developing ideas ... chance to play with ideas or even criticisms ... a chance to debate and argue ... just starts a discussion going ..." (T2, p.273)

These experiences reveal that the informal network of relationships fulfil a variety of purposes in NCD. They provide a necessary continuity to the otherwise formal episodes of new course planning and additionally support the social and affective ties of the membership. The informal can transcend the departmental boundary, allowing for a much less territorial imperative to the development of a new course. Informal and mutual relationships largely facilitate work that is often formalised by arbitrary structures.

However, the informal system emerges out of the formal structures and practices, and as such reflects the deeper issues and concerns of organisational life. The experiences reveal this process, and the underlying conflicts are manifested in the nature of some of the informal relationships while inhibiting the productive formulation of others. The informal system retains a flexible structure and composition, often reflecting its situational and ephemeral nature. It can also endure the vicissitudes of formal practices.

Essence of the Informal Processes

The universal of these collective invariants is **mutuality**. This essence constitutes the common base of the subjective reflections.

All the academics have to have some point of reference, a context in which they can create, share and negotiate the current meanings of daily concerns, both individual and organisational. The informal networks of relationships provide the structural elements for the organisation of mutuality. Its structural permanence is transient and largely invisible - being created at random points in time. Nevertheless, its structure evolves both to crisis and long-term achievement. For the individual, it is a composite of common interest, concern, dependence, defence or power. The content of mutuality is formed out of these experienced needs.

The varying facets of mutuality are contained in such concerns as trust, openness and respect. Conflict, suspicion, cliques and informal war express the opposite, yet equally cohesive, aspects of a different kind of mutuality with its own distinctive reality construction. To test out ideas, to debate and criticise, all give voice to a preferred type of interaction which is far removed from the sterile formal prescriptions.

Mutuality provides its selected membership with an alternative structural form in which to crystallise their individual experience of formal organisational discourse. It aids the process of clarification and understanding of these multiple constructed formal realities, allowing the individual to frame his own subjective experiences with other definitions. The essence of mutuality expresses the deeper understanding of formal organisational processes.

Summary

The remit of this chapter has been to explore the experiences of organisational processes, both formal and informal.

Formal processes are seen to encompass a large and varied assortment of problem areas associated with the functional consequences of course planning activities. The inter-related problems range from dictated

membership, large numbers on committees, the slow operation of CPC, inordinate time lags in the NCD process to interactions with validating panels. The behavioural responses were equally varied and attested to attempts by either individual or small groups to circumvent the formal processes.

The informal processes emerge out of the formal practices and their imposed prescriptions. Informal associations respond to the current as well as to the future needs of individuals and exhibit a wide range of functional uses. If the essence of inefficiency grounds the experience of formal processes, then mutuality characterises the experience of the informal processes.

Chapter 10 will now attempt to relate the main areas of analysis of the last four chapters to the major substantive issues of the general academic task.

Substantive Issues in NCD Revisited

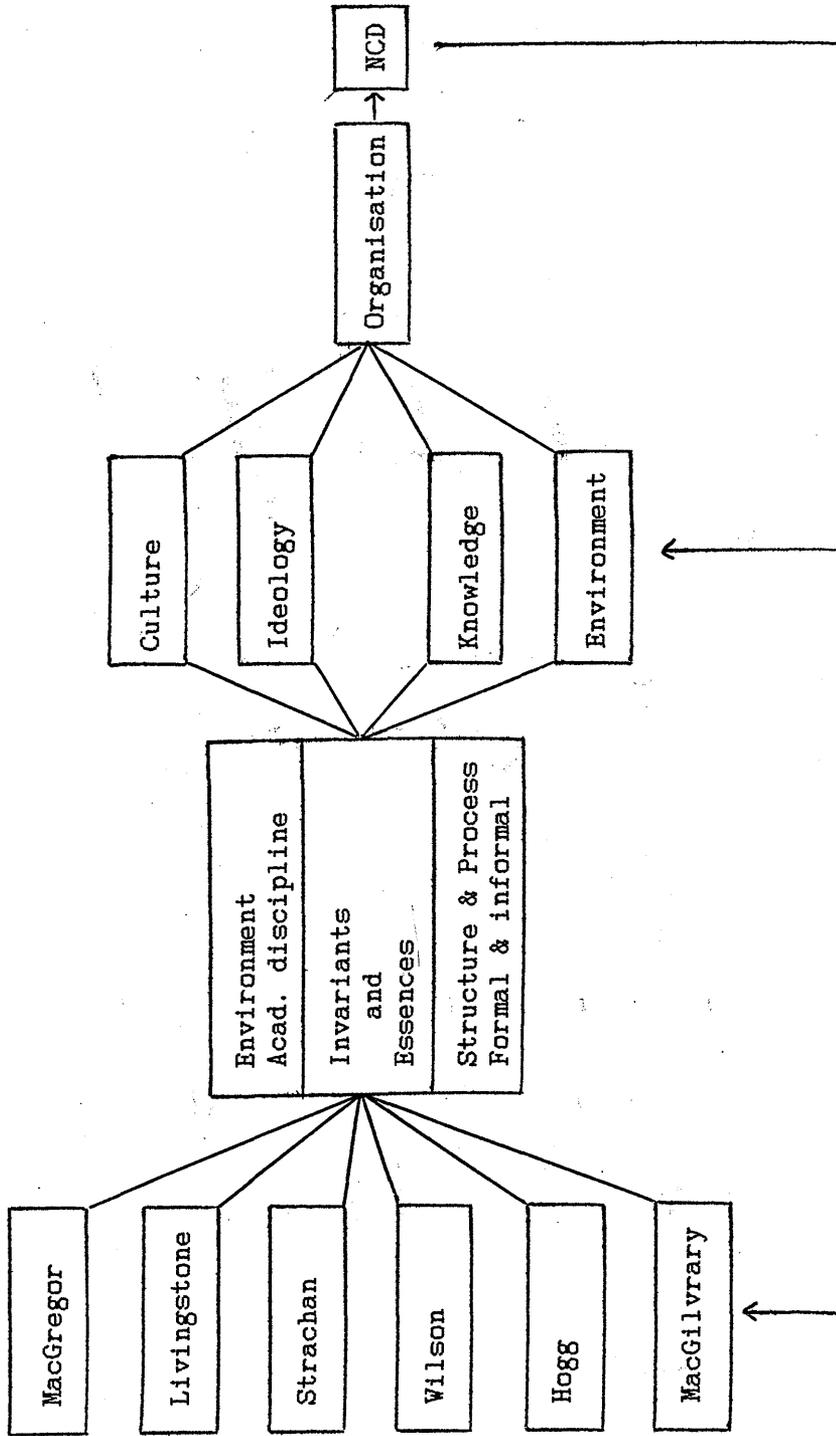
Introduction

The previous four chapters presented and analysed the life-world experiences of six academics who have been actively engaged in various NCD programmes. This material was generated around four dimensions of the NCD process. The final task is now to review and relate these lived experiences to the substantive elements identified in Chapter 3, namely culture, ideology, knowledge and environment, which collectively contextualise the academic task. Figure 3 on page 207 presents an outline diagram of the inter-relationships.

In order to aid the reader, a resumé of all the invariants and essences of the lived experiences will be given in a table format. These summaries will then be linked and developed forward to offer a conclusion of the social constructions in NCD. Finally, a brief review of the individual research experiences will be analysed to suggest modifications for future development in the area of NCD.

Table 1 on page 208 contains the collective invariants (themes) and essences associated with the specific foci of the NCD process. It presents an overview of the social constructions related to the organisational context. The detailed analysis constituted the preceeding four chapters (6 to 9).

Table 2 on pages 209 and 210 is a synopsis of the individual social constructions which emerged out of the research areas. These will now be used to describe and address the inter-relationships with the previously identified substantive issues.



Constant interaction and re-constructions of meanings and understandings

Figure 3
Social Constructions and Outline Interactions in NCD

NCD FOCUS	MACGREGOR	LIVINGSTONE	STRACHAN
1. ENVIRONMENT general specific	Need to take account, ambivalent role of S.E.D., professional bodies limit, C.N.A.A. rigor, staff research, S.E.D. enacts government policy and implications, College product orientated.	Problematic and need to get involved, New types of students and educational modes, Reports, S.E.D. controls, C.N.A.A. less remote. Specific aspects of professional bodies and types of involvement.	Unwillingness to engage senior management and committees, Experience different, Difficult to assess needs, Internal ideas, Tension in system, External - S.E.D. impact, also C.N.A.A. Professional bodies practical, How to define and assess needs.
2. ACADEMIC TASK discipline teach and research inter-relationships	Management studies, Low level and generalist application, Related to degree area, Varying levels, degree and postgraduate, Integrated, applied and wide contribution.	Sociology, Concern with coherence, Varying attitudes by others, Instrumental usage, Potential to develop, also limitations, Area not valued and understood, Barriers and conflict in combined research and course contributions	Psychology, Important to all courses and develop to course and student needs, Reflect expertise of department and relate to course, Applied research, Experienced, Problematic in professional areas with their inexperience.
3. ORGANISATION STRUCTURE academic goals formal structure	Not fully aware, Committed to degree work, Upgrade staff and research, Committees, Representation variable and restrictive and dictated.	Idealistic in past, now survival, Internal conflicts, Important, Set original tone, All committees push NCD, Helpful generally.	Discrepancies, Survival and independence, Conflict, Routes to achievement, Committees, barriers to NCD, Ideas need formal system, People important,
4. ORGANISATION PROCESSES formal informal	Variable results and factors involved, Internal politics, Very situational and used purposively, Some dangers in cliques,	Staff work load, Costs, Query effectiveness, Conflictual, Process limiting, Cohesive and interactive Preferred style, Some limits imposed, Generates ideas, etc.	Bureaucratic and slow, Need to know rules for success, Prefer, central to NCD, Diverse use of network for effectiveness,

Table 2

Resumé of the individual academics' basic social constructions

NCD FOCUS	WILSON	HOGG	MACGILVRARY
1. ENVIRONMENT general	3 components: students, employers and academics, Needs and relevance, Political, micro-process of NCD,	Key people externally, Internally little idea or help.	Differentiated on type of course, Vocational courses, environment considerable influence, Others not.
specific	S.E.D. power, C.N.A.A. big impact, require detailed knowledge, Field experts, Crucial role of senior management in past.	S.E.D. power, little credence, C.N.A.A. positive and helpful, Journals and research by G.V. Social change, demographics and educational policy.	Veto organisations, S.E.D. resources and employment, C.N.A.A. rigor, Staff and research, Various advisory groups and individuals.
2. ACADEMIC TASK discipline	Now old and irrelevant, Need to update and change, A hindrance and protects,	Not a sound base, Needs of course, fill it from discipline, Break it down and its power,	Have 2, computers and statistics, Practical use for staff and students,
teach and research	Strongly related to interests of course,	Team teaching and inter-disciplinary research,	Relate to subject area and applications,
inter-relationships	Ubiquitous. All courses,	Becomes inter-disciplinary,	Ubiquitous,
3. ORGANISATION STRUCTURE	Subordinate to survival, Institutional goals superior,	Difficult to perceive, Imprisoned, Need dialogue in college,	Upgrade diplomas and spin-off to staff
academic goals	Problematic in committee form, Need small team with drive and energy,	Need to break down, Vary inhibitory and formal, Break territories,	Negative influence, Hinder NCD, Lengthy and time-consuming process,
formal structure	Series of barriers, Inadequate system, Frustration and disenchantment,	Has to be circumvented, Various strategies, Balance between formal and informal,	Largely inefficient and often conflictual,
4. ORGANISATION PROCESSES	Range of positive relationships, Equally also negative relationships from wider conflicts,	Various uses, High degree of conflict and challenge to authority, Gets progress,	Enjoy and functionally rely upon,
formal			
informal			

Table 2 continued

Culture

Louis (1983) reminds us that culture is revealed through the active creation of meaning which arises out of an 'in situ' process of interpretation. This process can be both shared or be highly individualistic but, in either situation, it reinforces the notion of an organisation as being a social phenomenon.

The ideational elements of culture - meaning, value, knowledge and belief - are bound to a range of diverse symbolic practices such as myths, signs, special language and anecdotes. All of this reflects the deeper affective and political aspects of organisational life and experience. Putnam (1982) and Bennett et al (1981) point to the 'mediating' role of human agency in these processes, hence cultural meanings emerge and are intersubjectively negotiated. Language and symbol structure the individual's cognitive world. What then, do the social constructions reveal about the 'deep' aspects of organisational life and how are they typified in the conscious experience of the members?

At a college level, one is able to piece together elements which illustrate an attempt by senior management to articulate some semblance of an official 'corporate' culture which would ensure a sufficiently common framework of understanding. Its objectivity and rationally orientated meanings permeated a range of contexts and practices and can be explicated out of the individual experiences. The following illustrates some of the basic elements in this cultural system: in external college relationships, the 'formalised and standardised' approaches (Livingstone), the generally noted reluctance to become involved with external agencies except under controlled conditions; in academic goals, the officially instigated programme of diploma conversions, the contested direction and value of survival and autonomy, the dictated nature of the goals 'imprisoned by practice' (Hogg); in formal structure, the extreme formality invested in a plethora of hierarchially controlled committees, the deliberate use of structure to create an ethos of 'new courses are a good thing' (Livingstone); in formal processes, the lengthy and cumbersome rules

and procedures which are 'incredibly slow' (Strachan), the prescribed size and membership of committees, the whole system becomes 'a series of barriers' (Wilson).

The resulting inadequacies and inefficiencies experienced of the formal system give rise to an opposition, a type of counter-culture. This form of 'unofficial culture' contrasts the college's managerially defined orientation and evinces alternative social constructions. Its legitimacy rests upon a different structural, yet often transient, arrangement of informal networks. Different sets of meanings and experiences are attributed to the same functional tasks in NCD. The constructions of this culture are expressed as 'engender an enthusiasm' (Livingstone), 'compatible energetic individuals' (Wilson), who share common concerns and like attitudes to the tasks on hand. It is a network of affect with strong social implications which cut across the formalised inter-relationships between the academic departments. This cultural fabric sustains the values of trust, openness and respect born out of a self-selected and organic membership. Although often created out of situational and defensive responses, its functional use in NCD is seen as essential and positive, offering practical and congenial work experiences.

But culture is also located and experienced at the departmental level (Becher 1984). Van Maanen et al (1984) notes the role of culture in occupational groups. Several constructions allude to these factors. A strong sense of departmental identity is reflected in the inter-departmental concerns about worth and contribution to NCD (Livingstone, Strachan and MacGilvrary). Departmental cohesiveness, e.g. within Social Science, is exhibited in a shared conception of disciplinary inter-relationships, a strong open and informal work philosophy and a common perception as to the utility of their academic contributions to other areas. The strength of this departmental culture is indicated by the conflicts generated by other colleagues about the nature of their perceived role. A similar process can also be deduced about the professional areas who equally seek to cultivate a separate identity. Certainly, potent unitary departmental cultures manifest themselves at the NCD interface, engendering meanings and interpretations about worth, identity and academic value.

The essences of the various experiences ground the concept of culture in the context of organisational structure and process, but also in specific degree planning settings. It is evidenced (Wilson and Hogg) that a non-vocational and interdisciplinary degree challenged the orthodox norms and values of traditional discipline inputs. The 'wearing relationships' and 'lack of intellectual credence' (Hogg) of internal colleagues attests to the culture-shock of a new set of curricular principles dictated by this innovative degree planning experience. New meanings had to be negotiated around an understanding of what was to be defined as adequate and meaningful content. The conflictual nature of this process, sharpened and clarified the distinctions which had to be created out of historically held and valued definitions of a discipline. Discipline integrity and instrumentality are powerful, but on this occasion, opposing forces welded into a complex stock of specific academic and cultural meanings.

Cultural process can thus be seen to influence NCD at different levels - organisational, departmental and individual - and operate in distinctive ways. The explicit attempts by senior management to impose and reinforce an organisational culture, define its salient elements to others and then implement its practical realisation 'course engineering' (Wilson), is evident from a variety of social constructions. The perceived reality of this process was, however, constantly challenged from within the formal processes as well as from the manifest and alternative informal practices. The co-existence of these two 'interpretive schemas' (Giddens 1979; Ranson et al 1980) ensures a continual redefinition of the sets of cultural meanings held and made available to the organisational members. The nature of the NCD process - definitions and understanding of need, content, matters of relevance - makes the interpretation and evaluation of these issues into a highly contested social activity. There are multiple 'interpretive schemas' to draw upon and many definitions can be achieved.

Ideology

The deep texture of NCD is undoubtedly imbued with a variety of active and latent ideologies. As Dunbar et al (1982) generally reminds us, ideology is used to interpret, evaluate and challenge our understanding of ongoing social activities. It therefore helps order our lived

experiences, while at the same time both shapes and limits that experience (Therborn 1980). Again, ideology, like culture, can operate on a variety of levels, organisational, departmental and individual, collectively binding a definition of reality together, or providing contrasting definitions of the 'same' reality. Whether shared or disputed, ideology sustains its own symbolic practices which gives further credence to its social constructions.

The organisational world is experienced as an exposure to the world of ideas (Salaman 1979) variously communicated to explain structure, process and purpose. But these ideas are themselves anchored to wider social practices and become internally absorbed into organisational life.

NCD takes place within a nexus of dictated and expressed ideologies which collectively create a contextual 'ideological ambiance'. The dictated aspects are clearly seen in the practical strictures of S.E.D. policy - a 'market orientation' coupled to a 'technocratic' (vocational relevance) ideology expressed in the vocabulary of 'cost-effectiveness, resource allocation and employment opportunities' (MacGilvray). This strongly influences college policy and conditions the practical exercise of NCD. In Hogg's terms, the S.E.D. has a 'terrifying amount of power'.

The general educational ideology of vocational relevance finds its specific expression in the various concerns of the disparate professional bodies for 'safety to practice and training' (Strachan). These parameters subsequently impose limits on the selection of subject material in the curriculum and the degree to which innovations in such courses can be implemented. Professional ideologies encompass a strong value base and orientation to their practice which translates directly out of their professional qualification. Academics, who inter-relate with the professional educator in the design of vocational degrees, experience these strong value orientations (Livingstone). Perceived defensiveness by the academic staff of the professional, is often the intersection of such ideological differences. Collectively, the S.E.D., the professional bodies and their councils explicitly create and largely dictate a powerful conditioning ideology in this sphere of NCD.

The expressed elements in the 'ideological ambiance' are to be found in the practices of the C.N.A.A. and in the individual concerns of academics. Generally, C.N.A.A. 'sets a tone for academic work' (MacGregor) demanding rigor in teaching and research while setting overall academic standards (educational elitism). The detailed practices of an individual C.N.A.A. board provides specific knowledge of 'what ideas are acceptable' (Wilson). This search aimed to reveal the philosophy as to the discipline, its curricular presentation, research concerns and the structure of the academic field as conceptualised by noted scholars in the field. The strategy was blatantly designed to achieve 'ideological synchronism' with the particular academic area through the dictates of the 'invisible college'. C.N.A.A. boards themselves must reflect the many educational as well as the disciplinary ideologies that guide its own practices. MacGregor's experiences testify to such practical considerations and their variability.

For several academics, the broader educational ideologies (egalitarianism/individualism) were voiced in their thoughts about society, local communities and the categories of future students - the unemployed, housewives, etc. The dominance of the current full-time model is ill-suited to their educational and individual needs. Future educational provision will demand changes in both the attendance mode as well as the curricular provision. This evaluation of the future directly challenges the prescribed view of college affairs, its current development and continuing direction.

NCD thus takes place within a broad force-field of competing ideologies both directed and expressed. But it is also subject to the rationalising ideology of bureaucratic rule and practice. The structural components of departments, committees and senior management relay the formal, the planned, the rational, to such an extent that the vocabulary of opposition which emanates out of the experiences of the formal and informal processes richly characterises this ideology.

The following selection of reflections indicate its underlying construction: (Hogg) 'wherever possible subvert them', 'dead wood inhabits', 'formal is seen as a power structure', 'needs to be an opposition to management', 'challenge the formal power struggles', 'benevolent despotic relationship'; (Strachan) 'senior management has a considerable impact', 'play the game by the rules'; (Livingstone) 'momentum to protect your own', 'rigid formalised way of planning'; (Wilson) 'not a great fan of formal organisation', 'departments to be remarkably unenthusiastic', 'senior management has in fact taken over', 'informal state of war'; (MacGilvrary) 'formal structures fairly negative', 'feelings of resentment'.

These quotations collectively express the common meaningful experiences of formal NCD practices and some of these constructions capture the dynamic imagery through the use of metaphors like 'dead wood', 'state of war', 'games and rules'. Thus, the formal presentation of a college ideology is reflected in its processes. The individual experiences collectively construct a common understanding, sufficiently shared to create a general consensus as to its agreed opposition. NCD reveals this arena of conflict. The formal structure spawns the informal and this quickly becomes the focus of alternative interpretations, new meanings and understandings.

Ideology, at the individual level, is professed in differing degrees of intensity. An emphasis on the value of individualism, both from an educational and a developmental standpoint, pervades the notion of continuing education, its relevance and provision (Livingstone). Others foster the strong belief in the individual and the creative generation of their ideas (Hogg, Strachan and Wilson) and the furtherance of such in the informal setting with its preferred and synergistic effects - social, affective and cognitive.

The many held strands of ideology ensure that NCD can never be reduced to some neutral or rational planning status. The amalgum of social, organisational and individually held ideologies drive and temper the bureaucratic mechanics of the process. NCD becomes a highly interactive and constituent part of an individual's academic life-world

and experience. The selection of social constructions revealed in this research attest to these multiple realities which are created out of the many contexts of NCD practice.

At the level of praxis, ideology is clearly portrayed in the reflective experiences of Hogg and Wilson. The language of 'subversion', 'breaking hierarchy', 'power struggles', 'engineering' animates the NCD process for these academics, and is, in Thompson's (1984) sense, a critical use of ideology as it seeks to actively challenge the dominance of a prescribed authority. It also provides an Althusserian conceptualisation - as a lived and active relationship between man and his world.

Knowledge

In phenomenology, knowledge is subjective and built up from lived experience (Luckmann 1983). The social constructions of the academics provide the ground structure of experience located to its organisational roots. These experiences contain the typified world and its knowledge base. This section will review and relate knowledge to its organisational and disciplinary bases.

Public knowledge of the organisation is communicated through its formal processes and practices. This is the assumed objective and tangible information which comprises much of organisational knowledge and is differentially dispersed through the formal communication channels. Information has the status of a resource, created and used for a variety of rational purposes. Rarely is its problematic nature acknowledged, simply policy, procedures and rules codify its public and assured use. Committees and departments perpetuate and largely use this form of organisational knowledge.

But knowledge exists or can be created into many forms. Greenfield (1979) asserts that organisation is experience and that our knowledge of organisations is mediated through the social interactions and intersubjective experiences of its members. Organisational knowledge is thus a tissue of social constructions rich in meaning and understanding. There exist multiple knowledge bases which create the experiences of organisation, each one arises out of the diversity of

discourse on the organisation. Each academic not only experiences the organisation at different levels, but also in different ways. The college becomes structured in political, bureaucratic and academic knowledge terms, dependent upon the specific context of experience. Here, the experiential and subjective forms of organisational knowledge provide the deeper private and value texture to the objective formal and surface processes.

As has been already shown in culture and ideology, the formal and objective creation of organisational reality is achieved through senior management's control of the committee structure and the attempted inculcation of a holistic college view of affairs and its predicted direction. The essences of autonomy, control and intentionality assert this basic contention. The often covert political nature contained in this form of knowledge is confirmed in the detailed experiences of Hogg, Livingstone, Strachan and Wilson. The perception of power centres in the college and the deliberate influence exercised by them in the various stages of NCD is clear. From the initial backing of an idea (Strachan) to the mobilisation of resources or the complete taking over of the CPC role (Wilson) and the exclusion of external parties on a particular degree review (Livingstone), all provide ample evidence of knowledge of the political aspects of the organisation.

MacGregor also confirms the political aspect to organisational knowledge in his experiences of a twice submitted and failed degree initiative. The general level of awareness of this form of organisational knowledge becomes progressively refined and restructured in the detailed experiences of specific NCD practices. Although both MacGregor and Wilson acknowledge an understanding of the political dimension to this form of knowledge, its practical use could not have been more divergent. Wilson perceived the utility and exploitive advantages of this knowledge, while MacGregor ruefully reflects upon the inequities it can sustain.

Tacit forms of knowledge is knowledge gained from experience (Luckmann 1983; Schutz 1971; Polanyi 1956). It is subjective and arises out of the ordinary business of life. Large areas of organisational experience depend upon tacit knowledge. However, returning to the assumed world

of objective knowledge, this would incorporate Schutz's (1971) other areas of subjective knowledge, namely routine and explicit. Organisational knowledge comprises these diverse categories and is exemplified in committee procedures and practices as well as in NCD affairs.

But structures also create and sustain forms of knowledge. The department relays the formal definitions of organisational knowledge (on students, courses, task allocations, developments, etc.) but also creates tacit knowledge of itself and others. This locus of knowledge creation is seen in Livingstone's and Strachan's perception of their own department and their individual interactions with others. From both the range of formal and informal activities, meanings and understandings of other individuals and departments are built. Their often shared experiences and perspectives, delineate the knowledge accrued on their professional colleagues. This experiential knowledge is itself built upon a more public and codified form - the academic discipline.

Livingstone articulates a strong disciplinary concern. Coherence of academic subject matter is colloquially expressed, Social Science is something that cannot simply be 'hacked about at will'. This plea arises out of the many debates and confrontations with his professional colleagues who are pre-eminently concerned with training and professional practice. It neatly illustrates the dilemma of Bernstein's (1975) closed (collection) and open (integrated) curriculum. For Livingstone, Sociology has conceptual integrity and unity to its knowledge base. This base, however, does allow for fruitful inter-relations with closely related areas such as communication and cultural studies.

The antithesis to this form of traditional discipline integrity is illustrated forceably in Wilson's and Hogg's experiences and orientations to knowledge and its restructuring. Knowledge can be reformulated into new combinations and the established academic barriers 'have to be broken' (Hogg). Their epistemological orientations are founded upon their own academic backgrounds - English and English Literature. An interdisciplinary degree accommodates the knowledge

contributions from other academic disciplines, but the 'difficult relationships' (Hogg) and the 'discipline hindrances' (Wilson) experienced by them, notes some of the inordinate difficulties that arose in this area of NCD practice.

This degree development tested out the theoretical propositions of Bernstein (1975), Becher and Kogan (1980) in a cauldron of practice. The intersection of knowledge, culture and ideology is forcefully portrayed in several of the participants' lived experiences (Wilson, Hogg, Strachan and Livingstone). It gives credence to Bernstein's (1975) ideas about the difficulties inherent in shifting the traditional classifications of knowledge and the resulting difficulties which arise in departmental authority and formal social relationships.

The vocational degree area essentially attempts to combine the theoretical and practical aspects of knowledge. This relates to what Giroux (1980) and Hubner (1975) calls the 'technical value system' and is where knowledge gives the professional his identity and practical worth. The difficulties encountered between the Social Scientists and their professional colleagues cautiously illustrates the knowledge selection problems in the design of vocational curricula. Knowledge has become the signifier of professional tutelage and the legal ascription to practice. In Habermas's (1971) terms, it serves an 'interest' group and dictates professional relationships.

In a broad sense, vocational degrees and their carefully regulated knowledge selection contribute to Apple's (1979) notion of high status 'technical capital'. The combined influences of the professional bodies, C.N.A.A. and the S.E.D., frame, regulate and perpetuate this process in NCD.

The teaching and research experiences of the academics further illustrates their basic conceptions of knowledge. The newer, possibly less well defined academic areas, computer and management studies, both exhibit a low theoretical but high practical concern. MacGregor and MacGilvrary express the need to 'practically relate' into other discipline areas. With no inherent theoretical knowledge base other than those borrowed from recognised academic areas like behavioural

science and mathematics, the orientation is to demonstrate a ubiquitous practical use and relevance. A similar desire is expressed by Social Science but the marked difference is to illustrate the strong theoretical underpinning and relevance to professional practice.

Research generates new or reformulated types of knowledge. Most of the academics echo Wilson's reflection of conducting research in the 'interests of the course', binding the staff to specific applied areas. The instrumental orientation to this type of research, condoned by C.N.A.A., ensures what Weiss (1977) calls 'decision-driven' research which is practical and problem orientated. Livingstone in particular reflected upon the difficulties of attempting to get an interdisciplinary piece of research going in a department which totally rebuffed the overture. In contrast, Hogg sees research as being interdisciplinary and in Eraut's (1985) terms, is largely dictated by the criteria of the research community. Having noted the delicacy of crossing established and accepted knowledge boundaries, most staff would have to bring about a radical re-orientation to their knowledge classifications. X

The collective experiences have shown the many and varied forms of knowledge use and generation in the college context. The formal and informal organisation co-exists with the codified and public forms of academic knowledge. The debates and conflicts 'make visible' (Clark 1984) the boundaries of knowledge and the often inherent difficulties of meaningfully negotiating a common understanding. Knowledge too often becomes a prized resource, confers academic identity and status to individuals, is transient, but never can it be regarded as some neutral commodity in organisational affairs. It is in NCD that the boundaries of ownership become assiduously demarked and claimed.

Environment

To conceptualise and construct an environment is to create knowledge and assign meaning. It becomes a form of text linking the external world to the organisation. As such, it is both context and content. It symbolises awareness, knowledge, understanding while simultaneously representing uncertainty and ambiguity. Many interpretations, meanings and evaluations juxtapose in its social construction. These constructions must always be partial and reflect the multiple images

and concerns of the observers and participants who create its ever changing contours (Manning 1982).

The environment does not exist as a single entity. Although most of the constructions agree common and salient bodies like the C.N.A.A., S.E.D. and a variety of professional councils, there are still differences in the interpretation of their perceived roles and practices. Outwith these agencies, the environment is directly conceived in terms of highly specific and functional entities.

The essence of autonomy and control express the generalised and reinforced understanding of the environment as directed by senior management. MacGregor, Strachan and Livingstone each comment, in their individual experiences, of the lack of active involvement with the outside world. The college attempts to circumscribe and regulate any interaction. Senior management's statements and practices affirm this control posture to external affairs. For many of the academics, this forms a basic ground structure from which they then subsequently construct their own individual environments and give meaning to these constructions.

Senior management's attempts to pre-construct the salient features of the environment accords with Weick's (1977) notion of enactment. In this case, the environment was formally created through their definitions and interpretations. The essences of autonomy and control suggest the attitude and practice of rationality and hence extends these formal definitions and interpretations into Weick's (1979) idea of generalised cognitive processes in organisations. These become revealed as 'bodies of thought' - the recurrent schema, the causal textures and sets of referent levels used to identify and define the significant features of, in this case, the college's environment. This process is aided and abetted by 'thinking practices' - that is, the evolved routines, preferences and sets of dominant rules, all of which further restrict the range of attention and awareness given to the environment. Livingstone and Strachan both experience the practice of these processes in their attempts to extend the external involvement in degree planning and course reviews.

The rhetoric, combined with the practice of autonomy and control in college affairs, does colour the perceptions and subsequent constructions of the external world. The ideology of separateness is a powerful preconditioning framework to the development of strategy and future relationships with the environment. This has direct implications for NCD.

In direct contrast to this general picture, Wilson's and Hogg's experiences of the environment are radically different. A new innovative degree, which had initially failed, now demanded new conceptualisations, not only of academic knowledge but also the environment. New relationships had to be quickly created, new thinking practices had to evolve and new attitudes had to be engendered in staff. The intensive nature of the environmental involvement has already been commented upon. A careful delineation of its critical features focused a highly specific interaction which sustained the course demands in a 'mixture of fear and excitement' (Hogg). The environment was positively constructed in terms of influence and resources which, at the time, was radically different from the then accepted college practice. It demonstrated, in its successful accomplishment, that a more pro-active involvement with selected external agencies and individuals of direct influence to NCD was an acceptable practice.

MacGregor's experience of a lengthy, cautious and conservative internal approach to degree planning, which twice failed, is indicative of the orthodox and largely prescribed approach with little or no environmental input. Failure for these different degrees triggered divergent responses to the environment. However, 'fine' reading of the experiences does indicate that the active environment link came about as the result of senior internal influence and college micro-politics. Environment was expeditiously redefined and re-interpreted to provide a new province of meaning, but this event also required a not inconsiderable amount of political investment to break the mould and legitimise the actions (Salancik and Pfeffer 1978).

NCD is linked to the external environment principally through the activities of the S.E.D., C.N.A.A. and the professional bodies. For S.E.D., the constructions polarise around its resource and political functions. Resource power is seen in its ability to grant, withhold and sometimes withdraw ('kill off courses', Hogg), support, financial or staff recruitment. MacGregor sees the S.E.D. perpetuating a climate of ambiguity which constantly clouds the NCD process, a 'bureaucratic fence', with no clear indication as to the criteria of acceptance for a degree proposal. For others, Strachan and MacGilvrary, the criteria are more explicit - employment opportunities. Most agree on its political role - to translate the government's educational policy and implement it through its advisory capacity and influence as institutions. This advice has to be constantly monitored and the messages decoded for their variable meanings. Despite being a constant and obvious feature of the environment, the various constructions about the S.E.D. evince a range of somewhat negative attitudes and orientations to this organisation and its largely unpredictable practices. Past experiences colour present assessments and interpretations.

The C.N.A.A. is generally positively perceived. The essential meanings evolve around the advice on course design, content and teaching, staff development and research. Although rigorous, it is seen as asking the 'right kinds of questions' (Hogg) and sets the 'tone for academic work' (MacGregor). Livingstone sees its practices, once validation is achieved, as being 'more personal'. This consensus of understanding about the C.N.A.A. possibly reflects the current stage in the evolving relationship that the college has with this body. The experiences reflect this learning element. Both the S.E.D. and C.N.A.A. can exercise a veto role to course initiatives, but the political and academic sanctions are clearly differentiated in the experiences. X

Vocational courses pre-define the environment in terms of professional bodies and their councils. MacGilvrary, Strachan and Livingstone see a clear set of prescriptions which regulate NCD - the dictated subject allocation, teaching hours, standards on training, student numbers, etc. These professional bodies sharply differentiate a domain of the environment, and their practices are experienced as constraints.

If these three major environmental foci dominate the constructions, what else constitutes the external world? The vocational nature of the degrees undoubtedly circumscribe the relevant domains or subsets of the environment. The social constructions add meaning to these described categories animating their institutional practices with interpretation and evaluation. The 'given' aspect of the environment arises out of the NCD activities and the programme's stated direction.

These experiences surrounding a non-vocational degree show what Miles and Snow (1978) categorise as environmental 'prospectors'. Key individuals and groups were sought for a variety of purposes and as a result, the environment was actively created, re-defined, given meaning and attended to. The territory had to be first identified and then progressively mapped out. Knowledge was actively generated about the domain before its meaning and evaluation could be arrived at. The Wilson and Hogg examples illustrate this process of creating the environmental domain and subsequently attributing meaning to its features. In general, the environment (C.N.A.A., S.E.D., etc.) does not require this active level of refinement, as only a basic level of monitoring is generally deemed sufficient.

The Organisation and NCD

So far, this chapter has reviewed and related the various substantive elements in NCD to the individual social constructions of a group of academics. These constructions are not only individually created, but collectively subscribe to an overall imagery of their organisational locus.

Chapter 2 provided a review of the various concepts of organisations derived out of the dominant functionalist perspectives. Educational organisations are largely described with reference to these multiple frameworks (Allison 1983; Bell 1980; Davies 1981; Tyler 1985; Willower 1982).

In pursuing this research, the argument was developed (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) that by attempting to understand the life-world of the organisational participant, one could escape from the serious and limiting problem of reification of the organisational features and

processes (Greenfield 1979, 1973; Ranson et al 1980; Silverman 1972, 1970; et al). The organisation emerges out of the process of social construction, the members produce their own in situ accounts of 'organisational reality'. Their conscious experiences represent the diverse provinces of meaning and understanding created about the world, people, actions and events (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Greenfield 1980; Putnam 1983; Schutz 1972; Weick 1977; et al).

To explicate this world, phenomenology contains a body of concepts which defines the structures and features of this inner world of our conscious experience. It illuminates the 'deep structure' of organisations (Cicourel 1971; Geertz 1973; Deetz and Kersten 1983).

The multiple realities of the college arise out of the specific experiences of NCD contexts and which, themselves, reflect aspects of the wider college milieu. The fabric of these experiences contain many disparate and often contradictory threads. In general, the horizon (context) of college affairs is seen to be differentiated into three non-exclusive, yet principal spheres - the constructions reveal the political, the bureaucratic and the professional arenas. (These classifications are somewhat arbitrary and generic and are not used in a restrictive sense but are merely indicative of the generalised typifications.)

The political arena is featured in the observed and attributed action of self and others. It strongly identifies in the first-person experiences of Wilson and Hogg who actively pursue and foster a series of challenges to formal structure and process. The collective examples reveal this intention, the informal planning forum replaced the formal CPC. the self-selecting energetic group, the purposeful subversion of formal committees, the active involvement in the environment, the manipulation through informal relationships of established power, the relentless drive for validation, all eloquently testify to this form of constructed reality. Its basis arose out of the ownership of an incipient idea. The vocabulary of these experiences typify a world of manifest conflicts existing at many levels and in a variety of

contexts. The initial resistance to the idea, its subsequent successful development and its reluctant acceptance has created a legacy of enmity exhibited in the frequent 'informal wars' with other departments.

But conflict defines the alternative forms of realities. Other NCD contexts equally exhibit their battle areas. Issues about subject selection and contribution, of collaborative research efforts, of insufficient hours to develop a subject area, coherently typify the political nature of these interactions. These second-person orders of reality reveal the divergent departmental worlds, each sustaining their own independent stock of knowledge (academic disciplines) while trying to reach some mutual and intersubjective understanding or compromise about their justifiable contributions. Their internal world is represented through the tight-knit informal relationships and self-perpetuating identities which relate to a culture and ideology of mutuality. Self-worth and value of contribution precondition the inter-departmental relationships. Many of the experiences reflected these concerns (Livingstone, Strachan and MacGilvray).

Politics spawn other structures. The informal structure creates an intersubjective world based on alternative, and often highly political, interpretations. This life-world is bounded by mutual social concerns which become defined out of the dysfunctions of the formal. Paradoxically, the preferred style of interaction and the shared task definitions ultimately serve the ends of the formal organisation. The culture and ideology, however, are often radically different.

The bureaucratic sphere of organisational reality evolves around the defined formal structures and processes. NCD is inescapably linked to both. This reality is typified through the anatomy of rules and relationships which are prescribed. Its language of objective rationality defines what Collins (1974) calls the third-person reality - that of institutional life. It is born out of the experiences of submitting new course ideas which quickly formalise into course planning committee structures and which necessarily inter-relate with others. The time-consuming procedures, the necessity to produce documentation, internal validation and approval, all of which constitute

the discourse of formal organisational processes - planned, sequenced and rational. The essence of control exemplifies its basic concern. This is the organisational life-world which is planned to transcend the fickleness of human thought and action.

Its stocks of knowledge are codified, have public access and use, and change in an evolved and controlled fashion. The reality is created, delivered and interpreted within defined limits, so as to provide a dominant province of meaning from which affairs and events are consistently evaluated. It functionally relates to Weick's (1979) idea of 'bodies of thought', but here these are the prescribed ways of seeing and defining. The organisational text is pre-written and pre-defined. NCD follows an orderly sequence of events in this scheme of things.

But these objective realities are themselves based on tacit knowledge (Luckmann 1983). They arise out of intersubjective attempts to negotiate a common stock of organisational meanings. But the power to influence and define what information is accorded the status of relevance and what is not, ultimately selects the knowledge base for these 'interpretive schemas' (Giddens 1979). Organisational reality is the sum achievement of this process. The conflicts experienced when alternative interpretations were offered on goals, environmental relationships and the utility of small course planning groups is further evidence of the challenge to these formal definitions and values.

The construction of these multiple organisational realities is itself dependent upon the combination of different 'orders of reality' (Collins 1974). The political and bureaucratic experiences of organisational life related to NCD activities can be 'given' to an individual in alternative forms, second-person (interpersonal) and third-person (institutional). The associated learning processes are social and situational, and reflect these two modes. The individual has then to self-define his own ongoing interpretation of affairs.

It is in the professional area of organisational experience where reality is often critically shaped and is in sharpest focus. Here, the first-person (self) and second-person (interpersonal) experiences make

their greatest impact on consciousness. The social and interactional order of NCD exposes the individual to his own and others' perception of reality. The intersubjective nature of the defining and re-defining of meanings alluding to students and their needs, to learning and teaching, to disciplines and knowledge, finds its greatest expression. One teaches others, and is taught by others, how to interpret and evaluate these subjective and complex social stocks of knowledge. It is a cumulative, reiterative and refining process. The interplay of tacit and explicit knowledge grounds this sense-making of our social world.

The many experiences illustrating the professional arena exhibit complex social constructions on academic disciplines, its integrity or openness to building new bases of knowledge (Livingstone, Hogg), of students' needs and and teaching concerns (MacGilvray, Wilson, Strachan), of subject selection and contribution (MacGregor, Livingstone, MacGilvray, Hogg). These experiences vividly show the range of constructions built out of the first and second-person orders of reality and the organisational interactions which sustain them.

So many realities are brought to, created and transmitted in the deep structure of NCD. The formal organisational context contributes and communicates one set, the informal NCD settings another. As Strachan hopes that the informal attitudes and behaviour can and may be carried over and into the formal situation, states a preference for a reality which defines and values relationships outwith the imposed institutional forms. Livingstone on the other hand experiences the institutionally defined reality and perceptions of Social Science as a block to discipline and research contributions. The informal NCD setting was situationally developed and functionally used to overcome the penalty of these formal definitions.

In summary, the social constructions of these academics defined the political, bureaucratic and professional domains of meaningful organisational experiences. They arose out of the interaction of formal structures and processes of the college context and represent the individual's attempt to give meaning to the daily and mundane events of academia. As such, the expressed imagery in the experiences

communicates the structure, features and concerns of the individual life-worlds. It is a richly typified world of conscious endeavour. We get myriad glimpses of an organisation mirrored in various periods of time.

Individuals build their own conceptual models and understandings of organisations based on active participation and experience. Many explanations and elements sustain these lived organisational experiences - bureaucratic, political, organised anarchy, loose-coupling, etc. - collectively, they contribute to the essentially transient and changing nature of an individual's social experience and constructions of reality in time. The organisation can therefore only exist in various forms of human consciousness and experience. It is understood and made meaningful in the daily and varied traffic of human discourse.

NCD as revealed through the experiences of the academics is undeniably complex, social and problematic. It is an organisational process which taps into the deeper aspects of human understanding and locates its practice in the interaction of culture, ideology and knowledge. New courses are developed, not as a result of some superficial and prescriptive planning exercise, but out of the complex, emergent and contested process of achieving intersubjective meaning and understanding.

This research, as Van Maanen (1978) asserts, aims to provide insights to the process rather than produce practical prescriptions or supply technical rules. The academics have produced accounts of their own experiences to illuminate the practice, and hence help us to increase our awareness, knowledge and understanding of this important human activity in education. "Phenomenology directs attention to a world that is qualitatively richer in terms of human experience" (Apple 1970, p.34) than is admitted to by the more conventional and positivistically orientated frameworks commonly directed at understanding organisational phenomena and processes. The experiencing organisational member provides the raw material to meaningfully explore the private (personal) and the public (social) lives of education. Human experience contains a meaningful structure and this basic

assertion has been the central and guiding idea, which has sustained the spirit of this organisational investigation.

Conclusions of the Research (resumé)

Page 128 of this thesis clearly states the limitations of this research. It is contextually bound to its organisational locus and relates to the specific experiences of a selected group of academics. The findings, therefore, can only be concluded within these parameters.

NCD, as constituted and revealed in the social constructions of the academics, illustrates:

- (a) that it is firmly embedded in the internal social milieu of the college. The many constructions of senior management, departmental and individual activities are anchored in and related to these stocks of knowledge (typifications).
- (b) the specific individual experiences highlight the different approaches, attitudes and values assigned to their evaluation of the NCD processes and practices.
- (c) the deep structure of NCD confirms that culture, ideology and knowledge (tacit and explicit) are critical elements of an individual academic's life-world, guiding thought and action.
- (d) NCD is problematic as a process and a practice. The experienced conflicts attest to the difficulties of achieving intersubjective understanding on many issues.
- (e) the environment, as reflected in the activities of those agencies of direct influence, are variously constructed but perceived to generally constrain the process.
- (f) the diverse nature of the academic experiences evince the multiple realities brought to bear upon the NCD process. X

(g) the experiences illustrate the situational, transient and emergent nature of NCD, yet reveal the consistent elements of an individual's phenomenal world giving meaning and interpretation to the practices (invariants and essences).

Postscript to the Research Method

As one of the basic tenets of this research was to provide an 'active voice' orientation, it is fitting to conclude with the researchees' own reflections. Their invariants will contribute to future refinements and developments of this particular framework of research.

These comments were all recorded immediately after they had concluded their responses to the main research, on the assumption that one would tap the newness and accuracy of the experience before it became lost. Appendix I, pages 338-344, provides the detailed transcripts of the individual research experiences. The following invariants are the 'collective voice' and comment.

Invariants of Research Method

At an operational level, the tape recorder generated two opposite responses to its use.

For some respondents, the level, depth and content of the responses was difficult to gauge.

Analysis of Invariants (research method)

Responses to its use

"... not accustomed to dictating on to a machine ... aware of the machine being there ... makes me hesitate ... search for the right words ... machine there waiting to record ... this is part of a research project ... someone is going to look at, analyse and develop ... conscious that it is quite important ... want to give a well considered and thought out response ... I don't think quickly on my feet ..." (MacGregor)

The practical considerations contained in this quotation by MacGregor were not reflected in the other experiences, but it does sensitise the

researcher to a very human response in a taken-for-granted data collection method. The converse was specifically stated by MacGilvrary, Hogg and Strachan:

"... the explanations given ... and the instructions were OK and I'm not put off by the use of tape recorders or the interview being recorded. So at the mechanical level the way the thing was being operated, fine ..." (MacGilvrary)

"... like the confessional element, the isolated room and the tape recorder because although I imposed a formal structure on it, I really have no idea on how it would come out ..." (Hogg)

"... it's a very casual relaxed pleasant way of getting information out of somebody ..." (Strachan)

For the above, the physical setting and the mechanical operation was reasonably conducive to the gathering of the experiences. Neither Wilson nor Livingstone commented on these aspects.

Level, depth and content

"... I think that the use of trigger questions and some framing is very helpful to the person providing the information ... a very difficult task ... to give broad areas without actually leading the interviewee into giving the answers ... this particular method has been very successful in providing sufficient structure but not too much ... I've not found it difficult to hold the mike or control the situation ... been helpful methodologically ... to be able to switch this thing off and on ..." (Strachan)

"... most interesting reflection is of being pulled back from seeing my organisation as being unique ... my very, very personal experiences are very, very coloured ... committed a hugh proportion of my life ... to this degree ... cannot therefore speak of it in totally dispassionate terms ... it's coming out emotional as well as rational and this is how I think it should be ... many emotional and personal interactions ... is what teaching, learning and course creation are all about." (Hogg)

"... difficult in a short period of time to distill one's thoughts ... talked about my own attitudes ... don't think it has prompted any reflection on my part ... difficult to select on the spur of the moment what one feels is significant ..." (Wilson)

"... found it interesting ... it made me think about things ... I found it hard to know exactly what was required all the time ... not sure what you yourself are after ... what they say is limited by their positions ..." (Livingstone)

"... questions were very, very open ... leaves the respondent with a problem ... not sure of what he is saying or giving is actually what is wanted ... difficult to judge the level or depth required ... a more structured type of interview might have been useful ... questions were vague or not expected ... might given papers out ... the day before ... time to think ..." (MacGilvrary)

The opening and closing quotations, by Strachan and MacGilvrary respectively, offer divergent comments on the problematic area of structure on method. The tapping of experience is a subtle art rather than some exact science and the provision of some structure will always remain a precarious balance. My avowed intention is contained in Hogg's statement "I (i.e. Hogg) imposed a formal structure" - that the respondent structured his own experience was the guiding dictum.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that both Wilson and Livingstone further developed points to those in the main research. This accords with MacGregor's observation that once the recording has taken place, other aspects become remembered. Wilson's and Hogg's accounts reflect their intensely personal involvement in NCD.

As a method, phenomenology is doubly useful in its ability not only to enlighten the experiences of others, but also its own research method. The above quotations should provide a future researcher with some practical refinements to the author's own approach and thus help evolve this orientation to organisational field research. Phenomenological research strategies "replace the notion that assumptions and knowledge can be certain, authoratative, and unambiguously 'true' with the idea

that uncertainty is a defining feature" (Morgan 1983, p.383). The social dimension of the organisational world is such a place. It requires a reflective social science to map its salient features and elucidate its complex internal constructions and processes.

Appendix A

RESEARCH STUDY
NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT WORK

Name -----

Position -----

Candidate Note

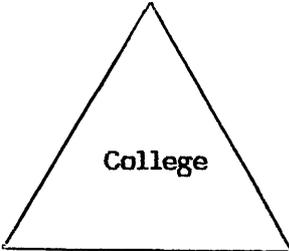
1. The principal aim of this research is to get you to explore your thoughts, ideas, and **actual** experience of **new course development** work within the context of the College.
2. I would like you to fully disclose and develop your **actual** experiences and thoughts in terms of 4 main dimensions:-
 - (a) the college-to-outside environment relationships
 - (b) your academic discipline area
 - (c) the organisational structure
 - (d) internal organisational processes.Each of these areas will be **discussed separately**.
3. **As your actual experience** of new course development work is critical to an understanding of the process, your permission is sought to tape record your accounts.
4. **All the individual responses will be personally treated with complete confidentiality.**
5. This is a **bona fide research study** and it will be used for the purpose of submitting a thesis for a Ph.D. degree to the University of Glasgow.

DIMENSION 1

Focus: College-to-outside environment relationships

In talking about this area of new course development work, I would like you to recount your perceptions and experience of what you consider to be the relevant aspects of this dimension.

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.



Using your derived set of organisations, groups and individuals, assess the impact that each category currently has, or may have in the future, on the college/your department in terms of the new course developments.

DIMENSION 2

Focus: Academic subject area

- (a) Would you now discuss your thoughts, ideas and experience of how you see your academic discipline contributing to the development of new courses.
- (b) What implications would this have for teaching and research?
- (c) What inter-relationships does your academic discipline have with other discipline areas?

DIMENSION 3

Focus: Organisational structure

- (a) How do you perceive the overall academic goals of the College and what relationships do they have to new course development?

- (b) In your experience, what influence does formal structure have in the process of evolving new courses?

DIMENSION 4

Focus: Organisational processes (formal)

Would you discuss your experiences and involvement with the formal organisational processes related to new course development work.

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of **informal relationships** that you have developed **within** the College with regard to new course development work.

Focus: Will you now discuss these informal relationships with regard to new course development.

Brief biographical note
on the research participants

Biographical Note

James MacGregor

Senior lecturer. Initially graduated in a Science discipline and worked abroad with the Colonial Service. Held a senior management post in a local company before entering into higher education and subsequently gained a postgraduate management qualification. He has had extensive and varied teaching experience in the management field ranging from professional qualifications, first degrees and postgraduate work. NCD work has involved contributions to all the college's degrees as well as a major departmental initiative. His current research interests lie mainly in the field of Health Services management while maintaining training and consultancy with a variety of commercial organisations.

Graeme Livingstone

Lecturer. First degree in Economics and Sociology with a masters in Sociology. Teaching experience and course development work has principally been in the para-medical field, evolving the application of his discipline to a variety of therapy areas. He also has been actively involved in elected office on the senior academic committees in the college. This work has involved looking at future educational need and provision.

Donald Strachan

Senior lecturer. Basic discipline is Psychology. Has worked in Personnel Management with a couple of multi-national companies before lecturing in higher education. Over the last 10 years he has built up an extensive teaching and NCD experience coupled to an active involvement in senior academic committees and working parties. He is currently a member of the National Board (Scotland) Nursing and carries out management training and consultancy work.

John Wilson

Senior lecturer. A graduate in English and Modern History. Work experience in the Armed Forces and the Police College. He was directly and intensively involved in the incipient development and design of a major innovatory degree within the college and has built up a unique experience in this particular case. His wealth of practical experience

has helped guide other proposals in an informal manner and is currently applied to the further evolution of the original initiative. Again, involved in external professional work.

Scott Hogg

Lecturer. First degree in the field of English and Scottish Literature followed by a doctorate. Prior to his academic qualifications, worked in the area of computing. Teaching experience has been at university level and, since joining the college, has been specialised in the communications field. NCD work has been singularly in one degree area at a high and consistent level of personal involvement. Research and publications are an important activity of his busy academic life.

Stuart MacGilvray

Lecturer. A Business Studies graduate whose teaching and research interests evolve around the application of statistics and computers to a wide variety of degree work. His NCD work reflects these practical interests. With the progressive introduction and use of both these areas in future NCD work, he applies an earnest concern with this evolving field to the various professional fields. Regularly attends relevant conferences on the topics.

APPENDIX C

Transcript 1

Name: James MacGregor

Position: Senior Lecturer

Dimension 1

The factors in the environment would appear to be: 1) the needs of the community or of society; 2) the employers' needs; and 3) the influence of the Scottish Education Department on new course development.

In developing new courses, my experience largely is that not enough account is taken of what society's needs are. I am including in society the needs of the individual who might be taking the course.

The same comment could be made about the second factor, the employer. The paradox here would appear to be that the employer does not always see his needs to being the same as society's needs.

What I believe about the Scottish Education Department is that they appear to be sitting on some kind of fence. It would appear that colleges have a licence to indulge in the development of new courses at an early stage, and then it would appear to be told by the S.E.D. that the college may not get involved in this kind of work. My perception is that the Scottish Education Department tends to, to sit on the fence, some kind of bureaucratic fence, instead of, if you like, entering into an agreement with a particular college, or a sharing an involvement in the overall organisational planning. They tend to avoid this.

There is another environment factor, and it's a factor that embraces all the authorising and validating bodies such as this college is involved with - C.N.A.A., and professional bodies such as the British Dietetic Association, and other validating bodies such as SCOTEC and SCOTBEC (now Scotvec).

My experience of C.N.A.A. has been one of involvement in several of the degree initiatives in this college. My perception is that they have become a very rigorous taskmaster, far more rigorous than other autonomous bodies such as universities have to go through in their new course development. The professional bodies act in a limiting way, in terms of what one can do in new courses, and frequently I believe that

they do not think through enough the effects of their constraints they put on colleges in terms of syllabus development.

The great thing, like SCOTEC and SCOTBEC, is that one is presented with a syllabus and all that one has to do is to interpret that to suit the college's circumstances.

Diagram

Having diagrammatically represented the relevant organisations and so on, that influence new course development work, my assessment of the impact that each category currently has, and may have in the future, is that the two over-riding factors are the Government and C.N.A.A. The Government, because of its current policy in regards to our sector in education and its effect on staff availability or indeed total resource availability, does influence what can be done within existing resources. It is very difficult. It would appear, at the moment, not to be able to acquire additional resources to undertake new work without apparently dropping some of the work that one is already been involved in.

With regards to the C.N.A.A., the impact that it demands for degree work, that are made in terms of staff research, staff publications, would be very limiting in my opinion as to what can be done. The impact here is primarily one of setting a tone for the conduct of degree support, or the support that staff give to degrees, while, at the same time, being tied to the demands that SCOTEC, SCOTBEC courses make, because they fundamentally have a large teaching commitment. Not just dictated by SCOTEC or SCOTBEC, but by the kind of student that opts for the below-degree level courses.

Possibly the next in importance is the things like college policy which takes into account, obviously, what Government wants and what C.N.A.A. wants. You could say that the college policy is the translation of these other two factors. I don't think that employers fundamentally have a great effect or impact. It is often said that education is ahead of the needs of the community as employers see them.

Maybe, last of all, there is the effect that the students have, and it would appear my perception is that colleges adopt, in marketing terms,

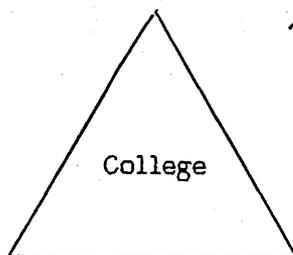
Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.

Authorising/validating bodies

- CMAA
- Professional bodies
- SCOTEC / SCOTBEC

Employers

Government



College policy & corporate strategy

College staff
- availability
- expertise

Other college resources

Students - themselves } their
- their parents } aspirations

- their experience as students influencing up-grading of courses.

a product orientation and not a marketing orientation. That the student is the customer, fundamentally, has to accept the contents, the tangible product if you like. The student has to accept the tangible product. What you can say, is that student opinion working from within the college influences the way in which courses are taught, not so much the design of the new course development work.

Dimension 2

My academic discipline is in the area of management studies, and looking at it in a general way, management studies does contribute to some of the, or a lot of the, existing degree courses. In developing new ones, there would appear to be an increasing norm that since we are very much vocationally orientated in our work, that some appreciation of management in general is included in many of the new courses. To me, that is the main area that I think development will come in. The implications, therefore, that has for teaching, and for research, is fundamentally to be able to relate the general management awareness across a wide variety of disciplines. By discipline, I mean, for example, from Physiotherapy to Dietetics to Public Administration to Consumer Studies, and so on.

The other area in which management studies has a major contribution is in the development of new courses at post-degree and postgraduate level, and that has obvious implications of a different kind for teaching and research. These implications are, that the teaching would and has to be reinforced by respectable or rigorous research into the areas of any postgraduate development.

In the two kinds of course development, one, if you like, primary development, such as the degree in Physiotherapy. The management studies, which in that degree includes the teaching in research methodology and statistical support for the research, is obviously very much interrelated with, not only the Physiotherapy itself, but with the Information Technology and the use of the computer to facilitate data processing and data retrieval.

In the postgraduate field, for example, in any initiative to do with management and the health service, the inter-relationships with other

disciplines take on another meaning and that is, that fundamentally one has to ensure that the behavioural sciences base for management is adequately built on, acknowledged and built on.

Dimension 3

I am not sure that I am, 'off the cuff', fully aware of the overall academic goals of the college. My understanding, over the past ten years, has been that the college has aimed to increase the academic level of the courses located in the college, and this has been achieved by upgrading some courses from diploma to degree level. It has been achieved by establishing degree courses for the first time in the college and it also has been achieved by shedding some of the lower level courses. The relationship that this has had to new course development, of course, is obvious.

In the first instance, it has caused the college to enter into a relationship with the C.N.A.A. By doing that, the development of these courses has been monitored in various degrees of rigour, that in turn has created the need for existing college staff to upgrade their inputs, getting themselves into a higher level of work and this has meant increased input from a research view point, the increase in the number of people who have gone on to take higher degrees, and it has also affected the appointment of new staff.

In relation to the influence of formal structure on the process on evolving new courses, the major thing here is that this particular college has developed a formal committee structure in overall terms. Our new course development has been put into the hands of committees, course development committees. Therefore, one has tended to get a representation across the disciplines of the college, because the committees seem to identify the areas in which input is required, rather than perhaps the talent that individuals have. In other words, if we had two very talented people in one discipline, you would only get one represented in Course Planning Committee. In another area, if we had two not so talented people, you would end up with one of those on the committee. So the formal structure does influence the people who are involved in developing new courses. This is not to say that the initiative originally maybe does not come from some influence

outside the formal structure, but what appears to happen is that very quickly it does become part of a formal course planning process.

Dimension 4

My experience and involvement with formal organisational processes in relation to new course development has been in, and could be looked at in, various ways. One is the involvement in a degree development in my own field or my own department's field of expertise, i.e. the Institutional Management field. The second experience is with the development of those courses in which management has an awareness level input.

In relation to the development of our own departmental degree initiative, this is a long drawn out experience. Once we developed a degree in Institutional Management which we considered had to have a rigorous management component, because it was a degree in management. My experience, or our experience, with C.N.A.A. was that the panel completely rejected this, primarily because the management input was criticised at being at postgraduate level and not at first degree level. The second attempt at this degree, we diluted the management input. Maybe we coincided with a slight change in the membership in the panel and, fundamentally, we were told it did not now have enough management in it.

Experience number three in relation to this degree development, came when there was an attempt to involve the staff who would be responsible for the technical core, i.e. the Food Studies and the Accommodation Studies element. Again, we hit a problem and it would appear that in this instance, the C.N.A.A. rejected this submission because the people responsible for the preparation and involved in the technical core were considered not to have the qualifications acceptable to them for this degree work. Out of all that, would come my assessment that C.N.A.A. panels are variable and that it all depends on, or one's success depends on, the membership of the panels. I also felt at the time, that there were some political factors in the situation. Some of these would be to do with the fact that another college already, in fact, had been successful in developing a degree in the Institutional Management area, the Hotel and Catering area. Rightly

or wrongly, I got the impression that we were not really getting the support from the Scottish Education Department, nor, in fact, from the C.N.A.A. membership panel. This primarily, of course, is why you cannot have two quite similar, or very similar, degrees in the same part of the East of Scotland.

In relation to the involvement in the other initiatives, linked to other departments in the college where management is fundamentally servicing into those degrees, a number of issues came out. One is that you can be very lucky, for example, in the Nursing Degree, the B.A. Nursing. I was a member of the course planning team that met the C.N.A.A. panel, and I had to defend the input of statistics into that degree. I was able to do this only because there was no respectable statistician on the panel. Had there been a statistician who had really wanted to look into, or wanted to examine more closely, the statistical input, I would have been pushed to defend it in the same way I was able to do to somebody who really was not a statistician or who was less than a statistician than I was.

The point is that, because it was seen by a course planning committee that they should have some statistics and because I was the only person in the Management department at that time who could, apart from the head of department, who could have defended the statistics, my formal position as senior lecturer gave me the place on that meeting with C.N.A.A.

Earlier than the B.A. Nursing, I was involved in the B.Sc. Dietetics submission, and I have always believed that we had a very easy passage in hindsight. I think it was the early days for both C.N.A.A. and for the college, and in hindsight, a submission such as that would not now get through, nor maybe indeed would it be developed as such in the college, with the present process of course preparation. In other words, I think that the formal organisation which controls the preparation of submissions would not have allowed, and that includes the internal validation set-up, would not have allowed such a submission to go through.

I was not directly involved in the submission for the degree in Communication Studies, but I did sit in on the side lines. I think that this is the first time that I had appreciated how much politics really pays in the development of courses. Politics in the sense of internal politics. It is not easy to see why we have a degree in Communications Studies in a college of this nature, where we're fundamentally into the therapy, caring and sharing type of vocational training. The lesson that I have had is that if you want to have success in your course development, then you really have to heavily involve the experts in that field. And what of it, if these experts are, in fact, part of the C.N.A.A. panel as well?

Now that I have touched on the formal aspects rather than the informal ones. It's an example of the formal process taking account and utilising the informal for its own benefits.

In comparison to C.N.A.A. and degree development work, I have also been involved in the development of new courses with SCOTEC. This involvement comes in two committees which designed the courses. I was not personally part of that structure, but my Head of Department was and one of my lecturers was. So that from both of these sources, and again I may be appreciating now that this was an informal involvement, but both of those sources, my Head of Department and one of my lecturers, involved me in the development of parts of their committee work, in which I had a greater expertise, in which I was more familiar with the areas than they were.

My direct involvement came in a different way. That once they had produced their syllabus, the involvement was to translate that syllabus into a working programme for the teaching of the topics to HD3 and again this became part of the overall organisational processes, the formal processes within the college. Not, if I remember, called a Course Planning Committee, but in fact work which was done directly by a Course Committee. What I would say of the workings of that, was fundamentally that one or two people did all the work, produced ideas and suggestions which the Course Committee then altered or discussed, then modified. A more recent experience has been the new course development in terms of Information Studies which is a Higher Diploma

to be run in the Information Technology Unit. It is a SCOTBEC diploma rather than a SCOTEC diploma, and this was quite a different experience. The Director of the Information Technology Unit is Chairman of the Course Planning Committee, and operated her chairmanship in an autocratic way, fundamentally saying this is what you have to teach, these are the hours which I have decided should be allocated and used. A much more directive approach, less consultative.

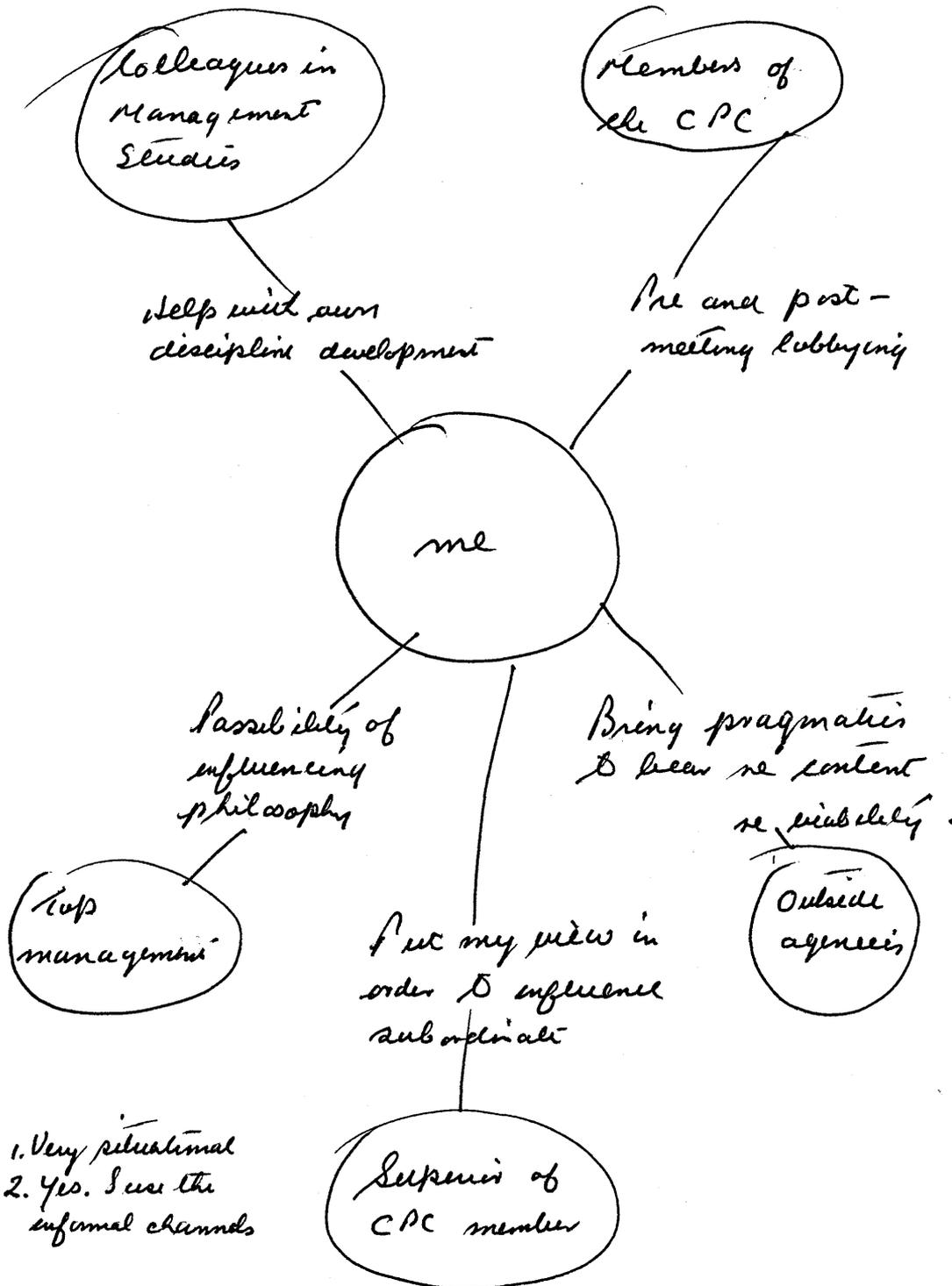
Informal Relationships

The informal relationships in relation to new course development that I have listed, apply only in a situational sense. I think that one needs to look at the specific informal relationships you would develop with people in terms of a specific situation. In other words, if one was planning a new degree in Institutional Management, the informal relationships you developed in relation to that course would be different than if you were planning a new course in Information Studies. So that it is a very situational thing. However, you can take some general implications out of this. One is that I recognise very clearly that I do use the informal structure, or I do create an informal structure; that I deliberately develop this and the prime reason is, one, to guarantee that what I might be contributing is correct and respectable. Two, that if I am not putting over my meaning and my ideas to other people, what I do is to indulge in a bit of lobbying in an informal way. As far as I am concerned, I don't think that I could operate totally through the formal system. It would seem that the formal course planning committee type of structure is there to formally ratify the informal negotiations that have existed outside the formal meeting. In that sense, then, development of the informal relationships is very important.

I have, in fact, listed Senior Management and Top Management as a general part of the informal system that I would attempt to use. I think that this is more of a very general nature. Given the opportunity, I would not necessarily seek out the help of, for example, the Principal, Vice-Principal, in order to try to bring their influence to bear on work of the committee. What I find happening at times is that the possible informal relationships that I might develop are restricted and that in many cases one tends to develop a clique of

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.



informal relationships. This, in the end, leads to possibly separate camps developing in the work of new course development in that one uses only some of the informal channels and ignores others for a number of reasons, maybe the most common being that people, or maybe one perceives people to, distance themselves from you, both in terms of your opinion and philosophy, and that maybe if one's personal attitude to these people or, in other words, if you like people, you intend to develop informal relationships with them. You tend not to do this with others that you may not care for as much. The implications of this are that the situation tends to dictate the result of this development and may not be so well thought out as it should be. Therefore, a thing to be avoided. Maybe I better repeat what should be avoided. It is, in fact, the development of informal cliques, in the development of new courses.

Transcript 2

Name: Graeme Livingstone

Position: Lecturer

Transcript of Graeme Livingstone

Dimension 1

First of all, I think we've got a real problem, at least from the way I see it, from within the Social Sciences, of our outside relationships. I don't think that we have sufficient relationships with the community in particular. Whether we have enough relationships with industry, I'm not competent to judge. But I don't think we have enough, a sufficient relationship with the community, and by that I mean, particularly people like the unemployed, housewives, this sort of thing. I think this sort of thing is important for a number of reasons, because soon there is going to be a drop in the number of 18 year olds, quite a drastic drop. And we're going to have to start thinking about continuing education and how we can start getting more mature students into the college. So, for purely survival reasons, I think we should start to consider very carefully our outside relationships. But, as I said, I don't think, as far as I can see, that in the past this has not been a very important item as far as college policy goes. I know from Academic Council, they're starting to think about this now, but it is going along in a fairly slow manner. Although they have asked us to think about this, as far as survival goes, as far as bringing in mature students goes, I don't think we have that relationship yet and I think we ought to get into it.

There is another aspect to this which is purely, let's not call it survival, let's call this a sort of community angle. I don't think the college does much for the community. This was borne out recently by this Professor Young, who came to the Home Economics Department under the auspices of Jean Smith. She did a survey around the local community to find out how the college was viewed and she found, in fact, that people knew nothing about the college. They felt they did not do anything for the college, and I can contrast this with the local P.E. college who were in danger of closing down a few years ago. A very important pressure group in their survival was the local community. So, again, that's another reason why we ought to start thinking about the community. Why? Because I do think we have a moral duty to help the people out there, and secondly it makes good sense to have people around who would support us.

So what I'm really talking about in all these things, in terms of course development, is that I think we have to get very much more into the area of continuing education and what that means is getting away from the traditional full-time model, towards part-time education for the unemployed, for the housewives, for anybody that would like to come and do the sort of courses that we offer at present over three years, but who can't come on these traditional courses, who can't do these traditional courses, but who could perhaps, over a period of five years, come for one day a week and some evening work, this sort of thing. So everything I've said so far relates to the development of a new style of courses, which are part-time, evenings, summer holidays, this sort of thing.

In terms of specific courses, I think that Home Economics worries me. We're soon coming up to a review. Everybody agrees that there has to be a very radical review. It seems to me that nobody in this college has a very clear idea of the way Home Economics should be going. Now why this is, I'm not sure. But there's big developments in the school, there's Munn and Dunning, there's the 16-18 Plan, all these sorts of things that radically affect school curriculum in Home Economics, and which we've got to adapt to. There may be changes going on outside, and I don't see that within the Home Economics Department any great debate or bringing in any outside people who can feed into this course review. Maybe it'll come about, I don't know. But I think that's one area in particular where I think there's a lack of interaction between the college and industry.

The Nursing course is interesting because of the way it's taught at the moment. Our students are given a highly theoretical, it seems to me, introduction to nursing. Yet last year, I attended a seminar given by a woman at the University who had just completed a Ph.D. on Nursing Education. She showed that this type of course which we run, actually does very little to fit students for working in the hospitals. And it may be that here again there's another area which is lacking, where there could be more interaction between the professional bodies, the actual hospital, the environment outside the college, and what goes on inside. My feeling is that the relationships between the college and the outside are very formalised, very standardised, and they don't

really allow for any tapping of new experiences or new perceptions or anything.

Diagram

O.K. I'll start talking about the influence of educational, industrial and social reports. I've got down here, for example, Munn and Dunning. I think Munn and Dunning is very important in how we're going to have to look at the Home Economics course review. Because the way that Munn and Dunning operates is very different to the traditional teaching in schools, that means we're going to have students coming to the college who have been taught Home Economics very much, I think, from a skill basis which is different to the traditional treatment that we've given them. So we've got to sit down and very carefully see what Munn and Dunning has done and how we can build upon that. I would think that the impact of some reports, obviously not all reports, but some reports like Munn and Dunning are very important.

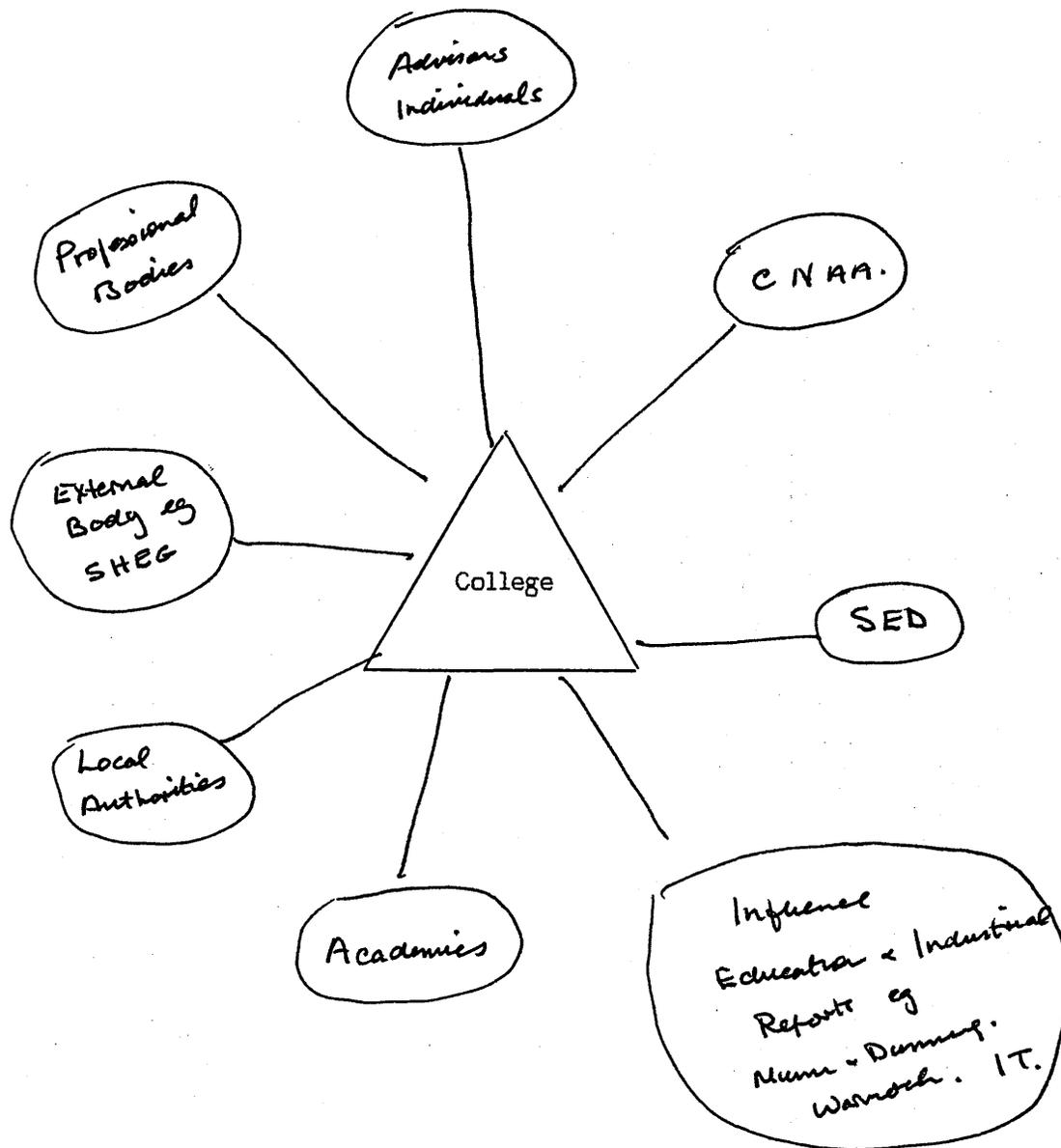
S.E.D. is obviously very important because they provide the funding for the course. If they don't like it, they don't think there's need for the course, then we don't get the funding. So that obviously is very important.

C.N.A.A. Again very important, because if it's a C.N.A.A. course, like Home Economics or Communication Studies, unless we get validation from them, we can't proceed. Once we have started, if they don't continue to validate us, then we lose out again, so again I think that's important.

Professional bodies are quite important, I think, because they set certain provisions and standards, for example, the number of students that can be taught on particular courses, perhaps the number of hours that have to be spent on the particular areas. These things have to be accepted by us so they obviously have an influence.

Supervisors and academics. Difficult to assess their impact. Obviously, in terms of the broad planning of courses, in funding and in the long term provisions for the course, they're less important. But once planning is under way, they may be important in giving us certain advice and pointing to certain directions. So they obviously have less

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.



impact, but within the actual course planning process itself, they are less influential.

Local authorities. I'm not sure about them except they have something to do with people like nurses and health visitors in their fundings. So, if they are unwilling and unable to give grants, then this will obviously affect the likelihood of the course succeeding, so presumably quite important from the financial point of view.

As far as the department goes, bodies like the S.H.E.G. seem to be important as advisory bodies in pointing out areas of needs and the likelihood of particular groups coming to a health education course. So, again, I think they're quite important but I must confess knowing less about them than I actually should.

As far as C.N.A.A. and S.E.D. goes, and professional bodies come to that, whilst the professional bodies and the S.E.D. seem to influence from a distance, we obviously have a lot more contact with C.N.A.A. We meet them in examination boards, their accepted examiners. We meet them at validation times, and they are less remote than, it seems to me, than the professional bodies or the S.E.D. They're much more involved at the 'coal face', so to speak, where S.E.D. probably operates at the level of management, so we don't tend to see them very much, although we hear a lot about their influence, their policies. There was a S.E.D. man on the latest Communication degree validation, but he said very little. I don't know what the role of S.E.D. was in the past, but certainly their role is greater than merely the provision of finance. There must be an assessment as to the viability of the course, and finance is only forthcoming if S.E.D. sees the course as viable in some respect. So, yes, they are very important, I think, in deciding which courses will get off the ground and which won't. C.N.A.A.'s task is, once that these courses are given the go ahead, to validate them and to keep constant check on their standards.

Dimension 2

In discussing how our discipline, I suppose how Social Science in general, contributes to the development of new courses, it depends very much on what course you're talking about. If you're talking about the

Location

Author: DUNCAN, James Gordon

Thesis
7606

Title: A phenomenological analysis of
new course development within the context
of a Scottish Central Insitution.

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Communication degree, I think our disciplines contribute a great deal to that. So much of it is from the focus, if you like, from social science, sociology and psychology. It was a degree that broke new ground in the college, it got away from the professional dimension. Its stress was on communication, therefore both the sociological and psychological aspects of communication became central. In fact, there was a big discussion whether you could meaningfully talk about something like communication by itself, whether or not that communication was really an aspect of basic sociological and psychological processes. So in terms of how we contribute to that degree, I think it was very important.

How we contribute to the development of new professional courses is a different matter, because professions have their own traditions. They are often, it seems to me, in this college at the present, staffed by non-graduates who lack experience in course planning, who have a certain sense of threat in the presence of graduates. I don't know what you want to call them, academics, I don't know what the word is.

Recently, my own experience, at one step removed, that I haven't been on these course planning committees like O.T. or Physio., but I have written syllabuses for them. There's a lot of conflict goes on in these course planning committees because there is a lack of understanding on the part of different people as to what each area is doing. For example, I don't think that the professionals, the O.T.'s, the Physio.'s, the Speech Therapists, really have any understanding in the Social Sciences. They don't seem to understand that Social Science is particularly about education and not training, not just training, and this leads them to view Social Science as something that can be hacked about at will, so that they will agree on a number of hours one week and on the next week half those hours. They expect Social Science to neatly fall into this, fit into their plans, not realising that the inter-connecting nature of the stuff that's being done is Social Science. You just can't hack pieces out of it. How we actually help in the development of these new courses is very much the question of how we overcome this hurdle of difference in perspectives between, say, I don't know what you call them, health professionals and social scientists. If we can't get over this hurdle, if there isn't more

agreement on common ground and better understanding, then I think we will have a sort of subsidiary role in the development of these courses. We will be shoving in stuff which we're not really happy with, which seems to meet the needs of the professionals running the courses, but which we don't really see as being adequate from the Social Science point of view. If there is a move to try to overcome this gap, perhaps through discussions at Academic Planning and Development, about the different roles and perspectives of different disciplines, then maybe there'll be a greater, or we will be allowed to play a greater role in development of new courses. At the moment, I see us being kept at arms' length as much as possible, being wheeled in on the day when C.N.A.A., or whoever it is, comes along, to say a bit and then wheeled out again and then that is the end. There isn't, it seems to me, any ongoing thought about the future of the relationship between Social Science and the particular professional discipline in question.

In terms of teaching and research, obviously the involvement in new courses offers a great potential both for rethinking teaching methods and improving them, and also for doing new research and perhaps developing joint research between Social Science and the course in question. As far as Communication goes, I think that the spin-off has definitely been in terms of teaching. We've all had to question our methods, what we teach, how we teach it, and I believe this has led, certainly for myself and I think for other people, to us probably becoming better teachers. It's certainly made the job more interesting and made us think and get into areas we probably wouldn't have got into before. In terms of research, that potential I don't think has been realised, and won't be realised whilst the present restrictions which operate at college level in terms of teaching hours, sabbaticals, this sort of thing, while these restrictions still continue to apply.

In terms of our teaching and research on other courses, I have to be careful here. Some courses I mentioned, I haven't actually taught on yet. On teaching on courses like Nursing and Home Economics, well, these are not new courses, right? In teaching on new courses, for example like Physio. and O.T. and Speech Therapy, I don't think that, given the problems that I have mentioned in talking about our

contribution to these courses, I don't really think, as long as these barriers between us and them exist, that there will be any great developments in teaching or research on these courses. Well, as I say, I don't think that being involved in courses like O.T. or Speech Therapy or Physio., given the current relationships between us and the professionals, really lead to very much in the terms of development in teaching or research. Where there's not the enthusiasm, where there's not this respect and co-operation, I don't really think these things really get off the ground. If your area is not particularly valued, you don't tend to think how can I improve upon it. If the relationships between you and the professionals are awkward, this doesn't really generate joint research, I wouldn't think, although it's possible you might start to do a bit of research itself. Recently, I went to a particular department and said I was thinking about doing a bit of research in their area. I was told I would get no support because what right have I, a sociologist, to be delving into their department? So it depends very much, I think, on the nature to the course, where there are good relationships, where your area has played a part and will be allowed to play a part. I think this probably does have beneficial effects on teaching and gives potentiality for research. Where relationships are poor, where your area of knowledge is not respected, I really think this has very little impact on teaching and research.

Inter-relationships and academic discipline

This is a difficult one because it's often a case, it seems to me, of how much you are allowed to inter-relate with other disciplines. For example, I think there is probably a sort of competition between scientists and Social Science. I think the scientists tend to view themselves as at the top of the ladder. They are the hard scientists, they have the scientific method behind them. Sociology is soft science, is wishy-washy science because we don't have the ability to control variables the way scientists reckon they do. This competition, I think, often sets up a barrier to any sort of meaningful chance of inter-relationship.

In terms of strictly theoretical inter-relationships, they're obviously many. You can't really separate, you don't have to separate, for example, I don't know, microbiology in relation to yeast and the

brewing of beer from the culture and the anthropology of the people who use the beer for social purposes. So there are obviously inter-relationships. It depends on how meaningful these inter-relationships are in terms of the courses that are taught in this college. In terms of sociology and psychology, obviously there are a great deal of inter-relationships. We often look at different aspects of the same thing which is the human being. As I said, I think there is a close inter-relationship between the social sciences. Obviously, there are also inter-relationships between the culture studies people, semiotics, linguistics. They do seem to use much of the sociological theories as a basis for semiotics, and they also try to go beyond it. I think each area does illuminate the other. It's less easy to see inter-relationships between things like physics, chemistry, biology with social science, sociology. I suppose there is that interface, if you use that word, between biology and those people who believe in genetic explanations and those who believe in culture explanations. The meeting ground is there, is a bit of both, so there is some sort of inter-relationship there.

I think that potentially there are more inter-relationships. There is a more open relationship in, say, our discipline and various professions like the home economists or the nurses who try to use what we've got. We try and understand what they want, etc. etc. Then perhaps there is a relationship with types of disciplines like English Literature or even culture studies. But there is a tendency to say, "look this is ours, this is yours". Why that is, I'm not sure. Each group probably have that, do sort of have an identity problem in terms of, you know, they see themselves in terms of their discipline and they feel that you're encroaching on their area if you try to get into it.

Dimension 3

I think that the academic goals of the college have changed over the last few years. Probably this is too simplistic and naive, but I believe that in the past survival was a goal. That's wrong. I would say, was less basic than it is today. Survival has always been the name of the game. Although I do believe possibly that in the past there may have been some idealistic notion producing good students and academic excellence, I think now the name of the game is very much

survival, and this goal greatly influences course development because to survive, we need new courses, we need an improved SSR and therefore that has become the name of the game. New courses to get more students into the college. I think possibly that goals of excellence, high standards, have become secondary to this main goal survival, and perhaps it is inevitable, given changing external conditions. I think that the goal of survival dictates that we will have to constantly review our course development, constantly look for new ways of increasing the number of students in the college and, as I have already mentioned the importance of continuing education and extending the type of courses to allow new students, new types of students coming into the college. Again, I think the prime goal here is not the standard of the course, just the fact that it is a new course and that it will be seen as viable by S.E.D. and will allow us to survive.

I think that these goals raise some interesting problems. We've seen it this term, where the management has the goal of college survival obviously, but many departments have the goal of departmental survival. If these two things are compatible, I'm not quite sure. I can give an instance of where, at Academic Council, we were told we were to discuss overall college staffing which meant looking in detail to the academic requirements of different departments. And when we tried to question whether a particular department needed as many new staff as they claimed they did, whether in fact if our department couldn't take over some of the teaching that would allow the particular department involved to have less staff, there was a very angry and violent outcry that we were just trying to protect our own position. So, yes, I think there can be a conflict between college goals as defined by management, and departmental goals. I'm not saying this happens all the time, but within a college with a departmental structure, the momentum seems obviously to protect your own. When overall college goals conflict with that, then there tends to be resistance to it. But I think for many people there is an understanding that we are in a changing market and a competitive market outside and that we do have to do something and there might be a growing willingness, I'm not sure about this, there just might be a growing willingness or understanding that we do have to work together but really I'm quite pessimistic about that. I don't really know about that one.

I think the formal structure has a very important part to play in evolving new courses. We go back as far as '75, it certainly was the Principal who said we had to change and who made us embark on this, or made us embark on the process of moving from primarily diplomas towards degrees. Since that time, I think the formal structure, if we include management, if we include Academic Council, Academic Planning, have certainly pushed as much as possible the departments to think about the possibility of evolving new courses. Sometimes, the pressure has come within this general ethos of 'new courses are a good thing'. Sometimes the pressure has come from within departments themselves. For example, our department for various reasons is trying to develop a health education course, and that has got a lot to do with our own survival. It is influenced by and does fit into the context of that formal declaration, that what we need in the college is as many new courses as possible. So I think the formal structure does play a very important role, obviously at the role of course planning committee. This is where most of the planning is done. There is now a new validation structure. I can't exactly remember exactly what it's called but at least it's coming in pretty soon. The Vice-Principal introduced it when we had all sorts of extra committees that help course planning committees to do their work. I think that this is probably quite a good thing, given some of the problems that arise with departments. They are not very experienced in developing degrees. So, yes, I think the formal structural influence is quite great.

Dimension 4

Formalisation of the processes, several in number. From the beginning, I have been involved in departmental planning and the Social Science Department as a service organisation because it has been heavily involved in this, I think to our cost, in terms of other things like research. We have been involved at departmental level, and of course I suppose as a corollary of that, in terms of the course planning level and course committee level. We've been involved in nearly every new course that has been developed in this college. It's led to big problems in terms of our ability to concentrate on any one course as we have to spend so much of our time between different courses and that has limited our ability to get involved in things like research. At the level of course review committees and course planning committees

at any one time, several of our members are involved in this at the moment. For example, we're having problems staffing our commitments to the O.T., Physio. and Speech Therapy course planning committees and this has been raised and argued about in Academic Council at the moment. Also, several of our members, including myself, have been on Academic Council and Academic Planning so we have been involved in the development of the broad goals and policies relating to new course development work in the college.

In terms of how effective things like course planning committees are, this is one thing that I feel quite strongly about. In the college at the moment the idea that the course planning committee is a very small voice, rather a small body of people, perhaps one from each service department with more from the actual parent department. I don't like this. I think the experience of the Communication Degree and the experience of the last Home Economics course review, where large numbers of people were brought together. In the Communication case, it was actually as part of the course planning forum. It was made up of anybody who was interested in the degree. In Home Economics, it is still a pretty small course review committee but the Course Review Committee did actually hold a number of seminars so that people from different departments could come along and develop their areas in conjunction with people from other areas so that there would be debates, discussions and arguments that fed back to course review and this is how I think course review committee should work. At the present, the dominant view seems to be that the course review committee should be a small body. In fact we just had a row at Academic Council the other day where our department was accused of being subversive because we actually went back from a course review committee and actually planned and changed things we had previously had. This is seen as a bad thing, but where you're dealing with education and not training, where you are dealing with people who, or at least with areas where you have to fit in to what they want, when they are constantly changing what they want. As the course planning business goes on, you can see a better way of doing it. I think that course planning should be an organic process in the sense that it should be a process of continuous review, updating your ideas, building up ideas. It seems to me that in many departments the course planning is a fairly formal

means, relating to this principle of training where people are told what they must get done. The individual member goes back to his department, comes up with something, this is fed back into the course review committee and is supposed to stay like that for ever. I don't like that idea, actually. I think it should be an organic process, it should be a process that grows with new developments with different aspects of the course, with new ideas that emerge with joint discussions. So maybe you can't, in fact, open, yes I think you can, I think you can open the course review committee up to a large number of people as in the case of Communications, and I think that courses will benefit from this. As I said, for the most part I don't think this is a dominant way in the college at the moment.

Informal Relationships

Informal relationships first. I think that the most important informal relationships are those within our own department. We do operate very much as a department even though there are sociologist, psychologist, social policy people. We do tend to work very much as a group. For example, in the Occupational Therapy degree, the O.T.'s wanted a sociology syllabus, a psychology syllabus, a social policy syllabus. So what happens is the sociologists are going to do their thing, psychologists try to do their thing, and the social policy do theirs. Then, we all meet as a group and we argue and we debate and we try and see where bits and pieces fit in together, and at an even less formal level, there's just the constant discussion of ideas that go on.

There's a course planning going on at the moment. I might come in one morning and say something to Hilary or might come and say something to Sinclair and it just starts a discussion going. This is often very useful and shows the value of these informal relationships in developing something good for a degree or whatever's being planned. So I think the primary relationships for me are within the department.

There are relationships of a sort of informal nature with other departments. For example, Communications degree, we chat to Dave McKie and Andrew Tolson, on the Home Economics degree we chat to Alice Short or Phil Bell. These are often fed back again into the department and we kick it around again. If I personally want anything from the

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.

Dept. Relationships / Hilary → Gordon
— Sinclair — Mike — Martin

Inter-dept Deacon
 eg D. Nettle, A Tolson Comm. Dept
 K. McMaster H. E. C.
 A Short
 Phil Bell

Library of Penny

H.V. Magnus Shearer

Lack of contact with Nursing Planning —
lack of formalized or similar — wrong

A Dredwell to ~~represent~~ represent Soc. Science

library, I go and see Penny or Anne-Marie, they're always very helpful. As far as Health Visiting goes, while he was here, I used to work quite closely with Magnus. He would come over to our place or we would go over to his place. In fact, one of his big moans was when we got moved over to 'C Block', he found it much more difficult to get in contact with us, so that was quite an important informal relationship.

I think these informal relationships that I am talking about now are contrasted very much. That's not quite true. I think that these informal relationships really do point to the way we work best, which is as a team. At a broader level, sometimes the course planning activities themselves allow these relationships to work very well. For example, I'm going back again to the Communication Degree, there was a very informal type of course planning where everybody was involved, where everybody was allowed to contribute. This, I think, fitted in very well with our method of discussion. Other courses don't fit so easily into this. For example, Nursing, course planning at the moment for the course review, is a very much more formalised process where there is one department representative, Anne Dockrell, who goes to course review committee. They tell her what's required then she comes back and tells us what's required. So I'm not sure if this type of activity actually encourages too much use of the informal relationships that exist at departmental level. What I'm trying to say is there are certain styles of planning that fit very well, I think, into the informal relationships in our department. There are other styles of planning that fit less well, certainly. If you have something like Nursing, then if there is something to discuss, we will as a group sit down and discuss it. It's been my experience that because of this very rigid, it seems to me, formalised way of planning, it does tend to have an effect. You do tend to go and simply do your own little bit of planning. It doesn't seem to engender the enthusiasm and interest that a less formal, formalised course planning has, where you feel you want to get involved to have debate and knock about ideas with people in the department.

If you go back to the Nursing, for example, I think that this very formalised course planning may mitigate against proper course development because you don't get a chance to debate and argue at the

course planning level. You don't get a chance to play with ideas or even criticisms. I mentioned this Ph.D. which has come out showing that nurses are not being adequately trained for hospital work. Well clearly what you need is some structure that allows these debates to take place and to be said out in the open. The formal course planning of the nurses I think stops this. They would argue that their way is perfectly adequate.

Transcript 3

Name: Donald Strachan

Position: Senior Lecturer

Transcript of Donald Strachan

Dimension 1

I think my immediate reaction to the statement, particularly in relation to the perceptions, is that I get the impression that within our own college over the years there has been an unwillingness to encourage college-to-outside environment relationships as a sort of central part of new course development. This may be a misperception, but we have experienced a kind of resistance in senior management to involving people outside, except under fairly strict conditions and limitations. I think we have gradually broken this point down and certainly currently there are more outside folk, speaking in terms of people rather than environments, that is, other organisations, there are more other individuals involved in course work, our course development work than perhaps have been in the past. One good example of this was in the planning of the Physiotherapy Degree which is very much a live one at the moment, and we have got people who are eminent as it were in the field of physiotherapy, not only within the course planning, but also within the course validation exercise. These outside folk have been extremely useful in, you know, looking critically at the drafts that have developed within the college.

I think that the question of outside organisations as opposed to individuals, if I may make that distinction, is in the college-to-outside environment relationships. One of the main things that comes over for me is that the college policy, at the highest level and as expressed through Academic Council statements, clearly indicates that it is our policy as a college to remain as a separate independent institution. My experience on a number of committees in the last year, for example, has been of the nature that whenever one suggests getting together with other organisations, for example Napier College or even Dunfermline with which theoretically there are supposed to be close ties, there is a tremendous caution expressed by members on these committees and by senior management about the nature of the relationships and the kinds of courses that might be developed. My perception of it is that it is almost a kind of creation of doubt and suspicion really, with the motivation of leading to, you know, let's not get too close because we might find courses stolen or students pinched

or whatever. It is that kind of feeling, it's a perception in that sense around. In terms of the actual experience, however, when we actually get together with people from those organisations, they are extremely helpful and are often very useful in giving you altogether a different perspective, a fresh pair of eyes, ideas from their own experience.

I think the other thing that could be said about all of this is that it is really about a recent experience we had in developing a particular course. We found outside organisations to whom we have written have been very positive in their reponse to us. Once they clarified that we are not actually in the same competitive market, once one has clarified what your student market is likely to be, they have been very willing to share their experiences and problems, and in fact, draft details with us in terms of their work in this area. In the few cases where the organisations felt that there might be some market overlap, there was slightly less willingness to be helpful, but one can understand that in market terms, it was a very reasonable response.

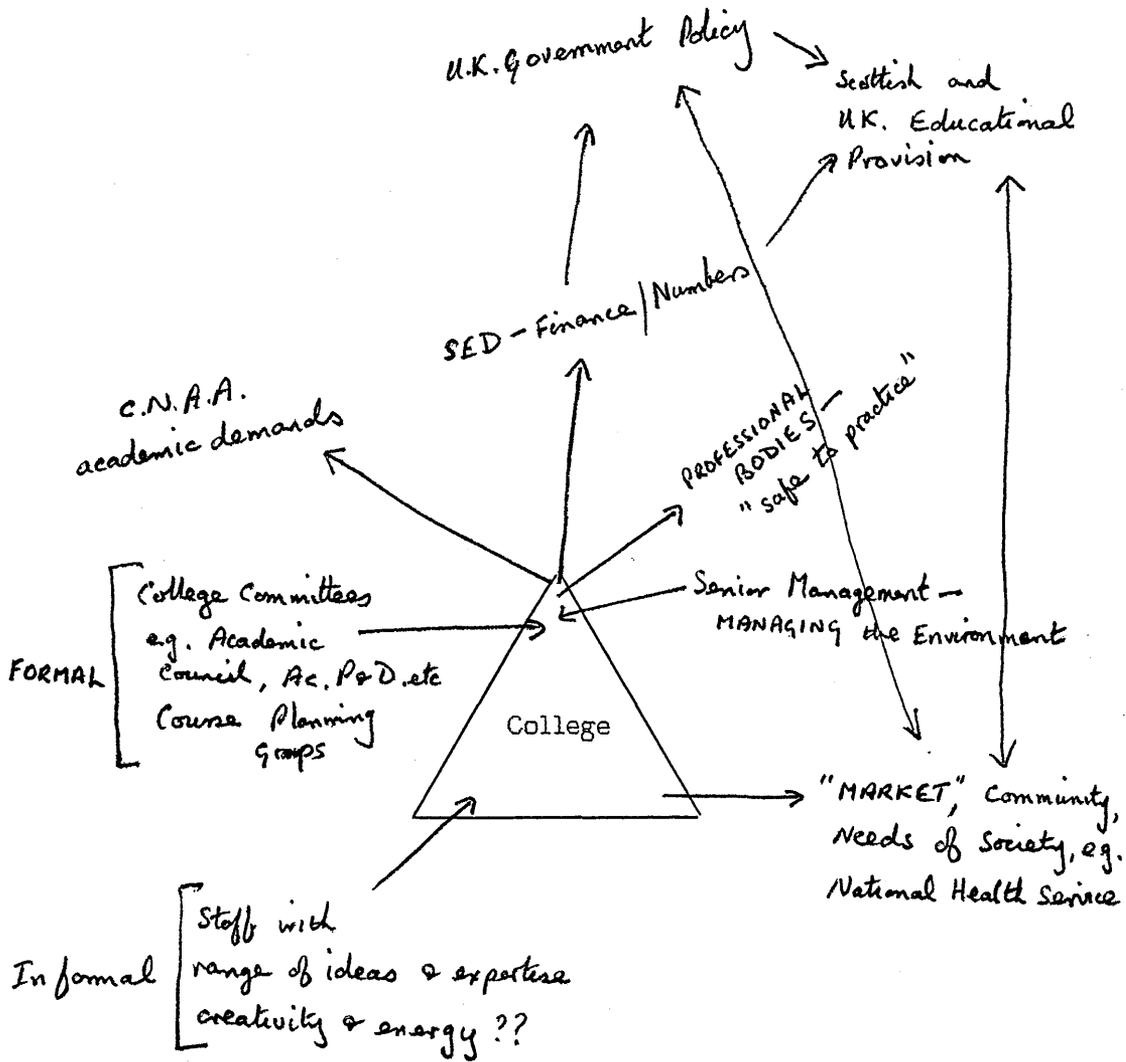
I suppose the other general comment I would like to make about this is that, in terms of new course development work, I sometimes wonder, and this is my own perception again, to what extent are we actually responding to genuine assessed needs of adults and individuals within our community and to what extent we're really concerned with survival and although those two issues ought to be consonant, there are times when my feeling is that we give priority to survival, sometimes at academic cost.

Diagram

I think the first thing to be said is my diagram, looking at it again, seems to focus on two broad categories, in college and the settings in which the college operates both on a local and national level. If we could discuss this first of all, from the college perspective and then from the externals, I think that might make a bit more sense.

I think undoubtedly that within the college the immediate impact in terms of new course development comes from people's ideas and the people resource. There are a very wide range of staff we have within

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.



the college, who have got ideas, expertise, creativity, energy, bit of luck, and that it is from individuals in small groups of that type that the major ideas will stem. We have also within the college a formal structure of committees on which these staff have representation and I see these formal ones as having a longer term impact in the sense that they can provide the opportunities for course work development to new course development to happen. For example the Academic Council or the Academic Planning and Development Committee may well determine the broad direction which the college is going, and within that encourage, at least in theory, the growth of and making concrete of these ideas that are around. One of the problems that we have at the moment is tension, in a sense, between the formal and the informal, that the college committees aren't necessarily working as effectively as they might, but certainly, in theory, the formal committees should be able to have a long term impact by determining policy direction within which the real work of the small groups and individuals can actually happen. My feeling is that senior management have a considerable impact, this again is a preconception, not so much in the creating of new ideas but in the determining the extent of which certain ideas would be backed and others which will not. In that sense, there is often a perceived blocking of certain ideas or at least a kind of neutral apathy in the terms of the development of new ideas, because these perhaps do not fit with the general way in which senior management see the way the college developing. I think that these comments probably cover most of my thoughts about the within college groups and committees and individuals.

Certainly I think, externally, we pay a great deal of attention to the way in which government policy is operating with the U.K. and in Scotland and this is seen through S.E.D. views. For example, if we were interested in developing honours degrees or postgraduate degrees currently, the S.E.D. view is that we would not be encouraged to do this simply because of the financial implication, and clearly S.E.D. are reflecting the U.K. government policy which is bound to have an impact. On the positive side, of course, there are other educational developments going on within the U.K. into which we could feed new course developments, and an example of these might be continuing education in the adult sector, another might be in the 16-18 year old

action plan, which although not directly influencing our college, certainly has an indirect influence, so to that extent I would suggest that the U.K. government policy and translated into S.E.D. action does have quite a considerable impact on what we do or, more likely, on what we don't do. This is unfortunate in some ways because quite often individuals are blocked or frustrated and perceive that they have very little, that there is very little mileage in pursuing certain lines because the ideas don't fit comfortably with the bigger scene in terms of the U.K. government position.

The other two main influences on us of this type are the professional bodies collectively, which range across a whole host of different groups, who have a concern with safety to practise, training and education, for vocational work of various kinds, and the Council for Academic Awards who are concerned with, of course, with academic awards, academic standards. These bodies, perhaps in their own ways, have significant impact on the development of new courses, particularly the professional bodies, but also C.N.A.A. because if we are in the business of translating, say translating diplomas into degrees, then we have to pay particular attention to the professional bodies' requirements. It is always argued, certainly by those from the profession, that if we cannot meet the professional bodies' requirements, then we have no course to develop. It is a primary aim, in that sense there is quite an impact. This creates tensions obviously between the external professional body making demands and the college staff who may wish to try something innovative or different which does not fit comfortably with the professional body requirement.

C.N.A.A. is less stringent in some ways but I think also has an impact in that C.N.A.A. require us to meet certain academic standards, obviously and rightly, and there is sometimes for us a clear division between C.N.A.A. academic requirements and S.E.D. demands in terms of numbers and finance, especially the length of the course, three or four years. The professional bodies who have, I suggested earlier, a safe-to-practise philosophy, I think all of these outside influences hit us as it were, have that impact at the point of planning, particularly on, you know, visits that may occur from time to time.

One last point perhaps that I should make is that both those organisations and groups, individuals working within the college and the external organisations which I've mentioned, are in the business of trying to assess the market, trying to assess the needs of society, trying to assess what the community will bear, what is appropriate to the community, and it's interesting I think to look at the extent to which individual staff who have ideas in relation to new course development find that these ideas fall on stoney ground because their assessment of the market does not fit with the assessments, say, of a professional body or S.E.D. officers. It's a very, very difficult area in which to operate in terms of getting any hard data, but certainly in terms of perception I think that a lot of new course development might take off if there was a willingness to accept that the market really is making this demand. The argument is often used to block development that the market cannot be of this or it is inappropriate and that, of course, is a matter of opinion, often at the end of the day.

Dimension 2

I think, in terms of the first part of this dimension, perhaps it would be helpful to begin by defining what my academic discipline is. I'm responding to this question in the context of the role of senior lecturer in the Department of Social Science and therefore I am talking about really the three academic disciplines, broadly sociology, psychology and social policy and administration. Although my own particular academic discipline is psychology, I think it's useful to comment upon all three and certainly from my perspective that is the kind of work that I am involved in.

I think the first thing to be said is that our kind of inputs to the development of new courses really is as a service department in the sense that we are not developing new courses nor would we perhaps want to develop new courses which have as a major aspect these three academic disciplines. We are not in the game in this college of developing in that sense pure degree or coursework of that kind. Having said that, I think there are major contributions that these three disciplines can, indeed do, make in the development of all new courses. The real thought that I have about this, I suppose, is that we have to develop the discipline according to the needs and demands of

the students coming through on a particular course. Now this means two things. One is that one has to select the material from within a wide range of that particular academic discipline, select because clearly there is competition for hours on any new course, and secondly we have to relate it to the vocational focus of that particular course. so if we are teaching physiotherapists as opposed to health visitors, one would want to orientate the academic discipline to the specific need of those groups. I think that the academic disciplines that our department is concerned with are clearly central and important to the development of new courses in a college of this type. There are contributions that are vital really across the board in all our existing courses and this I would foresee developing and continuing in any new course that we might be involved in.

I think, in terms of question B, split this between teaching and research, I think from a teaching point of view the implication is that we would want to, first of all, to be concerned with developing the curricula in such a way that the teaching reflects the particular expertise that exists within our department. For example, if a particular new course demands, say, a cognitive emphasis in psychology inputs, then this would require a psychologist in our staff who has this orientation to be involved at that point. But the same curriculum later might demand a different orientation, for example in psychology into, say the social areas and that would require a different teacher/lecturer involved. So one of the implications for teaching of the statements I've been making is that one would want to put the best people forward at the appropriate time in a teaching programme and this leads to questions of timetabling, how much it is possible to actually involve these various people at various stages. Sometimes very difficult to do, sometimes not appreciated perhaps from a senior level where there is a feeling that in some areas anybody can teach anything as long as they've got the book.

In terms of teaching methods, I think this is an important point. We are well aware in the development of new courses as I said earlier, we're not actually developing sociologist or psychology graduates, therefore the students don't perceive our subject inputs as being the primary core of the course. Fair enough, it does mean that the

teaching methods used have to reflect the need to link the input to the vocational orientation of the course. That means, for example, there are lecturers and teachers who have to know quite a great deal about the vocational orientation of the course that's involved and should be involved in small group teaching, for example seminar or tutorial work, as well as lecturing, say, on a larger scale. So, there are some of the implications for teaching.

In terms of research, I think that the general view within our department is that research work that we are involved in should have some fairly clear link or direction in relation to the courses that we are developing or will develop in the near future. Suggestion is therefore that research in our areas that we might be involved in, or are involved in, would be applied rather than pure in the classic distinction. I think the other point about research is that within the college, perhaps our department, Management and Science, are three departments that have people with considerable research experience and there is a very happy marriage between individuals within our department and members of other professional departments who perhaps don't have that same level of research background in the pursuit of applied research in the combined basis, and we've certainly tried to develop this approach in the past few years. Of course, the development of new courses increasingly demands our research base in anticipation of the development of that course rather than following it.

Lastly under C, our main inter-relationships come through in terms of the formal structure through sitting on course planning committees or groups, with folk from other discipline areas. I think our main perception of the nature of the inter-relationship is that quite often because of comments I made earlier about, say, research background and the depth of knowledge that our staff must have of academic areas, we do find in particular in professional areas that there is a feeling among those who have developed disciplines within the professional areas, a feeling of mild threat or mild concern that we have a depth of knowledge in specific areas which they do not share. This often is translated into defensive behaviour of various kinds within the planning activity. I think in relation to other more classic disciplines, for example Science, Management and some of the areas

within Communication, there's quite a degree of respect and good relationships existing within these, mainly because those who have developed a depth of study within the given area quite often are able, without necessarily knowing the detail, are able to understand the kinds of contributions that other academics may be able to offer. Generally I find a very good relationship of that sort among those who have developed disciplines in depth. Our problems arise where the disciplines have been developed rather shambly. Unfortunately, and you know the old adage "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing", does seem to affect us from time to time.

Dimension 3

Question A first. I think the problem I have with this question is that I perceive some discrepancy between what are stated to be the academic goals overall of the college and what I think they are, if you like, the hidden goals which are not necessarily academic. I mentioned earlier that one of the more explicit goals as opposed to academic goals in the college that I have heard expressed at senior level at the committees is the need for us to retain separate identity and to survive into the 90's and beyond 2000. Personally I do not necessarily see that as (a) an academic goal nor (b) as necessarily a desirable goal, although that is held by those who do have very strong influence within the college. In terms of explicit academic goals, we are said as a college to provide a range of vocational courses at diploma and degree level to a very high academic standard. I think the pursuit of "excellence" is one academic goal that is mentioned but when one actually sees the operation of that in detail, it's very questionable whether we are in the pursuit of excellence or rather in the pursuit of maintaining student numbers which at times means that excellences or the standard of excellence perhaps are dropped.

I suppose the other academic goal that is fairly explicit and shared is that we are concerned within our college to produce a range of degree and ultimately post-degree, postgraduate courses of various kinds. Although we are coming to the end of a particular stage of development in the college of achieving these goals by the conversion of diplomas into degrees, which was obviously a fairly efficient way of raising the standards within the college, although we have come towards the end of

that with the two final diplomas being raised degrees or attempts to raise degrees, we have now begun to look at other academic goals, for example contributing to the continuing education area, that is developing within our country and the possibility of new course development arising out of that. I think in this context there are institutional goals that are not academic which are about the effective use of the institution in terms of its human and physical dimensions, for example the idea of using the buildings during summer has led to the idea of developing summer schools which would fit reasonably well with the idea of short continuing education modules or courses which would be reasonably inexpensive to run but would maximise those resources. If one could call that an academic goal, then that is an academic goal. It seems to me rather muddying the ground between academic and institutional goals, in terms of college use.

In terms of answering question B clearly, the formal structure here defined as both the management structure of principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, heads of departments and so on and the committee structure, that overlays that. In my experience, these structures that I mentioned earlier have a very important role in evolving new courses mainly because if ideas for the development of new courses don't get support within either the committee structure or within the management, line management structure, then the chances of them getting anywhere are very, very slim indeed. I think the other point is that the organisation that we have at the moment in terms of line management into departments is often experienced by staff as being a limiting factor in the evolving of new courses, and one has to work quite hard to cut across the boundaries that the departments tend to create. I think that in that sense it has both a kind of benefit and disbenefit. The disbenefit is the one I have just mentioned. The benefit of having an academic structure of, sorry a management structure of that type, is that those who share certain disciplines and backgrounds tend to be together and this does create a synergistic effect in terms of ideas.

We have some experience of developing new courses which cut profoundly across the departmental structure, and at a recent meeting that I attended, the Principal was very, very critical of this, suggesting that it was a noddy or a haphazard way of developing new courses. I think

that little example shows some of the tensions that exist between those who are perhaps seeking to cut across these kinds of boundaries and those who feel from a management point of view are easier to control if people are held and controlled within their various departmental settings.

I suppose one last point that I would like to make is that the formal structure, when it works well, for example Staff Development and Research Committee, Academic Planning and Development, can be extremely supportive and helpful in the evolution of new courses. These particular formal structures can provide the college's institutional setting in which the detailed work can take place. All too often that kind of support is not made explicitly, but where it is made or given explicitly, one sees a blooming and a development of new courses that is very encouraging. But I would stress that ideas that in the end do tend to come from individuals, at whatever level, and the formal structure really is a means for whereby those ideas can then be developed into some kind of concrete reality. The formal structure itself is unlikely to produce those ideas 'to order' in some kind of way. I think if one pursued that line of reasoning, I think it would lead to a fairly sterile organisation.

Dimension 4

I think that the main experience that I've had with formal organisational processes remain with new course development work comes from Academic Planning and Development and course planning committees themselves. The main feeling that one has about these activities is that they are incredibly slow. The main, I think we'll have to put this in the context of the organisation as a whole, the main concern with this college is teaching. Clearly this is the priority, and planning tends to be done within a fairly busy teaching situation. It may be that formal organisational processes provide us with, or a way of both monitoring and indeed encouraging new course development, but there are times when one feels that that kind of bureaucratic support is grinding quite slowly. Nevertheless, I think that it is important to act as a kind of incentive and prompt, otherwise the new course development work, like lots of other work, may be perceived as secondary to teaching and does actually get put to one side because one simply is

responding to the demands of courses and students that we have currently. So that is a very general statement about the processes. They do sometimes appear to be slow and people can be critical of them for that reason.

I think the second point is that sometimes the formal organisational process is such that unless staff have ideas and, you know, have things that they want to develop, know what these processes are, in other words to play the game by the rules, they find themselves in some difficulty and I think from time to time people feel frustrated at these processes operating.

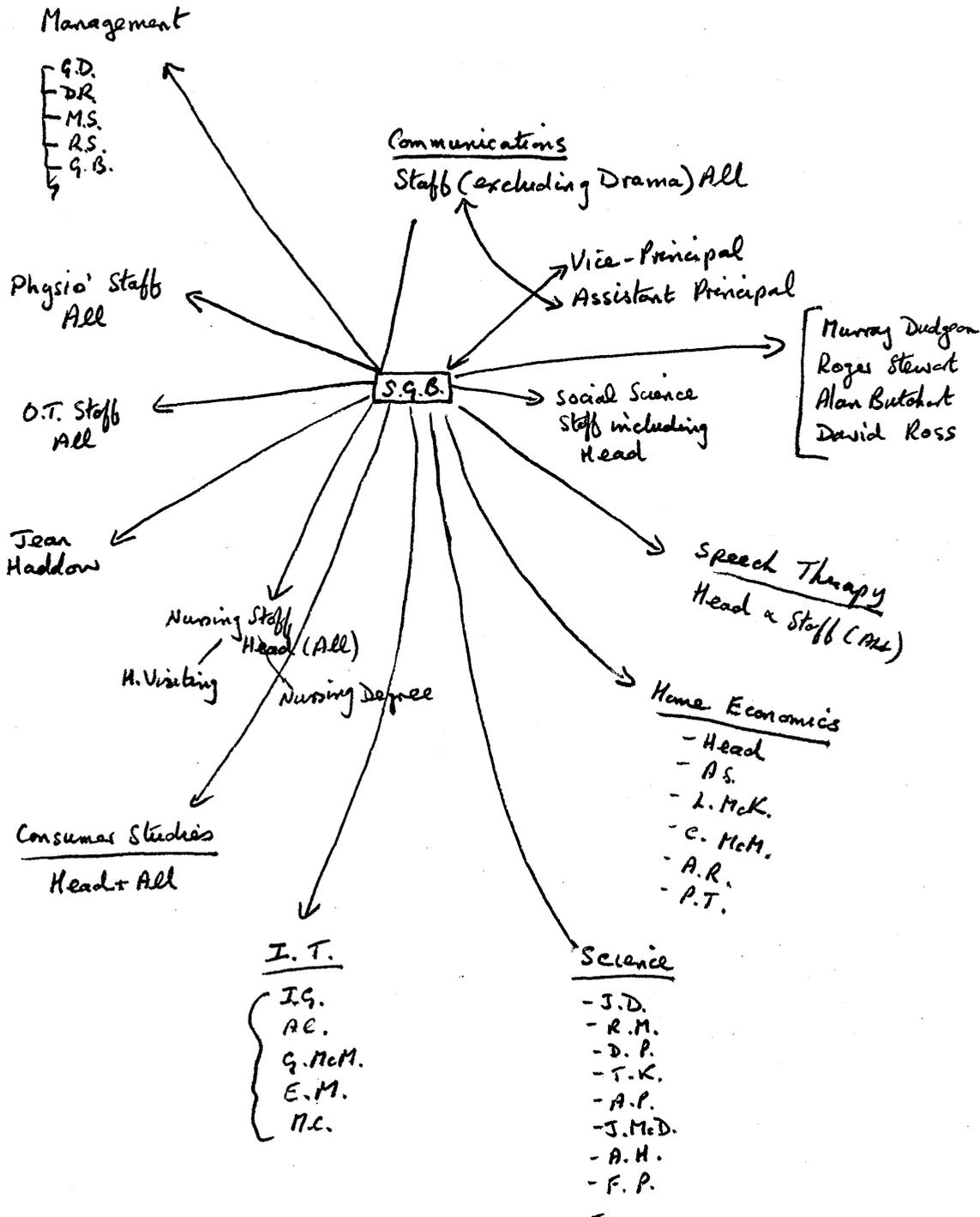
Thirdly, from a sort of positive point of view, the formal organisational processes, in my experience, do actually lead to a very positive support and the provision of resources. For example, when these are needed, if the new course being developed is acceptable, the processes are very good at getting the support systems operating to achieve the goals, so that although one can see criticisms and difficulties with these processes, nevertheless they work very effectively to produce the goods in the long run.

Informal Relationships

I think the main comment to be made about the informal relationships within the college is that I personally find that I can work better if I had a network of relationships of this kind, where I know people as people rather than representing a particular departmental interest or particular discipline whatever, in the college. So I work well within an informal situation of this kind and personally consider it fairly central to the development of new courses. Two reasons for this. One is that by knowing people, I am aware of the fact that they actually exist within the organisation and perhaps have a particular expertise or knowledge or experience that would be of value in terms of new course development. I'm always interestingly surprised to find that people who have been here for a few years still say 'who is that?' for someone who perhaps has been here as long, and it is simply because they have not, because of the departments they are in, they've just not come across each other. So I think that is a very useful part of it,

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.



knowing people within the college, you know who may be interested in or who may have expertise in a given area.

Another factor is that I believe that a lot of new course development has to happen within an atmosphere of trust and respect from one member of the planning group to another. I've had a lot of experience with the reverse of that where new course ideas have been difficult to develop because there have been underlying attitudes, tensions between people that have been unhappy. From a positive point of view, I believe that if one can create good relationships within the college before you can get to a committee, that that will carry over a positive effect in terms of your work within the group. So I think that for that reason it is quite useful to develop that kind of network.

I think the last point I would like to make about this is that when one has a series of informal relationships of this kind, it is possible to think to find ways of overcoming what might be seen as academic difficulties in a planning situation. In other words, the new course development doesn't stop once one is outside of a committee that has been set up to deal with it, discussions continue over a cup of coffee or lunch, or on the end of a telephone, but that really does require some kind of knowledge of the other folk within the organisation in order to continue that important part of the development. I had some direct experience of negotiating, if I can use that word, out of the situation which would be getting into an impasse within the formal planning group by using the informal network in a quiet sort of backroom way to change, perhaps to explore, attitudes, to try to resolve the particular issue, outside of the forum of the planning group itself, and on two occasions it certainly has been very successful. On one occasion it was totally unsuccessful, but you can't win them all.

Transcript 4

Name: John Wilson

Position: Senior Lecturer

Dimension 1

I think I would probably regard the outside environment as having at least three components. I would regard the potential student population as part of the outside environment, and then, secondly, the world of employment, potential employers, and then, thirdly, the academic world, or at least that part of the academic world that is relevant to our own course.

If we take the potential students first, I would have thought that we have got to take into account, first of all, the likely qualifications that our students will have, and secondly the aspirations that students will have. So as far as developing courses is concerned, we first of all, if I put these the other way round, first of all we have got to develop a course which is likely to have relevance in terms of potential students' aspirations. They need to get something out of it, there needs to be something built into the course that they feel is worthwhile. And then, secondly, we have to consider realistically the types of students that we would be getting and therefore try to match, try to devise a content of the course which will match their aspirations and their likely qualifications.

Then, I think, as far as the world of employment is concerned, we also need to put content into our course which employers are not going to reject. There needs to be something that they would appear to find acceptable, so they would feel the students have actually been through, in employment terms, a meaningful educational process.

Thirdly, as far as the academic world is concerned, we need to have in whatever course we are developing, we need to present the course in acceptable terms and what that means is really getting on to the same wavelength, talking the same language as those people from whom we must seek approval. What we are talking about here initially, in our case, is the C.N.A.A. And right throughout the development of the course which I am involved in, I have been very conscious that one needs to get on to the same wavelength as those people from whom one is seeking approval. What that really means, I think, as much as

anything else, is gathering what one might call intelligence, being in possession of intelligence in the military sense so that we know who we are talking to, what their interests are, what they have written, which conferences they are attending. We need to establish personal contact with people like that to make sure that by the end of the day we are talking the same language and sharing their interest. The worst thing in course development is to appear being very naive.

I think, certainly in our first submission, we had taken account of the employment environment. Firstly we had considered the student experience, secondly we had neglected to gather the kind of intelligence that would have permitted a successful submission on our first occasion. In my experience, when the first submission failed, we produced the second submission fairly quickly. I think within six months we had rewritten the degree, but that was based very much on a much wider understanding and appreciation of the academic environment.

Well, perhaps I could add a footnote on the academic environment to give a more precise example. I think that course development has to be gone about in a fairly political way. Now I think we did the right political thing in our Mark One, when we had a fairly elaborate survey of industry. We used that to justify the approach we were taking. We were attempting to justify our initiative really to the Scottish Education Department which is really another part of the environment that I haven't considered so far. We thought we were being quite smart politically by carrying out a very thorough survey of employment opportunities, what employers thought about appropriate courses, but we were not terribly clued up politically as far as the academic world was concerned. So we made it our business to try to compile a potted biography of people on the C.N.A.A. board. We made it our business to find out which conferences they were attending. We then made it our business to meet personally members of the board in an environment which they had determined. In other words, we bumped into them. This, then, when it came to the visit would enable us, we thought, to register with them as familiar faces, people that they had seen around in places they had been, and therefore we would be much more acceptable, we would be seen as being on the right wavelength, as part of their scene legitimately.

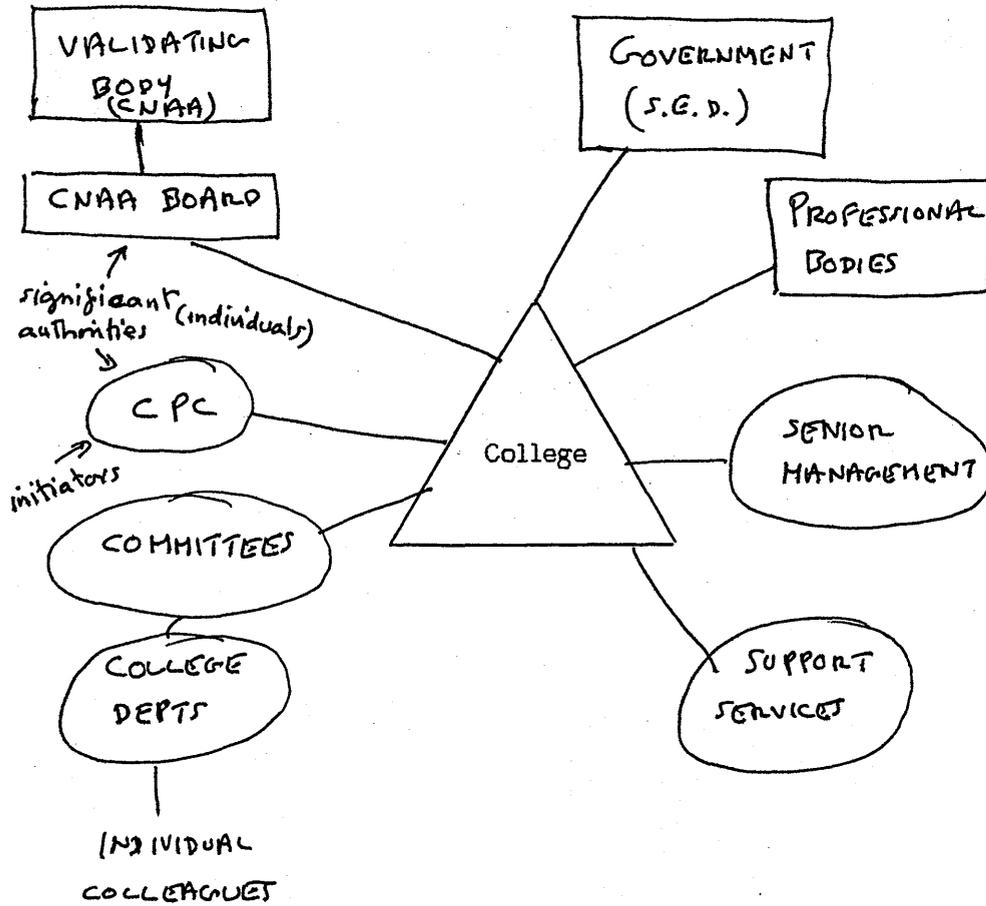
Diagram

I will deal with each group that I have identified in that order. First of all, the Government. As far as this college is concerned, in my own experience, the Scottish Education Department has the power to accept, that is to further or block, any kind of course development. So their impact is, it represents a hurdle which has to be overcome. In my own particular experience, we did not have to fight terribly hard in order to receive permission. This may have been because we were operating in an area which was slightly unconventional and they weren't quite sure about it. They may also have been favourably impressed by the initial presentation on paper which looked extremely methodical, and again I am referring to the original survey of industry and commerce which we carried out, which appeared very much to justify what we were attempting to do. When that initiative failed, we came up with a substantially different proposal and presented it to the Scottish Education Department in the guise of the revision, Although essentially it was a revision, it was a totally new proposal in all but name. So far as government was concerned, they have not exerted much of an impact in course development, accepting that we have to get their permission to go ahead.

Second body I have indicated is the C.N.A.A. C.N.A.A. have a very, very much bigger impact in my experience. They lay down very tightly certain parameters for course design and that is a matter of C.N.A.A. policy as a whole. But C.N.A.A. in my view is not a monolithic body and course developers really require to understand the anatomy of the individual board, perhaps more accurately the physiology of the board. In other words, how that board works, what ideas are acceptable to the board, and I have talked about this earlier. The C.N.A.A. board have a tremendous impact in my view on what is eventually acceptable and even if they approve of an initial proposal, then in their reports of monitoring visits and so on they will substantially modify what the course team wishes to do. So the individual board, I think, has a tremendous impact at degree level terms in this institution.

Then I think the next, I have also mentioned professional bodies. I have had very little experience in dealing with professional bodies as such, but I would imagine the professional body, like the Royal College

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.



of Nursing or whatever, perhaps has the same kind of impact as the C.N.A.A. board, because again I think professional people can get very uptight about the kind of training which entrants to the profession will be getting and they are particularly concerned about the maintenance of professional standards, etc., etc. So I can imagine they will have the same kind of impact as an individual C.N.A.A. board.

Then the next group I identify are what I have labelled 'significant authorities', and by significant authorities I mean individuals, largely in my experience, and these are people who are prominent in the field. I think that they can have a tremendous impact, tremendous positive impact potentially, and certainly in my experience we would not have been able to achieve successful course development without the use as consultants of individuals who were acceptable to the wider academic world, and we have relied very heavily on their advice and have been very lucky. So their impact is overwhelming.

The next body identifies that of the course planning committees themselves within the college. The composition of the course planning committee again is crucial because it will determine whether or not an initiative is likely to be successful. I think I am aware of instances in this college where the government has been favourable, the C.N.A.A. has been favourable, there have been people who have been willing to give consultant advice which potentially would have been very valuable, and the course planning committee itself has not had the ability or the imagination or the will, in fact, to capitalise on a favourable situation. So as an offshoot from the course planning committee, I've identified another group which I've labelled initiators. In any form of course development which is going to be successful, there must be one or two people who have the vision to see what is required to be done and to have the energy to persuade the course planning committee to fall in with that vision and to pursue it to success.

Other bodies within the college. We have a college committee system and the course planning committee has to receive approval for its actions from various committees, Academic Planning and Development, Academic Council and so forth. I think these committees have a potentially blocking impact rather than a facilitating impact at the

moment. The committees are not themselves initiators and do represent another kind of a hurdle which has to be overcome. I think probably it is a pretty minor hurdle given the fact that there are forceful initiators behind the idea.

In college terms, the next bodies that I identify are college departments because again many courses will require the co-operation of other departments and if those departments are not willing to give it, are not committed to the idea, then that represents a hurdle and this is very important. The very important point here is the personality clashes that arise between heads of department, and it is not unknown for one head of a department to be remarkably unenthusiastic about an other head's proposal, and that unenthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm translates into obstruction as it gets further up the college into committees. Or it might take the form of being reluctant to release staff from their own department to support someone else's initiative. Springing out of the college departments, of course, there are the individual colleagues. Any course development needs people to do the planning, people to do the eventual teaching and so the course planning committee is dependent upon the goodwill of individual colleagues to join in the enterprise and to share.

Two other groups within the college which I identify, senior management is the first. As far as senior management is concerned, their impact again is considerable. I know that in one or two cases within this college, senior management has in fact taken over the role of the course planning committee. Senior management have acted as the initiators, senior management have, in fact, been responsible for securing successful course development by compensating for the inadequacies of the formal course planning committee. That in our environment now is much less possible with our new committee structure, where initiatives have to be seen to be coming through the appropriate committee channels and it is no longer possible for senior management to engineer a course development in the way that they once could. I think that it's worth noting at this point that in this college where we have five degree level courses running, I think that senior management could be held responsible in a sense for 'engineering' perhaps three of those. If not entirely engineering,

smoothing the passage considerably. The failure of the college in recent years to achieve success in course development, I think, is partially the result of senior management being unable to assist course planners to cut the corners.

Lastly, I have identified support services. I think that in course development it is very, very helpful indeed to have the support of people like academic registrars, assistant secretaries, academic services, and people such as typists, secretaries and printroom personnel, because inevitably in the business of producing the documentation to a series of deadlines, without the goodwill of these people, with good personal relationships, it becomes very difficult, and if a particular deadline is missed it may mean a delay of about six months or more.

Dimension 2

This is rather a difficult one for me to speak to because I don't think that I can claim to have an academic discipline in the conventionally accepted sense. No, again, I feel I almost want to pass on this business of academic discipline because in a sense my original discipline is now so far behind me and times have moved so far that a lot of what I have done has really become irrelevant in my work and I think that what we have to be prepared to do as individuals is to be prepared to learn new skills or to develop new academic interests which might in fact be a long way from our original discipline. I can see that in some respects that the academic discipline as such can in fact be a barrier and a hindrance to course development. Now, again in my experience of talking to people who have been in the college with an original discipline in, shall we say with English Literature or something of that sort, then we have suffered because they try to cling to their discipline to make sure that their discipline was represented in the course. I don't think that it is accidental in our first submission, we did have elements in that first submission which did attempt to preserve disciplinary integrity and we have now ended up with a degree of the second submission which is multidisciplinary and many of the old disciplinary boundaries had actually to be broken down. Currently we have difficulty because some of the course team are still wanting to teach the discipline, for example psychology or sociology,

rather than to use their background understanding in order to teach a new field of study. So the academic discipline from my own personal experience can, in certain circumstances, certainly be a hindrance rather than a help in development of the new courses. Since new courses are at the forefront and academic disciplines tend to come way behind, I think there is a tendency for people who say graduated twenty years ago to want to teach what they themselves were taught and new courses are not really interested in that kind of thing, or at least they do not benefit from that kind of attitude.

What implications would this have for teaching and research? I think again if I am consistent, I would have to say that individual lecturers ought to be conducting research in the interests of the courses in which they are actually involved. That is not to say that in some environments pure disciplinary research isn't also required, but in the context of course development then I think there ought to be at least a significant number of people in the course team whose choices and decisions about what research to do should really be conditioned by the courses upon which they are teaching.

As far as inter-relationships are concerned, if we were thinking about my field of study, my field of teaching rather than academic discipline, then in my own case the inter-relationships I think are considerable because I think that within just about any course that I can imagine there ought to be a contribution from the field of Communication Studies.

Dimension 3

I think that the academic goals of the college are subordinate to the basic organisational goal which is simply to continue to survive as an autonomous college. That having been said, I think possibly at the moment the academic goals of the college are really related, not necessarily to increasing the range of courses that we offer, but to improving their standard, thereby improving the reputation of the college, and a securer reputation would presumably secure our organisational continuation and independence.

As far as new course development is concerned then, new course development recently and currently is, has to do with upgrading the courses from diploma to degree level and then from degree level, ordinary degree level to honours degree level. So I would say that the institutional goal is the end, the achievement of intermediate academic goals is a means to that end, and the raising of the level of qualifications that we are able to offer again helps us to achieve the overall academic goals. The raising of the standards as before also has an effect on research. We're beginning to think more seriously now about appointing research assistants and are beginning to get a kind of reputation for some research activity which has been identified as being a big weakness within this college for a long time now.

As far as the formal structure is concerned, again I think I have touched upon this in my earlier comments. The formal structure in my view represents more of a hindrance to the process of evolving new courses rather than, rather than assisting it. The difficulty with the formal structure is that the formal structure is committee based and individuals within committees don't really feel responsibility. I think where individuals have ideas, where they are prompted perhaps to have ideas initially, but then when they take up the ideas and pursue them that they are unable to get much further than operating informally. Or, put it this way, there comes a formal stage, or there are a number of formal stages in course development, but I think it is the informal preparation, the informal ground work, which will determine whether or not the formal stages are gone through. So that in this context, the basic belief is that the secret of successful course development lies in having a nucleus of compatible energetic individuals with some imagination, some ability, who have the skill to push an idea through whatever formal structure happens to exist.

There is a footnote to this. Our first submission from the course that I am involved in relied upon a course planning committee which was formally instituted and set up. It consisted of members who had been nominated by Heads of Departments so the composition was formally determined. When our first submission failed, we chose to move to a less formal arrangement and we recruited individuals informally on the basis of interest and willingness to participate, so we were able to

tap energies of people who had not been nominated formally by their Heads of Departments first time round. We carried out the bulk of the planning of the second submission not through a course planning committee as such, but in a much less formal forum, and that did seem to achieve much more success. We were able to harness better the energies of the people whose skills were necessary, or essential to achieving the ultimate goal.

Dimension 4

By now, it should be fairly clear that I'm not a great fan of formal organisational processes. I much prefer to work with people of like minds as informally as possible. I recognise, of course, that there are limitations to this because the informal group can only take things so far, then formal sanctions have to be achieved, have to be secured. Basically, formal organisational processes in this college occur within the setting of the committee. In my experience I find that committee members tend to attend meetings late in the day, tend to come unprepared, not having thought through the issues substantially or not having read or really understood the papers which were circulated in advance. The result is that within the formal setting a great deal of talking goes on, but is talking frequently off the top of the head and it is an attempt to talk out ideas for the first time. In other words, the formal setting is being used for what is essentially an informal function. The trouble with that is, at the end of the formal meeting decisions are usually expected to be taken and either the meeting recognises that it can't take a decision at that stage and therefore simply agrees to meet again, or inevitably a small working party is set up which then proceeds to work informally. But a small working party still has to present its ideas later on and we are at the same situation again where yet another informal discussion takes place on a basis of a working party report which may not have been read thoroughly, which may go through on the nod, so that the formal process is itself dependent upon a kind of prior informality.

Again, in my own experience, I find that many of the best ideas arise informally. For instance, in the initiative which I've been most involved, the suggestion, the idea was first mooted informally by senior management in the college. A number of informal discussions

were then held as to whether or not the idea was feasible and then subsequently the idea became formalised. I'm quite convinced in my own mind the most productive meetings were the informal ones and, very frequently, meetings which only took place between one or two people, particularly meetings between the initiators of the plan and individual consultants or between one or two members of the course planning team who were specialists and other specialist advisers and consultants. A lot of the best work seemed to be done in a very informal setting in somebody else's office or even socially. I don't really believe there is much of a substitute for a person on his or her own, really developing an idea as far as he can take it in informal consultation over a period of time with other people and delaying the involvement and formal process for as long as is practical or possible, and then subsequently when we are in an informal setting, of keeping the formal occasions as few in number and as short and only for as short a time as possible.

So far I have really, have been talking about the inadequacies of formal committee work. There is another feature of formal organisational processes which I find very frustrating in new course development and that is the time lags which occur between one stage and the next. Frequently, if approval has to be sought at a number of levels, one finds that the sequences of planned committee meetings are not appropriate so that the subordinate committee may meet just after the principal committee has met, and therefore there may be a time lag of several months before the principal committee meets again, so what was discussed at the subordinate committee may then come up at the principal committee. I'm quite sure that within the last two, perhaps three, years this time lag effect has proved a very serious barrier to getting some course development ideas through. Also the number of formal stages through which course development activities have to go is important here. At the moment, we have course planning committees. The course planning committee's proposals have then got to be examined by the internal validation committee. That committee has then to report. Then we go up to Academic Planning and Development, from Academic Planning and Development we go to Academic Council itself, and along the way we may have the involvement of formal departmental committees or senior management advisory committee. The difficulty, I

think, is in, I think, that coping with that formal structure and the complexity of the formal structure adds to the frustrations experienced by course developers and increases their disenchantment and lowers their motivation.

Informal Relationships

Well, having sketched out the informal relationships from the chart, I shall first of all go through these, talk about each one in turn. I certainly have, well, I have divided the relationships into positive, negative and ambivalent, so take positive first.

I think I have a fairly positive informal relationship as well as a formal one with my own head of department. This has been built up over the last ten years and certainly as far as course development within this department is concerned has been invaluable because we tend to have operated as a team. I think that in many ways we have complementary skills and abilities which we appreciate and this informal personal relationship has greatly assisted a lot of the informal preparatory work which has had to go on, both at a discussion level and at a very practical level of actually getting papers produced at the right time, arranging meetings and all the rest of it.

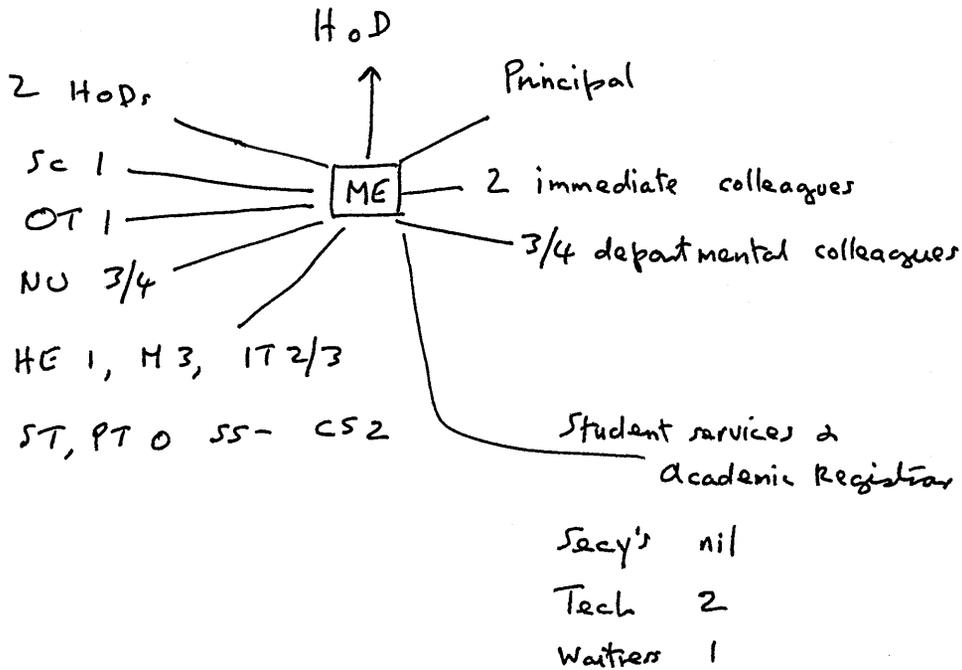
Secondly, I believe I have got a positive informal relationship with the Principal, which again evolved fairly naturally over time, partly through the already existing close informal relationship between my own head of department and the Principal, and I came in on the fringe of that. This I have found, as far as course development is concerned, very helpful because I think that it may have been that, had that relationship not existed some time ago, the idea might never had been put to me by the Principal of developing this particular course. So I am quite sure that the informal relationship had something to do with the Principal's belief that there was a possibility of developing a course in my area.

Other informal relationships within my department. I could say that with my two immediate colleagues I have reasonable informal relationships as well as formal. They are of relatively recent formation and I find the informal relationship more productive with one

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.

Positive



Negative

2 Depts
2 HODs

Ambivalent

V.P.

than I do with the other, and certainly with the more productive relationship I can see that this would be very helpful indeed for future course development. It is a question of establishing fairly slowly, over time and through experience, a working relationship with somebody which enables us to cut through the formal red tape. Within my own department I have good positive relationships with maybe three or four other people in the department, but since their work is not in any way related to the kind of course development of which I'm involved, then I don't think there is any particular significance in that.

Going further round the chart, I think I have got good positive informal relationships with two other heads of department. With one I have never been involved in any kind of course development, with another there has been marginal course development. Where there has been marginal development in course development, the informality, positive informal relationships, presumably helped, but has not been particularly significant.

As far as other departments are concerned, thinking of the number of informal relationships that might be at all significant, with the first department, 1, that relationship has been sometimes productive because I have been able to discuss course development with somebody who wasn't particularly involved in that development but it enabled me to go to someone in another department with another perspective, and that sometimes has been useful. Department 2, maybe one productive relationship there, but not involved in course development. Third department, three or four people I know quite well, three on friendly terms. And I have been involved within minor course development there, and the informality of the relationship has enabled our formal meetings to go ahead quite smoothly because we feel we know one another, but again there are more people involved so I wouldn't like to say that it has had particular significant development, just makes life easier. Fourth department, I only have one informal relationship there and that's not significant. Next department, perhaps about three people that I know quite well in that department. Only in one case is the informal relationship helpful. That probably has been fairly significant. The next department, two or three informal relationships,

couple of recent origin, again that has helped the development of the course because they occupy a significant part in the course, their areas are currently developing and the personal relationship, I think, is crucial to ensuring smooth developments. Next department, I've got two other departments here with no positive informal relationships, call that a third. Finally, another unit in the college, I have another two informal relationships, one of which has been quite helpful in my own personal course development, so it is a kind of a mixed picture.

Apart from colleagues on the academic side, I would say that I also enjoy good positive informal relationships with three or four members of the academic registrar's staff and those responsible for the student services. Again the relationships have been built up over time through working together, and certainly where it is relevant the goodwill of the academic registrar and his staff do represent a help. Without their goodwill, there might not be a serious hurdle to overcome, but certainly it makes life a lot easier. I don't think I have got positive informal relationships with any of the secretaries in the college, perhaps I do with a couple of the technicians, again that helps. Sorry, with one of the secretaries, yes, I would think I do and she has been crucial at certain points getting documents typed out of hours or I've been able to persuade her to type something out of her normal order of priority which has helped. Yes, I would say that has been helpful. Informal relationships positive with a couple of technicians again, yes, at a point when it comes to the dispatch of documents, the wrapping up of documents, asking people to do things in a hurry, may help quite a lot of time. I have also noted one informal relationship with a waitress, or a lady who serves the morning tea, and I don't think that is significant at all in course development.

Negative informal relationships are very strong. I would say I had negative informal relationships with two members of staff in two other departments and with also, with personally with two other heads of departments, not necessarily the same heads in relation, not the respective heads of people who I am not particularly friendly with at lecturer or senior lecturer level. As far as course development has been concerned, I would say that the negative friction existing between myself and one head and between myself and staff in that same

department has been a considerably hindrance. Difficult to say really how the negative friction arose in the first case, perhaps we were all sucked into a kind of wider conflict, but certainly the crosses we have had to bear over the last few years can be the origins of these difficulties, I think, can be traced back to a kind of an informal state of war which has existed between parties within the college.

And lastly, I have recorded an ambivalent informal relationship with one member of senior management and I think perhaps because of my positive informal relationships with the Principal and my own head of department that the recently appointed Vice-Principal may also be trying to establish a very good informal relationship at the moment. It is at a very early stage. Personally, I think it is ambivalent. As far as course development in the future is concerned, then, I think that a good informal relationship with the Vice-Principal ought to assist matters. With his predecessor, there was a good informal relationship, certainly helped a great deal.

Transcript 5

Name: Scott Hogg

Position: Lecturer

Transcript of Scott Hogg

Dimension 1

There are two contradictory relevant aspects of this dimension. The first one was the essential outside aspect, that is to say that, within the college, no one really had any idea, very much, of what a Communication degree really was. This again is my personal perception. There were a number of people outside who did have experience, who did have knowledge, who did have ideas. So, one of the few college-to-outside environment relationships was in trying to get in touch with such people, speaking to them and learning from them, and virtually ripping off as much usable information as possible. I found it tremendously stimulating and I found invariably they were more helpful, far and beyond the ken of what could be expected even of other colleagues. I found a mixture of fear and excitement in contact with it. I thought these people had an enormous amount of knowledge, a fantastic amount of experience, and had worked with many of the leading people in the field, had published in the field, has massive experience of what was involved in it. I didn't think that any of my colleagues had anything like this kind of stature and there was virtually no publications, certainly very few in the area, and the few people who had some kind of intellectual credence and an interest in the area were extremely difficult to work with. I found that the external relationships were much, much better. I could get on a wave-length quickly, I found that they were generous with their knowledge, and very, very positive. They were unfeelingly positive, totally unlike the internal college relationships.

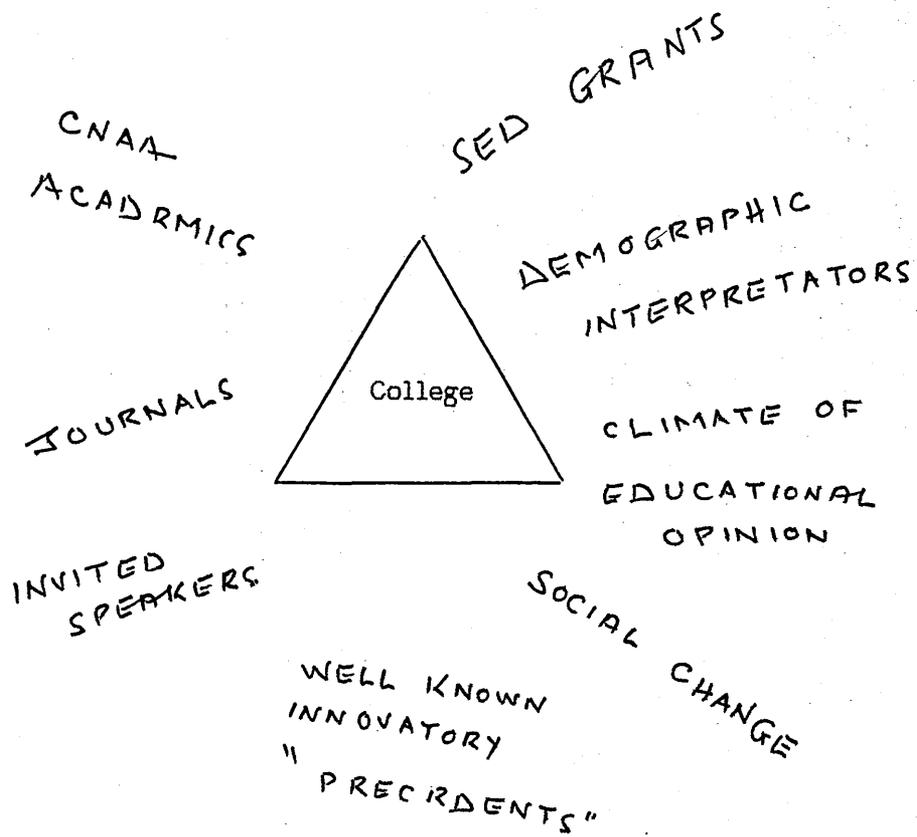
As I said, it was contradictory because these meetings were very, very few and far between. Essentially the process of building the degree, given the blockages and the total lack of direction and knowledge of the degree, meant that so much of it was college-to-college, and actually college-to-college history. The outside environment was tremendously stimulating, absolutely essential and far, far too small because of the pressures of college-to-college relationships.

Diagram

The key organisation is obviously the Scottish Education Department. They saw an early version of the course to see whether it would live or die. They have a terrifying amount of power and, to my mind, no intellectual credence whatsoever. This may be a cynical view, but certainly it's one that I feel quite strongly about. They had a tremendous impact. I think, in fact, their lack of intellectual foresight, their lack of any real intelligent reading, made them fail to realise that they had allowed through a course of this kind which had no place in a central institution as they envisage them. I think this is currently under danger as investigations come from outside. Scottish Education Department are going to be under pressure to look and see whether this course should continue in such a place. The other thing is they make assessment of whether the institutions are fit to do honours, less again, I suspect, on academic grounds than on numbers and education politics in a very narrow sense of where grants go. They make me extremely nervous. One of the few positive things that can be said about them is that they suffer from tremendous inertia and even if a directive came to get rid of the course, for example, they are so slow in moving that once you're in, it's much harder to shift. But they obviously are absolutely crucial and this has been confirmed in my subsequent experience of two other courses which were killed, one apologetically acknowledging the educational priorities, and one in a rather underhand fashion without taking any account for intellectual arguments whatsoever.

The second organisation of crucial importance in any new course which uses it is the Council for National Academic Awards, and to my mind they're almost as positive as the S.E.D. are negative. They may not always get it right, but what they do is make sure that you can get it as right as possible. They ask a lot of the right kind of questions via a lot of the right kind of people, in the right way. One negative feature, I would say, is that they still tend to be tremendously traditional and have the reputation of being traditional, and in fact the loosening up that's taking place has not come through in that, for example, traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and seminars, receive no scrutiny whereas new teaching methods would. But certainly, our particular board is one that I have tremendous respect for and they

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.



have, in fact, been putting questions like that to us. I think they're, at the moment, facing a kind of pressure towards a more, kind of, utilitarian organisation which would be very unfortunate, but I think that hopefully they will resist this. They will constantly monitor and less monitor in a negative sense, naturally help us to improve the quality of the teaching and lead us on in ways to develop.

Journals may seem a rather odd organisation or group but, nevertheless, I think that given the pressure of C.N.A.A. towards research, we have to negotiate from our course, to publish in relevant journals reasonably frequently and at a reasonably high level, and I think that this means a different kind of thinking, in terms within this particular institution. The pressure there is to make things relevant to a certain part of the outside world.

My fourth group, in fact, are a very disparate set of individuals. One of the benefits of the new course was that we had enough of a budget to actually ask people to come up and talk to us, and a wide range of people did so and it was invariably stimulating. From John Eldridge, of the Bad News Group, to a chap who had actually been in charge of a list 'D' school and had been a prison officer. We needed to get a perspective that was not readily available from within the standard academics. I think that this is a, obviously the latter two areas I've mentioned, journals and invited speakers, are much, much lesser of the two. Their impact has been within a number of the big individuals rather than us making a tremendous impact on the course as a whole.

I think another area which might tend to be neglected is research, a well-known innovatory precedence. A major feature in our course, and I would like to think one which I had considerable influence in bringing about, was to go to Glasgow University 'Bad News' media team who had made quite an impact on the media, on the academic world, on the political world, an impact which is still continuing although their essential research is well over six years old now. In fact, it probably is about ten years old. It was known as a kind of a good thing, an exciting development. It was group work, it was radical work. It was stirring things up, and I think that this is something that new courses like to be seen in relation to recent innovations and I think that this

certainly influenced me a great deal and led me to tie us into that organisation as far as was possible and what was adequate to the course back in the initial stage. And, indeed, lecturers from them came over in a guest lecturing capacity.

There are three other areas I would like to look at. I'm not quite certain if they fit into the categories of organisation groups and individuals, but I think they are nevertheless, as it were, material forces. One ties in in part to the S.E.D. Those people who interpret demographics obviously have an impact on the space to allow a course like this to expand or contract or be killed off. Along with that goes the climate of education opinion which, under Sir Keith Joseph, has unfortunately lost most, if any, philosophical justification in working in terms of a high utilitarianism which is a negotiation which is existing in a power structure and which is very, very seriously endangering the education of our students. And the other one is social change. Now again, this one is hard to pin down to organisational groups and individuals, but nevertheless the pressure I think is coming from imitating other advanced industrial nations and also has to do with government and business initiated social change. It can be seen most vividly in Information Technology which, I think, started off as a piece of opportunism, including it in the degree, but has developed into one of the central questions within our society and I would think that the development of this and the arguments with or without this social change are something which will lead to some very interesting work in the near and long future, long term future.

Dimension 2

Interestingly, I think that part of this questionnaire set-up shows its traditional nature. I no longer see an academic discipline as a particular sound basis. I think, by starting from the discipline's contribution to the course, I think you put the cart before the horse. I think this is wrong. I think you need to look at the uses, the needs of the course and fill it from the academic discipline. I know this is unacceptable within universities but I find universities unacceptable. The implications this has for teaching and research are quite considerable. If you take away the academic discipline base or bastardise the academic discipline base, this takes away a lot of the

academic protection, it opens up many, many more fundamental challenges. It also implicitly means that one goes towards team teaching and you need to go towards interdisciplinary research, so teaching becomes much more interdisciplinary. You need to rub off your own subject discipline against others and try to get them right, try to weld them together and research will tend to cross boundaries also. My own experience confirms this. Research goes into a large number of areas, all of which are marked by the intersection of at least two or three disciplines.

My answer to C might be a more, a way of concretising the criticisms I've made in A and B. My academic discipline is English. I don't actually think that's an academic discipline. Universities disagree. I think it's about as much credence as phonology. What I do think is crucial is a way of trying to balance between human attributes and social relations, and I think I would rather start from this kind of interaction. This kind of weighting you would give to those halves of the kind of human equation and look at which disputes, which advances which disciplines further, and knowledge of that kind of relationship. I find that I teach history although I have no history, I teach a bit of economics although I've never studied economics. I'm very well qualified in literature and don't teach it at all because I don't think it's that appropriate and I think again it shows up the absolutely antidiluvian approach working from academic subject areas which is nothing more than a departmental power juggernaut within universities as I understand them.

Dimension 3

I wish I could perceive the overall academic goal of the college. It's totally imprisoned by practice and the new Vice-Principal has freed the possibility of actually discussing what academic goals might be and whether we should shoot for them. I think the fact that our course is registered as an academic course in the way that few of the other courses were, has meant that we had a lee-way not allowed to various other very traditional courses. But this is not in any way due to any academic foresight of the college, merely a pragmatic response to a fair number of people doing service teaching and realising there were enough of them to put forward a cheap degree which would get a large

number of students modelled on certain English polytechnics. I think it's very sad to say that I don't think the college has academic goals. I would certainly try to raise them. I think the climate has changed and is changing, and we've a long way to go before we score any.

The influence of formal structure. The one key break which occurred prior to my involvement was, in fact, the destruction of formal committees and that the energy and the direction came from a forum which broke down the hierarchial organisation and got in some people who had some initiative, some drive, some energy, some ideas other than the dead wood which inhabits the heads of departments and many of the senior lecturer posts. I think this is perhaps, this may be widespread, I wouldn't like to generalise on it, because I think this college is an unique institution in the sheer deadness of its dead wood. I would think that with any new course, however, there would be a need for initial informal structure which later tends to be pulled into a formal structure as, in fact, happened within our own college. The difficulties that a place like Glasgow would have in producing a degree of this kind shows that in many ways that the formal structure is a serious drawback. It needs, in many ways, to break it so at least there is a forum to allow the kind of free-ranging discussions without interfering too much with territories, and I think that there has to be some breaking of the formal structure too. It also needs sanctioning from the top to make this work, and this is one of the things that I would praise the college hierarchy for. They realised the only way they could get a Communication Studies degree after the first one failed was by, in fact, giving people their head. By using the top of the formal structure, to let loose a kind of structure which they basically detest but which, to their credit, they allowed to run and which in fact delivered much more than they expected.

Dimension 4

My experiences in involvement with formal organisational processes, they have been extremely wearing. I have tried wherever possible to subvert them. Whenever I've been in a committee, I've tried to get working parties out to do the job and turn committees into rubber stamping machines. This would involve all the people I saw as having something to say about it, so it is not a way of eluding any democratic

thing. The other point was, that as the forum hardened into a committee, the committee itself became a useful ginger group for pushing ideas out into the college and for challenging the formal power struggles. The heads of department became less important than a democratic committee decision. We win some, we lose some.

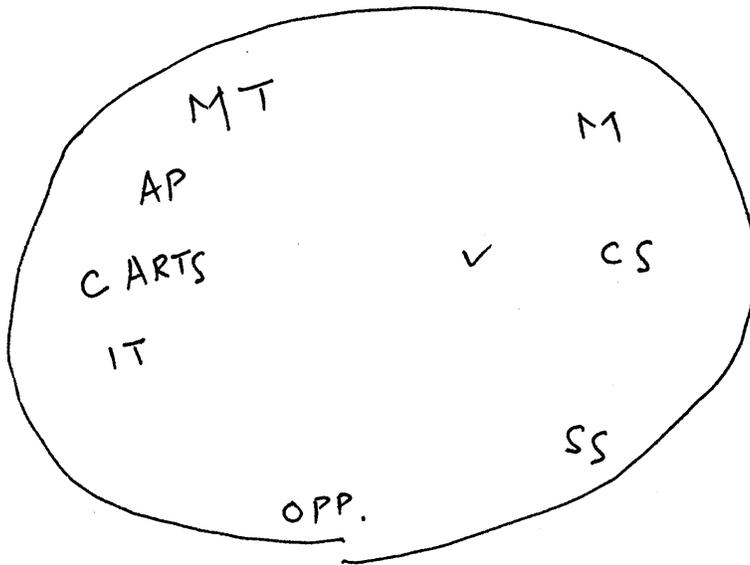
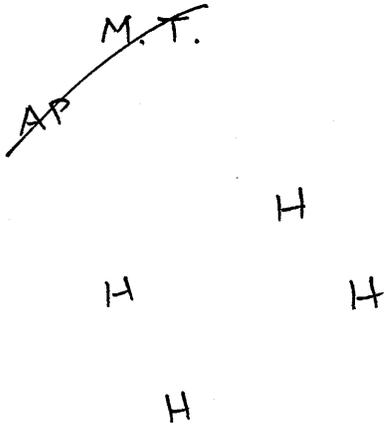
I don't know that detail would be a great deal of help in discussing this and again it is relatively unusual. Perhaps not, it may be arrogant to say this, but I've never seen an institution like this in any country, or higher education establishment, that I've worked in, studied in, or been involved in any way at all. Because of this, I think that the people involved in college try hard to make the formal organisational process extremely formal, that because, in fact, the work is done and the knowledge is held much at the bottom of the lecturers' scale but, in fact, most of the real decisions and work is being done, is going 'ya boo' to formal organisational processes. To some extent this is essential, and though later there has been an increasing formalisation in which I had to play a part, but the balance between the formal and informal is extremely difficult to make.

Informal Relationships

I sketch out what is crudely meant to be two figures with one line between going round a clock face. There are only about four figures on the clock face and I would say that I have a few informal relationships which help keep me partially sane and therefore have an important part to play. I cannot express it diagrammatically apart from the formal relationships. I think that what needs to happen is that the diagram encompassing the formal relationships and showing how that, within that informal relationship, forms patterns which can work within the existing power structure and in ways that can often challenge it. But I don't think the question makes much sense to me in its existing form. I don't think you can look at informal relationships and a diagrammatic representation of nothing. There needs to be the formal relationship within which or without which they operate. I'm still commenting on the diagrammatic representations of the relationships. The diagram is inadequate. I think at the top there needs to be a management team, and at the other pole there needs to be an opposition to the management team. Within this college, this tends to polarise round

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.



about representatives of Academic Council, Board of Governors and the union. The major force field within which this degree has had to work is the tension between the management team and the Social Science department. The Communication Studies course we have constructed relies heavily on a sociological interactionist model, albeit the amount of sociology taught us is relative. Sociology, in terms of the academic discipline term, as in traditional universities' teaching, is very, very different indeed.

Within that structure, and within that force field, there are other departments like Consumer Studies which always had a very, very small part to play in the degree, but nevertheless I had a very strong informal relationship and one of the few people on the staff I feel I could share any kind of difficulties and problems was in that department. That, in fact, drew me to the department and I gained a lot of personal solace and was able to talk about academic matters to people who were outside the basic force field. They were less sucked in, less powerful.

Other departments, such as Management and Information Technology, and in Management have really only one, I've only really found one person in the Management Department that I have really had a satisfactory informal work relationship and although a brief relationship, we got on very well, but it is not one of the major elements within the course. In many ways, I think this fits well with the part of management within a degree which is a component part, but is not a central philosophy. With Information Technology, which is a considerable power structure within the college and within the degree, occupies a quarter of the territory intermittently. I say intermittently because it didn't have the forces to occupy all of it before now. It tends to take over as much as possible, which will be interesting, and I have a very good and informal relationship with the head of department, whom I have spent a considerable amount of time fighting, but nevertheless, with a couple of notable exceptions, we have a pretty good informal relationship which meant that there was less sourness that may otherwise have happened, although sourness there certainly was.

The other relationship was within my department because I happen to be in the department. It gave me access to the Assistant Principal with whom I have a very good informal relationship. We have quarrelled publically and frequently and even violently on a number of occasions, but nevertheless, being under that kind of umbrella has allowed me a latitude and in return for that latitude I have put an absolutely disproportional amount of energy and time of my life into it. And without that kind of commitment to the degree, it could never have run. The management team were tolerant, in a kind of, along the lines of benevolence, a benevolent despotic relationship with the thing that they actually hate, the very many of the things that it stands for. But despite a strong opposition, there have been times when there has been a very good informal relationship although I have also left the Principal 'seething' with anger.

Interaction between the informal and formal is the core of progress. I think that it is essential that there is conflict and where possible this can be depersonalised. Where possible, we can decide on issues rather than personalities and this has meant shedding members of the course team, often with considerable personal stigma, but which, in the end I think, has worked out very well and has left some kind of personal relationship intact because the arguments were about and were focused round the issues rather than personalities. This still, unfortunately, remains rare within the college.

Transcript 6

Name: Stuart MacGilvray

Position: Lecturer

Transcript of Stuart MacGilvray

Dimension 1

I think this depends very much on the nature of the course that's been planned, and I would identify two categories quite simply, vocational courses and non-vocational courses. Examples of these to illustrate what I mean: non-vocational course I would classify the B.A. in Communication Studies; vocational course would be something like the Dietetics course or the Speech Therapy course.

We'll deal with the non-vocational courses first of all. In many ways there seems to be little influence from the outside environment on non-vocational courses. They become an almost academic exercise where course content, syllabus requirements, etc. is determined very much from the academic perspective of college staff. My personal opinion is that courses of this nature should pay much more attention to outside requirements, specifically to the vocational requirements that potential employers may have. I think a course that does not involve taking into account of outside influences and taking account of outside requirements can very quickly stagnate. That's probably all I would say on the non-vocational side of it.

The vocational courses, more comment is possible because, of course, they have a more rigid involvement or a more structured involvement with outside bodies. This involvement, or these outside requirements, are probably mainly aimed at checking the requirements of either professional bodies or employers. A good example of this, where the college and the planning committees have been involved with outside bodies, is the planned development of the degree in Food Studies in this college. This course started out by identifying what the employers or the potential employers were looking for in a graduate. This was done in a number of ways. It involved letter contact with a number of employers to try to get some initial feedback. These letter contacts very quickly led to a big group meeting where representatives from several organisations came into the college with a view to discuss what we had proposed and what they would see as being necessary.

Having attended one of these meetings, I came away with the feeling that they were probably necessary, but only as a first stage in identifying the philosophy, or identifying the general direction in which the course would go. In trying to identify and develop specific points or specific topics or specific subjects that would be required, I think they are of limited value. I would extend this comment about big group meetings, whether it's an advisory committee or a visit by a professional body such as representatives of the Dietetics Board or something like that. I would extend all these comments about group meetings to any kind of big meeting involving outside people. As I've said, I think they are of use in identifying general philosophy, perhaps for general direction, but they are of very limited value when it comes to detailed syllabus discussion. I think this is inevitable with a large number of people present and where perhaps you're talking about, only talking about a subject that's only relevant to say only two or three out of the large number present. It's much better to obtain outside influences and to obtain people's opinions. If members of the college staff can arrange meetings, preferably in the organisation concerned and not in college, even better than that, arranging a one-to-one or a one-to-two meeting with relevant people, even better is if college staff can go out and do the job or see the problem or see the application of the particular topic actually happening and see what is required; if this can be extended into college staff going on placements, then again so much the better.

So, to summarise, group meetings either with potential employers, advisory committees, or professional bodies, I think are of limited value in developing the specifics of a new course. OK for general philosophy for general direction, but to actually start to produce a syllabus or to identify areas where study is required, then I think what you are looking for is a small meeting with the relevant college member and one or two people from industry where the problem of the job can actually be seen. Having done that and have had established a series of meetings like that, I think it's important to consult the advisors from industry or wherever, at all stages in the development of the course. In other words, don't just go, get ideas and write them up and then get swallowed up by the college process. Much better to consult these people at all stages in development of the course.

Diagram

I've categorised the outside organisations etc. into two major sets. First of all, those that have the power of approval or veto on new college developments, and secondly those that act more in an advisory capacity. I now proposed to go through these one by one and describe their contribution or influence.

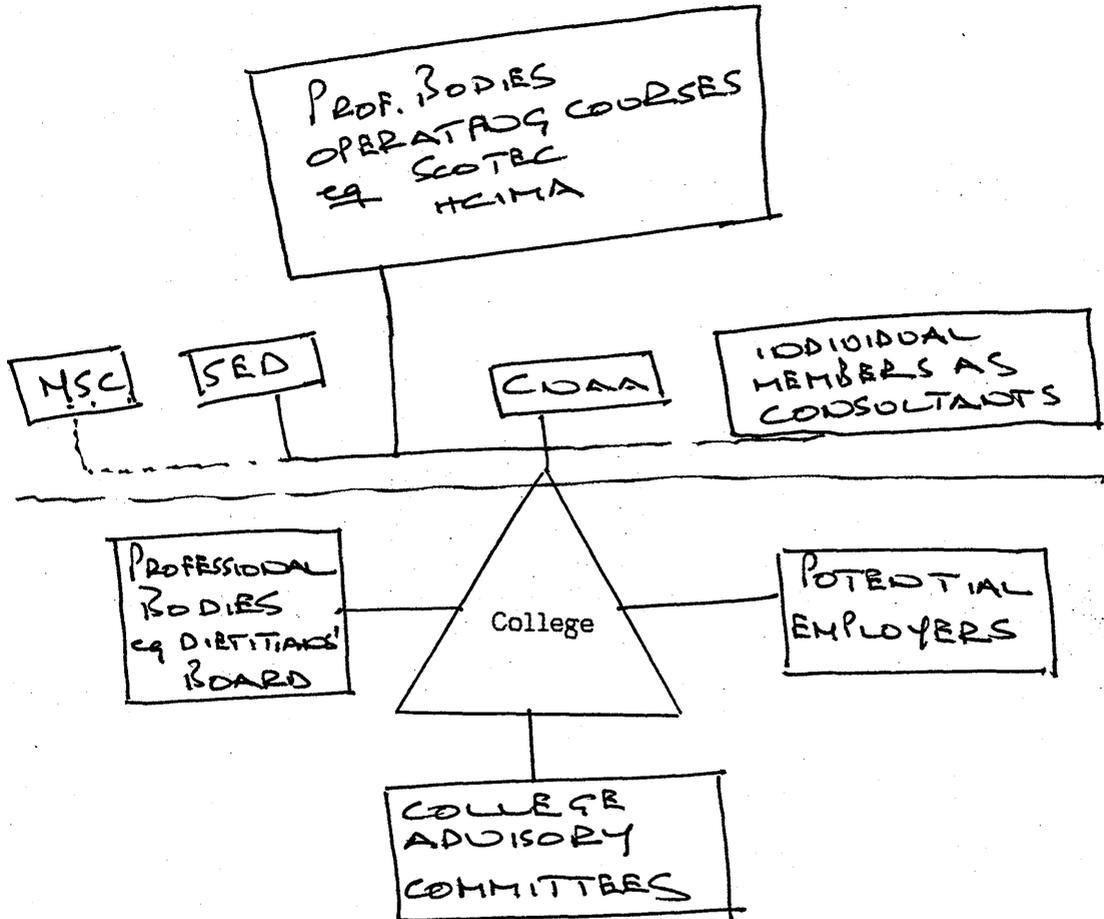
Those bodies and organisations that have the power of approval or veto. The two obvious ones are the Scottish Education Department and the C.N.A.A. I'll deal with those first although there are a couple of other ones that I would also like to bring into this.

The Scottish Education Department, I think, have an increasing influence and a much more powerful influence than perhaps they did several years ago. Their influence is probably mainly concerned with two factors. First of all, will the new course as proposed require any increase in resources, and secondly, and this is something that I think they're looking at in more detail, in much more vigorously than they used to, even if the course doesn't require any new resources or increase in recurrent or non-recurrent grant, I think the S.E.D. are much more concerned now with employment opportunities and employment potential for the new course. I think the S.E.D. have started to exercise their power of veto much more than they did in the past. They are subjecting courses to a much more rigorous assessment in terms of resources and in terms of employment opportunities and have been much more careful in what they actually approve. Another thing I've noticed is I think they are beginning to pay much more attention to syllabus content, perhaps not so much from an academic point of view, that is whether the syllabus is academically respectable or sufficiently academically rigorous, but I think they are starting to look at syllabuses with a view to evaluating how these syllabuses would meet the aims of the course and would contribute to employment opportunities.

The Council for National Academic Awards are, or is, probably the organisation that has most influence. C.N.A.A. has the power of approval or veto and has always been seen as the major hurdle that degree course planning initiatives have got to get over. They have always been a fairly rigorous body in the ten years or so that I have

Would you diagrammatically represent what you consider to be all the relevant organisations, groups and individuals that may influence new course development work.

APPROVAL / VETO



ADUCE / SPECIFY REQUIREMENTS

had involvement with course development. I think, however, they are increasing their rigour very, very considerably, especially with regard to research and staff development activities, as well as with the academic content of a course. To be honest, thinking now about the Communication Degree, I suspect they're not as rigorous and not as rigid in their syllabus content deliberations as they are in the, let's call it the professional activities of the staff research, study for higher degrees, consultancy, outside examining or whatever. In fact, the whole area could be identified as professional activity. So I think they're looking increasingly for evidence that the staff are academically lively and academically respectable. If you get over that hurdle, then I think that goes a long way to making them accept what you write down as course content, course aims and all the rest of it, because it's seen as coming from an academically respectable body of people. Sometimes, I think we tend to over-rate the C.N.A.A. and tend to get too worried about them. They are, after all, only academics from institutions very similar to this one, so I don't see them much as a problem with regard to syllabus content etc., but I do see them as posing a major problem, especially for this college, in view or with regard to the academic activity, professional activity and so on.

These are the two main bodies I see as having a major impact and these are still in the category of approval or veto, Scottish Education Department increasingly much more rigorous and C.N.A.A. increasingly rigorous especially in the area of professional activity rather than strict syllabus content.

There are other bodies, still in the category of approval or veto, who may have some kind of influence on what we do. First of all, some of the courses that we have planned and operate in this college are sponsored by a professional body, professional association such as the Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management Association. We also run a SCOTVEC course which has been revised reasonably recently and we're about to introduce a SCOTVEC sponsored course in Information Studies. These professional bodies which sponsor or operate a course tend to specify a syllabus, so selection of material for the syllabus has already been done by the professional body, so we don't have too much discretion there. However, the influence that these bodies have is

probably not very great because any syllabus, unless you actually give somebody a teaching scheme of work, any syllabus is open to interpretation and there is in practice a fair amount of discretion. So, provided you follow the spirit of the syllabus, and provided you cover the material that is likely to come up in examinations, I think we've got a considerable amount of freedom in the material that we present, the way we choose to present it and the emphasis we give to individual parts of that material. Possibly the greatest impact that bodies like that have is in the outside examination procedure whereby we've got to make sure we cover the ground sufficiently to prepare candidates for the examination.

Another one, it's not one that I've had much experience of, but one I could see was possibly more appropriate to further education colleges, is the Manpower Services Commission, who may set up courses or may operate or ask the college to operate certain courses. I'm thinking now of the college example of the Small Business Course. It's not a course I've been involved in, but I would identify the Manpower Services Commission or Training Services Commission or whatever section of that organisation as having an influence.

I've already mentioned C.N.A.A. and I do wish to amplify comments about the C.N.A.A. There is also the possibility that individual members of a particular board may act as consultants. This has happened in the past in one course that I'm aware of. It wasn't something that I was involved in: I don't really feel in a position to assess its impact. I also think it puts the C.N.A.A. person or the board member in a rather invidious position. But I do identify it as a possible outside influence, and I think we would be fairly strongly influenced by these people, although I've not had direct experience of it. I think we would be fairly strongly influenced by these people, hoping to get an easy ride from C.N.A.A.

The second category of organisation or body that has an influence would be bodies which can give advice to the college or can, in some cases, specify requirements, and provided we meet these requirements then everything's fine. The college, within its committee structure, has, or at least did have, I'm not sure if they still do, advisory

committees for certain subjects, advisory committees for Institutional Management and Dietetics or whatever. In line with comment I made earlier about large meetings or fairly large groups of people getting together, I'm not really sure that these bodies have a great impact because simply of their size and the fact that they are more appropriate perhaps for discussing general direction of courses or general philosophy. They do have an impact, but I would say it's a fairly minimal impact on course planning.

Another group of people in this category would be potential employers. I think we've had a tendency to pay lip service to reesarching potential employers' attitudes in the past. We've sent out questionnaires and we've analysed the results and possibly not done too much with it. I think this is an area where we've got to pay much more attention and enable potential employers to have a much greater say in selection of materials, depth of treatment and the provision of practical oppotunites for practical experience. So potential employers or groups of potential employers, I think, will have an increasing influence on course development work that we do.

Finally, the third and final category in this area, I've called professional bodies. Professional bodies more perhaps than an advisory committee. I'm thinking of their advisory capacity. I'm thinking in terms of things like the Dietitians' Board who can give advice and who do, in fact, specify requirements such as number of hours to be spent on certain topics. Provided that we meet these requirements, there doesn't seem to be a major problem. So they're setting down hours of study for particular subjects, and an outline of what might perhaps be covered. The outline is so general that really the amount of impact they have on planning is fairly limited. I would say it is a kind of mechanical thing in that provided you identify and make sure you cover the material they want and come within hitting distance of the kind of hours and allocations specified, I don't really see a major problem there. So a mechanical influence, yes, but having followed that fairly general outline, I don't think too much impact.

So, to summarise this one, the advisory committee has minimal impact, professional bodies have mechanical, the wrong word but I can't think

of the word I'm after, some influence at the outline planning stage, but beyond that very little impact. Potential employers, I think we've paid lip service to in the past, so very little impact in the past, but increasingly this is something we're going to have to pay an awful lot more attention to.

Dimension 2

I have two academic subject areas that I am involved in this college. The first of these is Statistics, and the second one is what I will call Introductory Computer Studies or Computer Appreciation. I'll deal with the Statistics one first of all because it is probably easier to answer some of the questions.

The contribution that Statistics makes to development of new courses is probably two-fold. First of all, I think we're trying to develop in the students some ability, albeit limited, because we're not trying to make them mini-statisticians, but I think we are trying to develop some ability to enable them to critically analyse data and present the results of that. This would be class work or course work orientated material where they perhaps obtained data from experiments in a lab or possibly even circulating questionnaires round students or the general public. So we are trying to develop some ability in analysis and finding out what the results really mean.

The second contribution that Statistics make, and this is especially for the science orientated students, is to allow them to critically interpret research papers that have been published. Increasingly, the research papers in the medical and paramedical fields, of which this college is deeply concerned, increasingly papers such as journals relating to such areas involve statistical jargon, involves statistical methodology which students have got to be able to understand so that they can get the best out of the paper. So I think we're also trying to develop an ability to critically interpret research papers, either at the level of understanding the jargon and understanding the procedures, possibly even at the level of identifying weaknesses in the way in which a particular experiment or investigation has been carried out. Very simple example: where there has been, for example, an inadequate

control group, I think it's important that students are able to identify that and the consequent lack of a base for comparison.

The second area that I'm involved in is what I've chosen to call Computer Appreciation. Now this subject contributes to new courses in once again two ways. First of all, I think it's important that nowadays we look at computer appreciation or introductory computer studies and see it as part of a general education. I think everybody finishing education or coming through education should have some awareness of computers and information technology. So that's all I'm going to say about that, just a general education level.

Secondly, the other major contribution is the application to particular areas. For example, the Dietetics students are exposed to a computerised dietary analysis package. There are other application packages that are suitable for certain other students or groups of students. So, to summarise that one, there's the general education thing and then that leads to the second level, which is the particular applications of relevance to a particular course.

The implications that this has for teaching and research, and now I'm concentrating on the computer studies one, I think the major implications for teaching is that we've got to have or make sure there is sufficient time allocated to this. It's, to be done properly, it's something that does require time. Obviously, the amount of time depends upon the requirement of a particular course, but it is something that does require time and time is always very limited, or the availability of time is very limited on courses, and this is one of the major implications and major problem areas that I think we have identified.

The main implication for research, well the two main implications for research, I think, first of all finding out what is going on, what state the art is actually in the professional areas to which the college is involved, for example Occupational Therapy, Nursing and so on. The second area is more than just finding out what is actually going on just now, but trying to identify areas where there is an opportunity for the effective application of Information Technology or computer

facilities. So implications for research, two levels. First of all, the largely descriptive one of finding out what is going on and possibly trying to get simulations available for demonstration purposes for the students, and secondly, identifying opportunities where the college could make an initiative and get applications going.

Inter-relationships between the discipline of Information Technology and Computer Appreciation and other discipline areas. Very difficult to identify these because the easy answer is that computer applications or the computer and technology has opportunity for application in almost any area that you care to mention. It could be that the application is of a professional or a practical nature, actually doing something to improve the service offered, or it could be that it's computer assisted learning, where more effective teaching can be achieved through the use of computer packages. So it is very difficult to identify inter-relationships except that broad over-view level because I reckon that the inter-relationship exists with almost any application or any discipline that you would care to mention.

Still on this topic of inter-relationships, one of the problems of the inter-relationship with other discipline areas is a lack of awareness by the experts and the professionals in these other areas of what they could do with computers or what they could do with computer facilities, how they could use them in their professional work. This lack of awareness, together with the problem I mentioned a couple of minutes ago which was the fact that you could apply the thing in almost any area anyway, these two problems, or these two aspects, I think lead to a great difficulty in firming up or hardening of ideas of what you are actually going to do. This is because, as I said earlier, that there are so many opportunities for application that, also because of this new problem of introducing, that very often the experts or professionals lack awareness of the benefits of applying or the opportunities of applying computer technology. I think this does make it difficult in firming up on specific ideas that can be applied.

So the inter-relationships one, difficult to answer that. Try to summarise it by saying the inter-relationships can be almost anything you like. The problem in the inter-relationship is the meeting of the

other discipline or professional or expert and the computer professional in order to firm up definite ideas of what you are going to do.

I've deliberately avoided the statistics one because I think the introductory remarks that I've made earlier adequately cover the inter-relationships between that discipline and the implications for teaching and research are again the time factor, making sure sufficient time is available to do it properly, and the research factor. I will go on about this one in a bit more detail. The research aspect of Statistics once again is at two levels. There's the preparation of teaching material, the unearthing of suitable illustrative material for students, trying to make it realistic, trying to make it a live subject rather than using data which is so obviously false and so obviously fictitious. So there's the uncovering and probably simplification of materials in order to produce useful demonstration material. The second aspect is the provision of statistical advice and research advice to staff undertaking some kind of investigative project. I think that is probably as much as I want to say on that one.

Dimension 3

The major academic goal that I reckon the college has had for the last ten years and will continue to have is to upgrade as many courses as possible to degree level. The development of this is that we're already beginning to start talking in terms of upgrading ordinary degrees to honours degrees and I think that there is also the feeling that we would like to encourage the possibility of higher degrees by research. This would be by staff and research assistants or research fellows rather than students, at least initially, and at least to start with. So major goal is to upgrade to degree level. The relationship they have with new course development is an attempt to increase academic rigor, an attempt to increase academic respectability and also to promote research activity by staff in areas of relevance to the particular subject or particular course being developed. The idea of increasing academic rigor and of promoting research is obviously to satisfy C.N.A.A. requirements.

The influence of formal structure, fairly negative. Fairly negative about this one because I've long had the feeling that formal structure, course planning committee structure, reporting to course committees or Academic Scrutiny or whatever now, I reckon they hinder the development simply because of the amount of time that can be taken up in developing new courses. The formal structure seems to be a very lengthy process before a piece of paper can be prepared and accepted by the college as part of a document. I think much more is achieved through working parties, working and meeting on an informal basis, much more frequently and much more regularly. So the formal structure, I think, hinders development simply because of the time it takes to finally approve a part of a document. Much more can be achieved through informal working parties.

Dimension 4

My involvement in formal organisational processes has been concerned with course planning committees and internal validation committees. I believe there are other formal organisational involvement with new course planning, I haven't been involved in them, and frankly my awareness of what they do is somewhat sketchy, but I think things like academic scrutiny committees may be involved and eventually so might also the Academic Council.

Course planning committees. My feeling about course planning committees is that they are very slow in operation and that they consume a lot of time before results are produced. In that sense, I think they are very inefficient when you count up the amount of time that is required, or seems to be required, for their operation and the results that come out. Another criticism I've got of course, of course planning committees is that they tend to be large and very often what's under discussion is not relevant to all the people actually attending. They tend to get bogged down in syllabus detail sometimes, where perhaps only two or three people have got a contribution to make.

Internal validation committees, I think, are a very, very good idea. They're also required by C.N.A.A. in some form or another so we've little option but to have them. But I do like the idea for the reason that people involved in a course planning committee or people involved

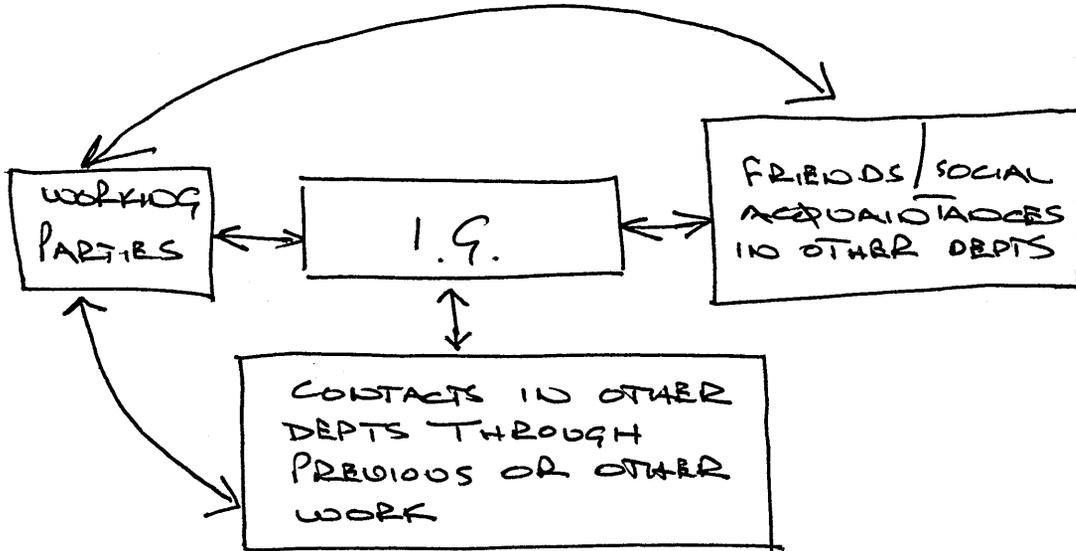
in syllabus development for a course planning committee can get too close to their work, 'they can't see the wood for the trees', because they're so bound up in it, they're so familiar with it. So I think internal validation committees are a very good idea. However, I have encountered feelings of resentment between or especially coming from course planning committee members when criticism, even intended in the best of, the best will in the world, I have encountered resentment from course planning members when supplying criticism and comments and suggestions have been made. I think that some of this resentment may stem from the fact that I'm not sure whether anybody has actually ever clearly defined the power that an internal validation committee actually has. Do they have, for example, have the power of veto in saying this document will not leave the college? I think that internal validation committee members would like to have that power but it may be that perhaps it's over-ruled by the course planning committee if they choose not to take advice on board, possibly over-ruled by college management. If there is a problem with the internal validation committee, that's the one I see as the main one, that there is not enough definition of power to decide how far they can go in enforcing their objections, comments, criticism or suggestions. Perhaps if that were more clearly specified, there may not be the same amount of resentment that sometimes exists between course planning committee members and internal validation committee members.

Informal Structure

Perhaps the most effective informal relationship in new course development is the, I think, increasing practice to set up small working parties to discuss and to develop a particular syllabus in a particular area. These are run on a much less formal basis and I think can be very effective in producing syllabus material to take back to a course planning committee. As well as that, other informal activities and informal contacts would involve people who work in other departments but whom I have had contact in previous work or other ongoing work. Well, it can be very handy to have a name to be able to contact somebody who knows you and you know them, you have worked together with them, can sound out a particular idea, then you have a useful contact to go through. As well as that, I do have some friends or social acquaintances in the college in my own department and in

Focus: Informal relationships

Would you use the following space to sketch out the range of informal relationships that you have developed within the College with regard to new course development work.



other departments, and from time to time these people have provided a useful sounding-board for some ideas, have offered initial criticism, and have offered suggestions as to what should be done. Sometimes these friends or contacts in other departments are serving on a lot of the course development committees and have been given a particular task to do. So to summarise, the informal relationship in college probably useful, mainly in relation to new course development, probably mainly in relation to course working parties and this can be supplemented by being able to approach people in other departments to sound out ideas, pick their brains, who are either informal contacts or those who you are friendly with on a social basis.

Collected reflections of the participants
on the research method

James MacGregor

Perhaps the first comment to make is that I am myself not accustomed to dictating on to a machine. I am a bit aware of the machine being there. I think this makes me hesitate a bit, search for the right words, search for the right grammar and, as it becomes evident that I may not be doing it all that well, the more one hesitates. Other people may not necessarily experience this. The other thing that I find is that, because of the fact that there is a machine there waiting to record what I am saying, because this is part of a research project, something that somebody is going to look at, analyse and develop their thoughts and ideas from, I am conscious that it is quite important to that person. Therefore, I tend to want to give a well considered and thought-out response. I find that being presented with a statement or a question, I want to look at that question, look at that statement, and structure what I am going to say, and I find that this is not easy for me to do. Not easy for me to hurry up in doing, perhaps because I don't think quickly and on my feet. Whether it is part of the research procedure or whether it is not, or whether it is deliberately so, I would have preferred to, if you like, have had more notice of the questions. This, I think, would have given me the chance to think through and structure my thoughts, and maybe would have resulted in a more complete response for the researcher to use. I think also, in that respect, when the actual recording has taken place, you think of aspects and lines of thought that one could have given and developed. These were lost for ever.

One of the things I found difficult was once you start to classify the issues into, for example, issues to do with degree development or C.N.A.A. work as opposed to new course development. When it is merely taken the syllabus that has been developed by SCOTBEC or SCOTEC or some other organisation and developing that into a teaching programme, then one's conscious that that structure, that classification, should maybe be repeated in all the other responses that you give. I think that that is an example of later on you think, 'Oh, I forgot to mention it', in relation to the rest of the classification.

One of the unknowns here is that because of various pressures, it was not possible for my contribution to be given in a one period session. Now what happens, therefore, is that if it is spread over, if the contribution is spread over several periods of time, one forgets what the first bit has been. This may influence the research, there may be something that the researcher needs to take into account, that the need for an appointment to be made with the respondent, to have long enough duration to complete the research, the questionnaire or the question in one period of time.

Graeme Livingstone

Well, I found it interesting. I found it made me think about things that I don't usually go around thinking about. I think that I found it hard to know exactly what was required all the time, because I think this whole area is a very broad one. I'm not quite sure what you yourself are after. I know it's a phenomenological study of organisations. I presume you try to get individuals' perceptions which to some extent influence the on-going development of college life. I suppose that sort of thing. Funny, I'll be interested to see how it all comes out. I don't yet know how you are going to use all that stuff, but obviously you do, you know, you've thought it out.

I suppose the problem I see is I don't know who you've interviewed. I would think in terms of trying to, in terms of trying to get into the experience or understand the experience of college members. I think the power dimensions are important because I think so much goes on behind the scenes, or at least is determined by those in power, that people like myself are, I was going to say merely involved, but involved at a much lower level. How much power we really do have in influencing the direction in which the college goes, it seems to me that to look at that you really have to look at the relationships between the managers and particular committees like Academic Planning and Academic Council, and you would have to try and this is a very difficult job to work out just how decisions were made. I mean you know one criticism of the pluralist model of power is that the pluralist neglect the extent of which certain people can 'set the agenda', so if you read through minutes of Council you see that decisions were made but you don't know the decisions that were not

allowed to even come on the agenda. I'm really just talking from the top of my head. I don't really know what you're doing. I can see to a certain extent to how this would give you an insight into, say, how different departments work. I don't know how this will help you in your evaluation of effectiveness, if that's what you're doing, how course planning activities work and my perceptions of how my department's work are obviously not shared by people outside the department.

Going back to that thing about the nurses, they obviously see the way they're doing it as a good thing, a good way. I tend not to see it in the same light. Who's right and who's wrong, I don't know. So what you're doing is very much, is obviously, you know, tapping people's perceptions and their subjective and limited by all sorts of things, end of term and all that sort of thing. I would think, to get a real picture of college life, you would have to interview quite a few people at very different levels, I feel, always bearing in mind that what they say is limited by their position, limited by their power or lack of power, and things like that.

Donald Strachan

My main feeling about it is that it's a very casual, relaxed, pleasant way of getting information out of somebody. I think that the use of trigger questions and some framing is very helpful to the person providing the information because one has to structure faults and ideas around something. I realise that it's a very difficult task sometimes to give broad areas without actually leading the interviewee into giving the answers that perhaps the researcher wants, and I think that this particular method has been very successful in providing sufficient structure, but not too much, to allow the interviewee to ramble on or comment on his or her thoughts and feelings about areas. I think that the recording of it to begin with, because my throat is a bit sore this morning, I wondered how that would go, because I thought that talking for about three-quarters of an hour, an hour, might be difficult. Funnily enough, I've not found that difficult, maybe that's just myself. I've not found it difficult to hold this mike or control the situation. I think it's been very helpful methodologically to actually be able to switch this think off and on, because I'm sure that, certainly for me,

there were moments that I wanted to stop because I was going down a line that was leading where I didn't want it to go, so I think that was fine for me.

John Wilson

I've found this rather difficult to do because I've been very closely involved for quite a number of years in course development with specific reference to one particular course, so the experience has been rather overwhelming and it's very difficult in a short period of time to distill one's thoughts, so I'm maybe conscious of the fact that speaking into the tape-recorder is not necessarily, it hasn't produced much of the way of incisive analysis. It might. There is really so much to talk about. It is very difficult to select on the spur of the moment what one feels is significant. I am conscious of having perhaps talked about my own attitudes, rather than answering very directly the prompting questions that were actually placed in front of me, so I am conscious that I may not in fact have supplied the researcher with the kind of information which he will ultimately find most useful.

Apart from that, I don't think the experience has helped me to crystallise things that I didn't know before. I don't think it has prompted any reflection on my part. I think it does raise the feeling that I have had for quite some time, which is that in the business of course development, one team really ought to learn from the experiences of another and it is difficult in our setting to share the experience that we have, to pool the experience that we have. One of the suggestions that has been made in this college for some time has been for the course development to be formalised in one way and that is by handing responsibility for course development to a formal course development unit, perhaps with a change of membership from time to time, but certainly with some continuity so that course development is not left to individual teams of people in different departments to re-invent the wheel each time. As long as we pursue that model of setting up a new course planning team within a particular development or within a particular discipline or field of study, to go through again what other people in other parts of the college have already experienced, without continuity from one course development planning

committee to another, then the kind of experience which I have been prompted to share is going to be lost. And that, I think, is a serious consideration to any institution, how can experience be shared between one group and another so that the institution as a whole can be completed?

Scott Hogg

The most interesting reflection is of being pulled back from seeing my organisation as being unique. As commenting on, I can think of other organisations which at least have similar problems, so immediately the formalising, which you noticed throughout I took occasional acceptance to it, was nevertheless one of the features that made me check. I do find difficulty in weighting the usefulness of it. Again, it may be wanting to control what is happening to it, but obviously in my experience, my very, very personal experiences are very, very coloured and committed a huge proportion of my life in two years to this degree and cannot therefore speak of it in totally dispassionately terms and wonder if this rather abnormal piece in my life, is that in universal terms, more conventional terms. I would like the confessional element, the isolated room and the tape recorder, because although I imposed a formal structure on it, I would really have no idea on how it would come out. I think it's coming out emotional as well as personal, and this is how I think it should be. I think that too often we are pretending to talk about rationality and aspects of reason when what we're really dealing with is many emotional and personal interactions. That is what teaching, learning and course creation are all about.

Stuart MacGilvray

On the positive side first of all, the explanation and the instructions were OK and I am familiar with tape recordings of responses. So at the mechanical level, the way the thing has operated, fine, no problem. The negative side, one or two things here. First of all, I think that the questions asked were very, very open, probably deliberately so, but that does leave the respondent with the problem that he is not really sure of what he is saying or giving is actually what is wanted. As an aside, I would find it all very difficult to analyse this stuff and I am glad that it is somebody else's problem.

The, another area, I think it is difficult to judge the level or depth of what is required and I realise it is up to the respondent to give his own, to use his own judgment, but I think it is difficult to judge the level required. Some questions very open, difficult to judge level required. I can't help wondering if a more structured type of interview may have been useful as a supplement, not necessarily as a replacement or a substitute for, but a supplement to this interview we have had, possibly an attitude survey or scale could also have been used.

Another point coming out from this is that, some of the questions asked in the areas were quite vague. I think vague is the wrong word, perhaps not quite what was expected. For example, describe and sketch your network of informal relationships in the college. That was a bit of a shock to me and it was quite difficult to do that one on the spur of the moment. So what I am suggesting here is that it might have been an idea to give the booklet out to the respondent possibly the day before the interview took place to give him time to think and jot down a few thoughts down on a piece of paper.

So the criticism I would make, questions very open, difficult to judge the level, possibly could have used some kind of more structured supplement to this and also, quite serious about this one, very beneficial if the respondent was given 24 hours to think about the answers.

**List of standard abbreviations
used in the thesis**

Abbreviations

CC	Course Committee
C.N.A.A.	Council for National Academic Awards
CPC	Course Planning Committee
IVC	Internal Validation Committee
NCD	New Course Development
OT	Occupational Therapy
S.E.D.	Scottish Education Department
SHEG	Scottish Health Education Group
SSR	Student/Staff Ratio
UGC	University Grants Committee

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