

# Management Learning

<http://mlq.sagepub.com/>

---

## **Learning to be a Qualitative Management Researcher**

Catherine Cassell, Victoria Bishop, Gillian Symon, Phil Johnson and Anna Buehring

*Management Learning* 2009 40: 513

DOI: 10.1177/1350507609340811

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://mlq.sagepub.com/content/40/5/513>

---

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

**Additional services and information for *Management Learning* can be found at:**

**Email Alerts:** <http://mlq.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://mlq.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

**Citations:** <http://mlq.sagepub.com/content/40/5/513.refs.html>



Catherine Cassell

*University of Manchester, UK*

Victoria Bishop

*University of Manchester, UK*

Gillian Symon

*Birkbeck, University of London, UK*

Phil Johnson

*University of Sheffield, UK*

Anna Buehring

*Manchester Metropolitan University, UK*

## Learning to be a Qualitative Management Researcher

**Abstract** *Conducting management research underpins management learning and education—therefore how the management researcher or practitioner learns research skills is an important issue to be addressed. This paper focuses upon the skills, knowledge and practices required to conduct qualitative management research, and the learning processes that go into their development. A total of 45 in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the field. From an analysis of the interview data, the types of skills and knowledge required for the production of good qualitative research were identified, and the learning processes and practices associated with those skills were critiqued. It is argued that the processes by which we learn to do qualitative research, and become effective qualitative researchers, involve both the learning of appropriate skills and knowledge and their use and conceptualization through three types of research practice: reflection, reflexivity and phronesis. The implications of the analysis for management learning are presented. **Key Words:** management research; qualitative research; researcher learning; researcher skills; researcher training*

Learning to do research is a vital element of management development programmes, and the development of research skills and competent researchers is one of the key challenges facing the business and management field (e.g. Pettigrew, 2001). As a consequence, it is important that management researchers themselves address issues such as how we learn research skills, and the learning environment in which they are developed. In some ways research skills have been treated as a body of knowledge, to be acquired like other bodies of knowledge. Typically, in business and management schools novice researchers are taught the technicalities of using qualitative and quantitative techniques and the relative virtues of different methodological approaches. Additionally, in some cases they may also be taught about the philosophical context underlying diverse approaches to enable them to reflexively interrogate their own philosophical commitments (Johnson and Duberley, 2003).

Our focus here is upon qualitative methods of research and the skills and knowledge required to conduct high-quality qualitative research in the business and management fields specifically. The increased use of qualitative methods in this area has demonstrated their considerable contribution in adding to management knowledge (e.g. Boje, 2001; Prasad and Prasad, 2002). However, although there are numerous texts that provide practical advice on how to use specific qualitative methods (e.g. Cassell and Symon, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Seale et al., 2004), beyond that we know little about the skills and knowledge required to produce high-quality qualitative research, and the processes that facilitate the development of those skills in managers and management researchers.

We argue that it is timely to critique and reflect upon the skills that are required for the production of good qualitative management research. The field itself is fluid and some have argued that the managerial context within which we conduct research is constantly shifting, as, for instance, new postbureaucratic forms of organization emerge (Hendry, 2006). In the same way that this fluidity in how we define and make sense of management itself has led to some authors arguing that management development programmes need to provide opportunities for ongoing reflection (e.g. Gosling and Mintzberg, 2006), so management researchers and educators should reflect upon and critique the skills, knowledge and learning environments that underpin the development of management researchers.

In this article we aim to address these issues through the medium of a research project, one of the aims of which was to explore the skills and knowledge perceived necessary for the production of high-quality, qualitative management research. It is our contention that an understanding of the skills and knowledge required is useful to the development of managers who seek to conduct qualitative research for their own job-related needs or as part of a management development programme, and to the training of management researchers. Although there may be some similarities between the skills required for qualitative and quantitative research, our concern here is with qualitative research, which was the focus of our empirical research. Specifically we address two issues: first, the skills and knowledge needed to produce good qualitative research; and second, the implications of this for management learning in this field. We take an inclusive

approach and use the term 'qualitative management researchers' to include all of those who may be conducting management research using qualitative techniques, ranging from MBA and doctoral students to established faculty members. The paper concludes by arguing that the processes by which we learn to do qualitative research, and become qualitative researchers, involve both the learning of appropriate skills and knowledge and the use and conceptualization of those skills through phronesis, reflection and reflexive practice. We begin by examining the complex nature of qualitative research skills.

## The Skills of Qualitative Research

Defining qualitative research skills simply is problematic, and we focus on two issues here. The first is associated with the plurality of meanings conjured up by the term 'qualitative research' and the implications this has for how we understand the skills attached to the practice of qualitative research. Qualitative research takes place within a number of different epistemological and ontological positions (Alvesson and Sköldbörg, 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Prasad, 2005; Symon and Cassell, 2004) or 'historical moments' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3), and therefore it can mean many different things to different researchers. Indeed, a number of writers have pointed to the dilemmas that emerge in attempting to produce a unitary definition of the term (e.g. Johnson et al., 2007). This can lead to difficulties for management researchers' learning in this field. Harlos et al. (2003) highlight that students might find it somewhat discouraging, and Hammersley questions 'how we prepare students for participation in a research community that is riven by methodological, philosophical, and even political disputes' (2004: 556). Indeed, Clough suggests that the important question is how we can actually teach qualitative research methods, 'particularly towards that end of the research spectrum where the boundaries between subjects and objects are opaque or fuzzy' (2004: 421).

The second issue relates to how we define what is meant by 'good' or 'high-quality' qualitative research. Within the literature it is apparent that there is no one accepted definition of what is meant by high-quality qualitative research. Rather, it is a contested terrain and a variety of different 'criteria-in-use' exist (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1989, 1994; Lewis and Ritchie, 2003; Seale, 1999). These may be influenced by pragmatic or philosophical considerations, or indeed both (Bryman, 1988; Johnson et al., 2006). Therefore an analysis of the skills that go into the production of qualitative research needs to recognize the diversity not just in how we define qualitative research, but also in how we assess its quality.

Reviewing the literature on qualitative research would seem to suggest that the skills required by the qualitative researcher are diverse, and the demands placed upon them multifaceted. Textbooks that focus on enabling qualitative researchers to learn their craft highlight some of these various demands. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the qualitative researcher as a 'bricoleur' or 'quiltmaker' who crafts and interweaves their interpretations skilfully to produce high-quality research. As they suggest, 'the methodological *bricoleur* is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection' (2005: 6). Other authors also highlight the

demands upon the qualitative researcher to create a flexible, responsive research design in a context that may be unpredictable, emergent and contingently varied according to the nature of the social context(s) being investigated (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This highlights the difficulty of teaching research which 'is most often designed as it is being done' (Van Maanen, 1998: xi).

Within the organization and management fields specifically there are texts that provide advice on data collection and analysis (e.g. Bryman and Bell, 2005; Cassell and Symon, 2004; Lee, 1999), and texts that provide accounts of the different philosophical paradigms and traditions that underlie qualitative management research (e.g. Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000; Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Prasad, 2005). Other texts also focus on the real-life experiences of conducting fieldwork, or tales from the field (e.g. Becker, 1998; Humphrey and Lee, 2004). Attention to specific skills is usually associated with a particular method of qualitative research. For example, collections such as Seale et al. (2004) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003) contain chapters where the specific skills of interviewing and focus groups are outlined. However, although these texts provide advice in relation to the various methods and methodologies underlying qualitative research, none of them focuses specifically on the skills required to conduct qualitative research in general and how these can be learned.

An important issue, then, is the appropriate forum wherein students can learn the necessary skills. Although textbooks can provide a range of advice on the practical issues of research design, analysis and writing up of qualitative research (e.g. Cassell and Symon, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Lee, 1999), the subjective experience of conducting the research itself is clearly significant (Fine et al., 2000). This has led some authors to argue that the more procedural or 'cookbook' approaches of some textbooks may not be enough, and that students have much to learn from reading the reflexive accounts of other researchers (e.g. Frost and Stablein, 1992; Hammersley, 2004; Humphrey and Lee, 2004). A further argument is that some skills can only be learned from conducting fieldwork itself: indeed, as Frost and Stablein suggest, 'only with the experience of "doing it" will the lessons of the classroom truly make sense' (1992: 277). Prasad (2005) argues that qualitative research should be seen as a craft and that 'knowledge of methods and theoretical paradigms alone is therefore insufficient for engaging in the craft of research' (2005: 7). This raises particular issues for those involved in the development of management researchers in relation to how we can enable the achievement of such craftwork.

In this article we seek to extend management knowledge in this area by investigating the perceptions of those involved in assessing the quality of qualitative management research and the distinctive skills and processes that go into its production and how these are learned. Given the complexities highlighted above, it is important that we are explicit about our own epistemological approach to these issues and the implications of that approach. Our theoretical framework is informed by interpretivism. Although there are a range of different approaches that come under the label of interpretivism (Prasad, 2005), such approaches are characterized by taking human interpretation as a starting point for any analysis, with a concern for how we socially construct reality around us. In taking an interpretivist approach to how quality in qualitative research is defined, we recognize

that different actors will have different interpretations of quality. It is these interpretations that we are interested in. Therefore, we do not subscribe to the view that there is a fixed point from which qualitative research can be considered 'good' or 'bad' in an externally legitimated way. Rather, individuals will construct their own sense of what is good, which will privilege their own understanding and sensemaking processes.

Taking an interpretivist approach has implications for how we understand the development of skills and knowledge in qualitative research. Here we are interested in how skills and knowledge lead to the production of qualitative research within the dynamics of a given research context. Rather than seeing skills as acontextual, they are seen to be situational or context-dependent, and their use requires the application of a tacit dimension (Polanyi, 1967). These contexts extend beyond the learning environment; indeed, different types of knowledge and skills may be gained through interaction with other workers or practitioners outside the classroom (Brown and Duguid, 1991). This highlights the view that the production of qualitative research can sometimes be seen as a collective venture (Van Maanen, 2006) and that the skills associated with its development are associated with practice. Practice here is not seen as a container that we fill as our skills and experience of qualitative research accrue, but rather as an ongoing dynamic process (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 1996). A useful way of conceptualizing practice is through a consideration of *phronesis*. An Aristotelian term, *phronesis* has been translated as 'practical wisdom' (Flyvbjerg, 2008: 153). Zackariasson, Styhre and Wilson (2006: 421) suggest that *phronesis* is a much-neglected concept in considerations of knowledge in the business and management literature and outline three traditions of thinking that underlie the Greek taxonomy of knowledge: *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. They argue that whereas in modern language *episteme* has been translated as 'epistemology' and 'epistemic', and *techne*, as a more embedded form of knowledge, has been translated into 'technology' and 'technical knowledge', *phronesis* has no similar translation. They suggest that *phronesis* can be seen as being 'street smart' in that 'this knowledge consists of acting from what one knows, to "make things happen"'. A more formal definition comes from Clegg and Ross-Smith (2003: 86), who suggest that *phronesis* 'refers to a discipline that is pragmatic, variable, context dependent, based on practical rationality, leading not to a concern with generating formal, covering lawlike explanations but to building contextual, case-based knowledge'.

Zackariasson et al. (2006: 421) argue that the knowledge associated with being 'street smart' has been excluded from mainstream research on knowledge, yet has a vital role to play. Flyvbjerg (2008: 153) points out that Aristotle believed that *phronesis* was the most important of the three intellectual virtues because a key component of it is the ability to think and react in relation to values. Thus it goes further than analytical, scientific knowledge and technical knowledge to involve 'judgements and decisions made in the manner of a virtuoso social actor' (Flyvbjerg, 2008: 154). Therefore, in addressing how we learn to become accomplished qualitative researchers, the *phronesis* that underpins the practice of qualitative research is worthy of consideration.

In summary, a review of the existing literature would suggest that producing high-quality qualitative research is a challenging endeavour, but that little

research has explored the skills and knowledge required for that endeavour. The contribution of this article is to provide an empirical diagnosis of the skills and knowledge required to conduct good qualitative management research, according to key stakeholders in the field, and to examine the implications of this diagnosis for management learning. The next section outlines our research methodology.

## **Methodology**

The research reported here was part of a larger funded study, the overall aim of which was to enhance good practice in the use of qualitative methods in management research. The objectives of the research project were: to conduct a systematic investigation into current perceptions of qualitative methods in management research, including perceived barriers to their use; to identify perceptions of good practice in conducting qualitative management research; to identify current assessment criteria for qualitative management research; to ascertain perceptions of skill deficits in this area and the factors viewed as contributing to these deficits; and to develop a set of training workshops to encourage informed and reflexive practice in this area. The focus of this paper is upon the issue of skills and their development, which was an integral part of the overall project.

We conducted 45 in-depth interviews with a range of different individuals who have an interest in enhancing the quality of qualitative management research. Our sample therefore included editors of international journals in the management field, chairs of professional associations and those who commission management research (academic disseminators); practitioners who commission qualitative research; widely published qualitative researchers who also have experience of supervising the work of others; and those involved with the provision of management development in this area, such as Doctoral Programme Leaders. The key criteria for selection of the sample was that they had an interest in the quality of qualitative research and were involved in making judgements regarding the quality of qualitative research on a regular basis. Therefore, it is noteworthy that in some cases the interviewees were in quite powerful positions as gatekeepers involved in defining high-quality research and having access to important outlets. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on questions that related to the objectives of the research. The majority of interviews were face-to-face; however, the practicalities of the situation occasionally necessitated telephone interviews (e.g. when the interviewee lived in a different country).

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. The overall analytical approach adopted largely followed the conventions of template analysis, where the researcher produces a list of codes (a template) representing themes identified in the textual data (King, 2004). The qualitative data analysis package NVivo was used for the initial stages of coding. One member of the research team, trained in the use of NVivo, was primarily responsible for this initial coding of the interview material. The initial template for the analysis was constructed with a series of broad categories that linked into the research objectives and interview questions. However, the template was further discussed and modified by the research team, and were categories reformulated within the template as a result

of this inductive process. Therefore, the final template contained categories that had been created both a priori and inductively. The broad categories in the final template were: definitions and purpose of qualitative management research; status and credibility of qualitative management research; perceptions of good practice; quality criteria; training and skills requirements; and professional and institutional issues. Each of these categories was then subjected to more in-depth and detailed analysis by a member of the research team. The findings reported here stem mainly from data that were originally categorized as 'training and skill requirements' and 'perceptions of good practice', though it is important to point out that one member of the team then re-read all of the transcripts in an attempt to ensure that our initial interpretations could be clarified through locating the data back into the context from which it was produced.

In reporting the findings we have been concerned with identifying issues in the areas of interest rather than drawing conclusions about the strength or generalizability of such views. Our aim was to use the research findings both to influence the design of management learning in this area and to stimulate discussion and debate.

## Research Findings

In outlining the research findings we sketch out the interviewees' views of the skills and knowledge required to conduct good-quality qualitative management research and how those skills and knowledge can be learned and developed. The data are presented in three sections. First we outline the skills, then the knowledge areas are described, and last we introduce the idea that there are also three types of research practice required in the accomplishment of good qualitative research: these are reflective practice, reflexive practice and phronesis. We recognize that the distinctions between notions of skills, knowledge and practice may be blurred in some places and we are not treating these as static concepts. However, in interpreting the data through the analytic process it was apparent that some form of categorization of the components that constitute accomplished performance in this area would be helpful; hence this categorization emerged from the analysis. Our working definitions of these categories are as follows. By skills, we mean the procedural know-how required for effective performance in a given area. When discussing types of knowledge, we are referring to bodies of background literature or information that provide a useful context in which we can understand that performance. When referring to different types of research practice, we are assuming that these are dynamic activities where the research process is critiqued and potentially acted upon. In the account that follows, extracts taken directly from the interview transcripts are used to illustrate some of the points made.

### *Skills*

Analysis of our interviewees' accounts suggests that the production of high-quality qualitative management research requires the development of a range of skills that could then be enhanced through the processes and practices of actually doing qualitative research. Specifically, we identify four different types

of skill viewed as important by our participants. These are seen as significant regardless of the underpinning philosophical paradigm, though the paradigm may impact how they are manifested and learned. These skills include those of data collection, data analysis, writing, and critique and evaluation.

Being able to collect data effectively was seen as a key skill. Researchers needed awareness of the technical aspects of the specific data collection technique and how it could be used in the research process, including the strengths and limitations of choosing particular techniques. Various communication skills were also seen as important—particularly listening skills. There were also more general aspects of the overall approach taken to data collection that were highlighted. For example, the development of an ‘inquiring mind’ was mentioned. Similarly, the ability to develop one’s curiosity in order to be able to probe research topics and informants appropriately was raised. It is evident that these skills can be learned through reading and training to some extent. For example, there are a number of useful texts advising fledgling researchers about how interviewing should be carried out (e.g. Holstein and Gubrium, 1997), and courses that focus on the development of interviewing skills. The technical details of what is required are available from these texts.

However, interviewees suggested that learning the skills may not in itself be enough, and that collecting data skilfully also requires being able to respond flexibly. As one interviewee outlined:

If you read methodology handbooks, it all sounds so smooth if you follow this strategy. Then you come up with the reality and you get terribly frustrated when you see you cannot follow the strategy. (Qualitative researcher)

Skilful performance is accomplished through being able to respond and amend data collection processes as necessary in a given research encounter. For many management researchers, this encounter will take place in the context of an organization, where different political, social and cultural factors engender unpredictable circumstances. It is an appreciation of the uncertainty within the research encounter, and the ability to respond to it in a flexible manner whilst collecting data, that characterize the skilful qualitative researcher. This can be seen as a form of phronesis, in that the researcher needs to respond in accordance with the demands of a given context.

Skills of data analysis were also highlighted. Although different approaches to data analysis were referred to by our interviewees as reflecting a range of philosophical perspectives, skills in data analysis were seen as crucial regardless of the underlying epistemological approach taken. Important criteria for the analytic process were consistency and transparency. The advantage of some form of systematic approach to analysis so that the reader could understand the analytic process was also highlighted. Additionally, this should occur in some kind of analytic framework so that there would be:

a match at least, or a congruence between the kind of data presented and analysed and the methods chosen to the theoretical problem and the problematic of the paper. (Academic disseminator)

Interpretation was also seen as important in order for the research to have some credibility for the reader, and the distinction was made between 'some genuine interpretation' and 'simply reporting things'. Choices and assumptions in relation to epistemological assumptions should also be made transparent. Overall skilful analysis demonstrated some consistency between methods, methodology and analysis, in order to construct an underlying logic to the story being told. Similar to data collection skills, although skill development in a classroom context was viewed as important, being able to interpret data appropriately was seen as requiring some contextual experience and reflective practice; for example:

I think if you are going to use an interpretivist perspective, in my experience, I think if you talk to postgraduate students they find it incredibly hard to take and use that kind of perspective effectively. It's so easy to use the words, and it's relatively easy to understand how one collects the data, but I think it's extraordinarily difficult to make the connection between understanding the interpretivist perspective and being an interpretivist. For me, operationalizing is the sense of actually doing it and in particular being able to apply the analysis in a particular way... There are lots of skills they have to acquire ... and those skills are like crafting in an apprenticeship because you have to go and do it, practice it and work at it and hone it because it is extremely difficult to do. (Doctoral programme leader)

This interviewee makes the distinction between learning what an interpretivist analysis is about and actually operationalizing it. Learning to analyse qualitative data therefore requires the contextual experience, reflection, practice and prolonged engagement with the data that happens beyond classroom activity.

The skill of translating a piece of research into an end product was seen as important to develop, and indeed the writing-up of qualitative research is a topic increasingly covered in textbooks on this subject (e.g. Seale et al., 2004); for example:

Qualitative researchers really have to learn how to express what we do in a way that engages readers, but that doesn't do the kind of 'trust me, I was there, you weren't and here's the story', but lets the reader see the kind of data that you engaged with and responded to, so they have confidence that you did it. (Academic disseminator)

This perspective highlights the need for the development of writing skills in order to persuade the reader of the status of the account produced. Good-quality qualitative research was perceived to be convincing to its audience, using a range of writing skills in its production, for example, knowing how to use metaphors and other rhetorical devices. Equally, crafting a logical and coherent argument through a piece of writing was seen as a central issue in convincing an audience of the credibility of a piece of research. The reader needed to follow the thread of the author's argument and understand the claims being made. Creating a coherent account was seen as a particular challenge in qualitative work, as the analytic process could be quite messy when compared to the typically linear approach associated with quantitative work. Interviewees suggested that where researchers come to qualitative research having been trained initially in quantitative traditions, they find this particularly difficult. This may especially be

the case with MBA students and practising managers (Skinner et al., 2000) who are used to producing formulaic accounts in their workplace based on the use of figures. There are now a range of informative texts and professional development workshops that provide advice on how to write up qualitative research (e.g. Czarniawska, 2004; Golden-Biddle and Locke, 2006; Richardson, 2000; Woods, 1999). However, this is something perceived as considerably daunting for the novice researcher who may be searching for some form of standardized procedure.

A further skill identified by the interviewees that is rarely acknowledged in textbooks in this area was the ability to effectively and fairly critique and evaluate the qualitative research of others. This skill was seen as important given the significance of peer review and critiquing research literature to academic work more generally. The journal editors in the sample referred to reviewer skills in this context. Different editors argued that reviewers, and indeed editors in the field of management, needed to understand the multiple interpretations that could come from qualitative research and the complexities of the business, management and organizational worlds. Specifically, these skills were seen as potentially addressable through training, and it was argued that reviewers should be taught how to review effectively and what to look for in a qualitative research article. Although there was some debate about what a good review looked like, it was recognized that a certain amount of skill was involved in reviewing the work of others appropriately and fairly, and that this was a skill that lent itself to structured training through the use of classroom exercises, for example. In particular, it was argued that reviewers should be aware of the variety of criteria, with different kinds of qualitative research requiring different types of criteria. This implies a need for reflection and reflexivity on the part of reviewers.

### *Types of Knowledge*

As well as identifying the skills that researchers required, interviewees also identified bodies of knowledge that were important. These were: knowledge of the range of qualitative techniques available; knowledge of philosophical approaches; and an understanding of the complexities associated with conducting qualitative research. A key theme underlying these different types of knowledge was the opportunities they provided for enabling researchers to make informed choices. We interpret these types of knowledge as different from the skills we have previously outlined, in that whereas skills are concerned with how to conduct research and the processes involved, the types of knowledge are concerned with providing a background in which to contextualize and make sense of that research. They also facilitate a consideration of the different choices available in pursuing qualitative research.

Interviewees emphasized that researchers should be aware of the diverse range of methods and methodologies that were available to qualitative researchers, and the opportunities that those methods afforded. For example:

I don't think there is in qualitative research in general enough use of some of the more complex qualitative [tools] ... There's far more imaginative and innovative things that people can do, but you rarely see people proposing to do them. (Academic disseminator)

Awareness of the range of techniques available was seen as particularly important given that some of the different qualitative approaches were not as well-documented in the literature. The intention is that this type of knowledge base would enable more effective methodological choices. A limited and restricted view of qualitative methods was unlikely to lead to the production of creative and inspired high-quality work, as opportunities would be missed. Awareness of available techniques is clearly something that could be self-taught or learned in a structured training process, and there are now numerous books available that detail different types of method and how to apply them (e.g. Cassell and Symon, 2004).

Another area of knowledge focused upon philosophy and epistemology. Interviewees commented that qualitative researchers needed an understanding of the various philosophical contexts in which qualitative research is conducted in order to effectively utilize the skills we have previously outlined. As one participant explained:

There's a real skill and history and theory attached to serious qualitative research that they should at least be aware of. (Practitioner)

Interviewees talked about the value and importance of having of an explicit epistemological approach and conceptual framework; as one suggested: 'you can't have method without philosophy'. Interviewees agreed that some knowledge of different philosophical approaches was important. There was, however, debate about the extent to which such knowledge should be covered in research training courses, with some interviewees expressing a concern to 'get the balance right' between philosophical knowledge and skills. Indeed, the amount and diversity of philosophical knowledge required was a contested area. Two examples that reflect the different positions on this issue are presented below. The first is from a journal editor, and the second from a doctoral programme leader:

I think what's happening is more and more people are going from straight undergraduate degrees in business and management onto PhD programmes, or even worse from MBA programmes onto PhD programmes, and they don't have the philosophical foundation in the social sciences and therefore they're all at sea when it comes to making a contribution. (Academic disseminator)

I think there is, you know, a tendency to actually over-complicate it, as you say, and make it dense and use lots of long words like epistemology and ontology. I think qualitative does tend to develop that kind of approach. It may be that that switches them off. (Doctoral programme leader)

So whereas other writers have highlighted the significance of an understanding of research traditions (e.g. Johnson et al., 2006; Prasad, 2005), amongst our interviewees this was clearly an area of debate. These differences in relation to 'how much' philosophy is appropriate connect to how the interviewees conceived of qualitative research and the position they took with regard to its purpose. If, for example, their view was that qualitative research is only useful as a precursor to quantitative research in a neo-positivist paradigm, then they were more likely

to argue that a cursory understanding of philosophy is enough. However, where interviewees were wedded to a more critical approach, as evidenced by critical theory, for example, there was more concern that training in philosophical positions needed to be sufficiently complex in order to encourage learners to position and justify their own work through philosophical debate. An important aspect of philosophical knowledge was being able to be reflexive and learning how to challenge and unsettle one's own philosophical assumptions. Knowledge of different philosophical commitments was also important given the different criteria used within different approaches to assess the quality of qualitative research (e.g. Johnson et al., 2006).

The final area of knowledge highlighted was an awareness of the complexities involved in conducting high-quality qualitative research. The concern was that the complex nature of qualitative skills was overlooked:

I think there is a very real danger that students take a qualitative approach because ... perhaps for the wrong reasons, where the reasons are to do with the fact that they've seen other people use it and they admire the way other people use it and perhaps underestimate how difficult it can be. I think there's a danger they underestimate. They think they understand it, when perhaps they don't fully understand it. (Doctoral programme leader)

The intention of conveying this knowledge was to send the message to new researchers that there were complex demands and a variety of skills involved in the production of high-quality qualitative research. Effective qualitative research was perceived as requiring the development of a certain maturity, with one interviewee describing the requirement for 'a long apprenticeship'. In preparing to become a qualitative researcher, some awareness of this would be useful. As Sandberg (2000) suggests, training from an interpretivist perspective could focus upon how individuals conceive of the nature of work, and then changing those conceptions. In this context we are suggesting that novice researchers reflect on their conceptions of qualitative research and maybe challenge some of their pre-conceived ideas.

### *Reflection, Reflexivity and Phronesis*

From the discussion above, it is apparent that the interviewees did not see knowledge and skills alone as enough for the production of high-quality qualitative research. Rather, reflection, reflexivity and phronesis were also seen as significant. We see these as three different types of research practice that enhance learning in this field. These practices are dynamic and involve some critical appraisal of the qualitative research process.

The term 'reflection' as used here draws upon the work of Schön (1983). Here, reflection has an underlying experimental logic where the researcher explores the impact of their research in a problem-solving manner with the intention of generating some form of learning on which future action can be based. For example, the researcher may consider how their interview technique or write-up has had an impact and seek to learn from that to potentially do it differently next time. Gray (2007: 496) suggests that 'Reflection is an active and purposeful

process of exploration and discovery, often leading to unexpected outcomes'. One of the interviewees provided an example of how they had introduced a piece of work for students to encourage the development of particular reflective skills:

It's a reflective learning piece, but it's about the practical skills of doing it [qualitative research]. A lot of people fail because they go back to the literature and theory because they're used to it in their literature review, in their philosophy of knowledge paper, and they think we just want all that stuff. But we don't ... We want to know what they have learnt. You know, what they have learnt that's different. What are the insights they have got from this exposure and how is this going to change what they are going to do. (Doctoral programme leader)

The notion of training in reflective practice has been highlighted in the management learning arena (e.g. Gray, 2007). It is also a key element of some of the MBA and DBA programmes taught in business schools, where the assumption is that practising managers will use their learning to reflect upon and critically interrogate their practice and previous experience (e.g. Watson, 2006). Gray (2007) outlines how a number of tools can be used within the classroom environment to encourage critical reflection, for example, story-telling, reflective logs, repertory grids and metaphor. The opportunity to be reflective requires some form of prolonged involvement within a given research context or practice situation. As Gosling and Mintzberg (2006) assert, learning to reflect critically requires something to reflect upon. However, as Gray (2007) suggests, managers, and indeed researchers, may not automatically reflect on their research experiences. This could be due to their busy lives but also a result of the sometimes uncomfortable issues that such reflection may generate. Therefore, a supportive facilitator and peers are important in creating an effective classroom environment for such reflection to take place.

Interviewees highlighted the importance of both reflection and reflexivity. As Anderson (2008: 184) suggests, the 'concept and practice of reflexivity have been defined in many ways'. Here it is seen as the critical appraisal of the researcher's taken-for-granted assumptions about their research and their own role within it. Reflexivity was perceived as important by interviewees in helping the reader to understand and make sense of the research by challenging and critiquing their assumptions and research practices throughout the research process. The reflexive researcher was:

in the camp that says 'I impact and therefore I need to examine how I have impacted or how I think I might be going to impact and be up-front to my readers and also my [research] participants. (Qualitative researcher)

However, being appropriately reflexive was seen as an accomplishment that needed delicate consideration. Researchers needed to be able to disclose aspects of themselves and their research journey without being too self-indulgent. The ongoing nature of reflexive processes indicated the necessity for an innovative approach or some form of reflexive circle, crucial to the production of high-quality work.

A number of authors have argued that reflexivity is interpreted differently in a range of different epistemological traditions (e.g. Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000; Cunliffe, 2003; Johnson and Duberley, 2003). Therefore, the extent to which qualitative researchers working in different paradigms can be trained to be appropriately reflexive is a complex issue. Ideas about reflexivity are often new to management students and potentially difficult for them to engage with. Cunliffe (2005: 236–7) argues that the classroom can be a forum for ‘critical reflexivity’, where the assumptions and ideologies underpinning our work are critiqued. She suggests, however, that students often confuse reflection with reflexivity, and therefore it is important to ‘emphasize that self-reflexivity is about becoming a self-conscious and self-questioning being’.

Apart from reflection and reflexivity, *phronesis* also has a role to play. When interviewees talk about being able to respond flexibly in situ and appropriately to the context they are describing, *phronetic* knowledge—that is being ‘street smart’ (Zackariasson et al., 2006: 421), or perhaps ‘context wise’—would be a more appropriate term. So although skills and knowledge are important, as one interviewee suggested: ‘a lot of things you have to learn by doing them’. It is unlikely that *phronesis* can be developed specifically in a classroom setting—rather, it is a response to a given research context. However, there may be some advantage in reading accounts of the fieldwork experiences of other qualitative researchers (e.g. Becker, 1998) to see how they have dealt with the various situations that arise when researching.

In summary, from the analysis of our data and our interpretation of the interviewees’ comments we have identified the skills and knowledge argued to impact upon a researcher’s potential to conduct high-quality qualitative management research. We have suggested that training can be provided in each of these areas, but in itself this is not enough. Rather, in order to become an accomplished qualitative researcher, three additional forms of research practice are important: reflection, reflexivity and *phronesis*. We now consider the implications of our analysis.

## **Discussion**

From the analysis of the data we have outlined the skills and knowledge areas that our interviewees highlighted as informing the production of high-quality qualitative management research. Although some of the skills relating to specific methods of qualitative research have previously been identified, our account has focused more holistically on what is required of qualitative management researchers. From our analysis it is apparent that the core skills and knowledge areas in themselves are not enough—these need to be understood and developed in the context of the lived experience of being a qualitative researcher, particularly in relation to three different types of research practices. Table 1 summarizes the components that have been identified from our analysis of the interviewees’ accounts. Within that we highlight the specific areas, important elements, and main methods of learning for each of the skills, types of knowledge and research practices identified. Given the components we identified, we now explore our interpretations of the key implications of our analysis for management learning.

**Table 1** Requirements for the production of good qualitative research

Requirements	Specific areas	Important elements	Main methods of learning
Skills (procedural know-how)	Effective data collection  Effective data analysis	Responsive to context Flexibility  Consistency Transparency Interpretation rather than description	Textbook Classroom exercises Practice in the field Textbook Practice of analysis Reflection Prolonged engagement Classroom exercises
Knowledge areas (background bodies of literature and information to provide context)	Persuasive writing-up  Effective critique and evaluation	Using metaphors and rhetorical devices Logical and coherent argument Sensitivity to different evaluation criteria	Textbook Practice of writing Classroom exercises Structured training Reflection Classroom exercises
	Range of techniques and available	Choosing appropriate method Creativity	Textbook Structured training
Research practices (dynamic activities where the research process is critiqued and potentially acted upon)	Range of philosophical approaches Complexity associated with qualitative research Reflection	Explicit conceptual background Position and justify own work Awareness of complexity Preparedness Problem-solving Iterative learning	Textbook Structured training Textbook Structured training Prolonged engagement Space and time set aside Learning logs Reflective tools (e.g. Gray, 2007)
	Reflexivity  Phronesis	Critical appraisal of underlying assumptions Epistemological sensitivity Responsive to context	Classroom debate Space and time set aside Learning logs Reading fieldwork accounts Practice in the field

One of the key considerations is the role of the classroom learning environment. Clearly, training is a useful and cost-effective way of conveying the skills and knowledge we have identified. Within the classroom these skills can also be practised, for example, through activity-based learning where participants can practise and develop new skills with regular feedback from both tutors and other class members. Moreover, researchers can explore and develop their reflective and reflexive skills within a classroom setting through the use of learning logs, for example. Opportunities can also be provided for fledgling researchers to grapple with some of the complexities of qualitative research. In the same way that Sandberg (2000) argues that training should induce workers to think about how they make sense of their work and the consequences of the understandings generated, so training in this field can encourage researchers to reflect upon how they define qualitative research, their own epistemological assumptions in their approach to that research, and the consequences of that for the practice of being a qualitative researcher. Additionally, we would expect that individual researchers will learn from interacting with their fellow researchers and peers as they engage with these issues (Brown and Duguid, 2001).

Another implication is that management learning should provide the opportunity for new researchers to learn from the reflections of other qualitative researchers who have experience of being in the field. Reading and discussing reflective and reflexive accounts of being a researcher is one way of doing this (e.g. Becker, 1998; Frost and Stablein, 1992; Golden-Biddle and Locke, 2006; Humphrey and Lee, 2004). As Prasad (2005: 284) suggests: 'There are few better ways of learning the *craft* of qualitative research than by looking at other well-crafted pieces'. In recommending attention to the reflexive accounts of others in this context, we are not recommending the use of a best practice model. Rather, the focus is more upon a variety of practices that may work in a given context. Given the role of phronesis we have outlined, providing researchers with an opportunity to engage with the research practices of others and study how an accomplished researcher responds in various fieldwork settings is useful. The intention is that students are exposed to the diverse range of experiences of other qualitative researchers.

A further implication is that training should be carried out with enough time between sessions to allow students to have ample opportunity to reflect upon their learning and experience. One of the findings of our analysis was that the interviewees believed that becoming an accomplished qualitative researcher required a considerable amount of time. There are some problems, however, with fitting this apprentice-type model into the current constraints surrounding research training. Within the UK, for example, the content of research training at doctoral level is tightly specified by the ESRC—an accrediting body. Although the need to learn about qualitative research is one of the specifications of that body, the majority of research training is confined to an intense period of the first six to nine months of doctoral registration. Training is completed before the period of fieldwork begins. This means that opportunities for reviewing how the knowledge gained during training interacts with practice tend to be confined to supervisory sessions between doctoral candidate and supervisor. So the learning processes outlined here are potentially more prolonged than the typical management learning qualification at Masters, MBA, or doctoral level.

The implications we have derived from the analysis so far all focus upon the development of the qualitative researcher in the classroom. However, another important implication is that there clearly needs to be some learning in the field through the experience of actually conducting qualitative research. This 'on-the-job' learning is the main way in which phronesis can be developed. We would argue, therefore, that the production of high-quality qualitative research should be viewed as an 'active accomplishment' (Orlikowski, 2002: 270), where skills and knowledge only take on meaning through the lived practice of conducting qualitative research. Therefore, opportunities for practice are important.

There are some issues to reflect on when considering both the research reported here and our analysis of the implications for management learning in this area. One constraint of the research is that the interviewees were mainly from the UK and USA. This perhaps reflects the Anglo-American dominance of the social sciences, and the 'big market share of American and British authors in the qualitative methodology literature' (Alasuutari, 2004: 597). It would be interesting to see the extent to which our findings with regard to qualitative research training are relevant to those in other countries and learning environments. As with any diagnosis, our interpretations of the implications for management learning are also dependent on the analysis of our data and therefore reflect the views and concerns of the interviewees, and our interpretations of those views. Clearly, their views about qualitative research are not neutral and are based on their own constructions of the role and purpose of qualitative research in the field. Indeed some, such as the journal editors, for example, are in positions of considerable influence to shape the ways in which good qualitative research is defined.

In outlining the implications of our analysis for management learning, we recognize that the identification of skills and sets of knowledge will be controversial for some qualitative researchers. A potential danger is that we are creating some standardized framework for all kinds of qualitative research. We recognize this danger but this is not our intention. Rather, we have highlighted the complexities that surround this area and the contentious issue of how good qualitative research is defined. Our analysis emerges from the interviewees' opinions and experiences about the skills, knowledge and practices that go into the production of good qualitative research. Our intention has been to combine these with the existing knowledge base to consider what the qualitative researcher needs to do to achieve something that might be perceived as good-quality by others in the field. This is useful when working in a field where the concept of quality itself is contested and socially constituted, though it must be recognized that there is always the potential that other stakeholders may have interpreted the requirements somewhat differently.

With regard to our own position, we are all keen advocates of qualitative research and actively engaged in research training within business and management schools. Encouraging discussion of how management researchers learn to do qualitative research is therefore important to us for a number of reasons. Apart from this issue having been given little attention in the literature so far, we wish to encourage more management researchers to engage with these methods and believe that an understanding of what is involved may enable this. Our own experience as management educators tells us that sometimes qualitative research lacks credibility with managers and other management educators; therefore,

an understanding of the views of those with interests in the field about the complex processes that go into its production could potentially help address this. Furthermore, we are interested in encouraging discussion about the ways in which the quality of such research is assessed with a view to enhancing its status within the management field.

## Conclusions

The contribution of this work to our understanding of management learning is to provide an empirically based, detailed analysis of the views of key stakeholders about what goes into the production of good qualitative management research. With the caveat that good quality is a contested concept that has multiple interpretations, we have outlined the skills, knowledge and practices our interviewees saw as requisite for the production of high-quality qualitative research, and have discussed the implications for management learning in this area. From an interpretivist perspective, we maintain that it is important to understand the skills, knowledge and practices required for competence within the context of a researcher's conception of what it means to be a qualitative researcher, and that training needs to take into consideration qualitative researchers' sensemaking processes around the nature of their work. Becoming an accomplished qualitative researcher is a complex process. It requires engagement with a philosophically diverse field where there are different assessments of quality at play (Johnson et al., 2006). It requires us to have a range of skills and knowledge, as we have outlined. Finally, it also requires us to have the opportunities to reflect, be reflexive and experience being a qualitative researcher in order to learn and develop.

## Acknowledgement

The research outlined in this paper was supported by ESRC Grant no. H3332500006, entitled 'Benchmarking Good Practice in Qualitative Management Research'.

## References

- Alasuutari, P. (2004) 'The Globalization of Qualitative Research', in C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium and D. Silverman (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, pp. 595–608. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. and Sköldböck, K. (2000) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Anderson, L. (2008) 'Reflexivity', in R. Thorpe and R. Holt (eds) *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research*, pp. 183–5. London: Sage.
- Becker, H. (1998) *Tricks of the Trade*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Boje, D. (2001) 'Report from the Division Chair', *Academy of Management Research Methods Division Newsletter* 16(2).
- Brown, J. S. and Duguid, P. (1991) 'Organizational Learning and Communities of Practice: Towards a Unified View of Working, Learning and Innovation', *Organizational Science* 1: 40–57.

- Bryman, A. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2005) *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cassell, C. M. and Symon, S. (2004) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.
- Clegg, S. R. and Ross-Smith, A. (2003) 'Revising the Boundaries: Management Education and Learning in a Post-Positivist World', *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 2(1): 85–98.
- Clough, P. (2004) 'Teaching Trivial Pursuits: A Review of Three Qualitative Research Texts', *Qualitative Research* 4(3): 419–28.
- Cunliffe, A. (2003) 'Reflexive Inquiry in Organizational Research: Questions and Possibilities', *Human Relations* 58(8): 983–1003.
- Cunliffe, A. (2005) 'The Need for Reflexivity in Public Administration', *Administration and Society* 37(2): 225–42.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004) *Writing Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dall'Alba, G. and Sandberg, J. (1996) 'Educating for Competence in Professional Practice', *Instructional Science* 1: 40–57.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. (2005) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S. and Wong, L. (2000) 'Qualitative Research, Representations, and Social Responsibilities', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 107–32. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2008) 'Phronetic Organizational Research', in R. Thorpe and R. Holt (eds) *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research*, pp. 153–5. London: Sage.
- Frost, P. J. and Stablein, R. E. (1992) *Doing Exemplary Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Golden-Biddle, K. and Locke, K. D. (2006) *Composing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gosling, J. and Mintzberg, H. (2006) 'Management Education as if Both Matter', *Management Learning* 37(4): 419–28.
- Gray, D. E. (2007) 'Facilitating Management Learning: Developing Critical Reflection through Reflective Tools', *Management Learning* 38(5): 495–517.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) 'Competing Paradigms on Qualitative Research', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 105–17. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hammersley, M. (2004) 'Teaching Qualitative Method: Craft, Profession or Bricolage?', in C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium and D. Silverman (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, pp. 549–60. London: Sage.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (2nd edn). London: Routledge.
- Harlos, K. P., Mallon, M., Stablein, R. and Jones, C. (2003) 'Teaching Qualitative Methods in Management Classrooms', *Journal of Management Education* 27(2): 304–22.
- Hendry, J. (2006) 'Educating Managers for Post-Bureaucracy: The Role of the Humanities', *Management Learning* 37(3): 267–81.
- Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (1997) *The Active Interview*. London: Sage.
- Humphrey, C. and Lee, B. (2004) *The Real Life Guide to Accounting Research: A Behind the Scenes View of Using Qualitative Research Methods*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2000) *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology*. London: Sage.
- Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2003) 'Reflexivity in Management Research', *Journal of Management Studies* 40(8): 1279–303.

- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. M. and Symon, G. (2007) 'Defining Qualitative Management Research', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* 2(1): 23–42.
- Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Symon, G. and Cassell, C. M. (2006) 'Evaluating Qualitative Management Research: Towards a Contingent Criteriology', *International Journal of Management Reviews* 8(3): 131–56.
- King, N. (2004) 'Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of Text', in C. M. Cassell and G. Symon (eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, pp. 256–70. London: Sage.
- Lee, T. W. (1999) *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewis, J. and Ritchie, J. (2003) 'Generalizing from Qualitative Research', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, pp. 263–86. London: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (2000) 'Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 163–88. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orlikowski, W. (2002) 'Knowing in Practice: Enacting a Collective Capability in Distributed Organizing', *Organization Science* 13(3): 249–73
- Pettigrew, A. (2001) 'Management Research after Modernism', *British Journal of Management* 12: 61–70.
- Polanyi, M. (1967) *The Tacit Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.
- Prasad, P. (2005) *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions*. New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc.
- Prasad, A. and Prasad, P. (2002) 'The Coming Age of Interpretive Organizational Research', *Organizational Research Methods* 5(1): 4–11.
- Richardson, L. (2000) 'Writing a Method of Inquiry', in N. K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 923–48. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Sandberg, J. (2000) 'Understanding Human Competence at Work: An Interpretative Approach', *Academy of Management Journal* 43(1): 9–25.
- Schön, D. A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.
- Seale, C. (1999) *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J. and Silverman, D. (2004) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage.
- Skinner, D., Tagg, C. and Holloway, J. (2000) 'Managers and Research: The Pros and Cons of Qualitative Research', *Management Learning* 31(2): 163–79.
- Symon, G. and Cassell, C. M. (2004) 'Promoting New Research Practices in Organizational Research', in C. M. Cassell and G. Symon (eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, pp. 1–10. London: Sage.
- Van Maanen, J. (1998) *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Van Maanen, J. (2006) 'Ethnography Now and Then', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* 1(1): 13–21.
- Watson, S. R. (2006) 'Management Education as if Both Matter: A Response to Jonathan Gosling and Henry Mintzberg', *Management Learning* 37(4): 429–31.
- Woods, P. (1999) *Successful Writing for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Routledge.
- Zackariasson, P., Styhre, A. and Wilson, T. M. (2006) 'Phronesis and Creativity: Knowledge Work in Video Game Development', *Creativity and Innovation Management* 15(4): 419–29.

## Contact Address

**Catherine Cassell** and **Victoria Bishop** are at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6BP, UK.

[email: Catherine.cassell@mbs.ac.uk; victoria.bishop@manchester.ac.uk]

**Gillian Symon** is at the Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1E 7HX.

[email: g.symon@bbk.ac.uk]

**Phil Johnson** is at The Management School, The University of Sheffield, 9 Mappin St, Sheffield, S1 4DT.

[email: phil.johnson@sheffield.ac.uk]

**Anna Buehring** is at Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, Aytoun Building, Aytoun Street, Manchester M1 3GH.

[email: a.buehring@mmu.ac.uk]