



**International  
Human Resource  
Development**

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## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to all those who have a vocation, a calling, to support and encourage constructive and positive learning: students, delegates, teachers, trainers, tutors, lecturers, consultants, coaches, mentors, managers, researchers and support staff.

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**THIRD EDITION**

# International Human Resource Development

Learning, education and  
training for individuals  
and organizations

Edited by John P Wilson

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**Clare Rigg** is Senior Lecturer in the School of Business and Social Studies at the Institute of Technology, Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. For many years she has worked with practitioners from all sectors, integrating action learning and action research to issues of organization development, leadership and management development and to improving inter-agency working. She has researched and written on action learning, critical action learning, management learning and human resource development, including recent books on *Action Learning and Public Leadership* (with Sue Richards) and *Critical Human Resource Development* (with Kiran Trehan and Jim Stewart).

**Júnia Marçal Rodrigues** holds a Master's degree in business administration (UFMG) and is a specialist in human resource management (UFMG) and a psychologist (UFMG). She has extensive experience in human resources with public and private companies in Brazil. She is an MBA professor in disciplines including strategic remuneration and human resources (performance evaluation, career, competencies).

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# PREFACE

The first edition of this book was published in 1999 when human resource development was still a young and maturing discipline. It may still be maturing but it cannot be accurately described as young anymore. In fact, the term ‘human resource development’ was first used in 1964, which would make the discipline middle aged. The book’s title contained the term ‘learning’, which emphasized the increasing transfer in emphasis from training to learning. Also, there was a foreword by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment acknowledging the important contribution that HRD made to the economic success of all countries. At the time, there were few textbooks available on the subject and this one successfully found a readership and was reprinted.

The second edition built upon the success of the first edition and also increased in size by two chapters. There were a number of international contributors, particularly for the numerous case studies that illustrated the practical and applied dimensions of the theories.

This third edition continues the pioneering nature of the two previous editions and is the first textbook to provide a thorough exploration of international human resource development. The contributing authors come from across the globe and represent the foremost exponents of IHRD, making this the most encompassing book of its type.

The origin of the term ‘human resource development’ was in the context of human capital development, and it is in the field of national and international development that HRD has become increasingly important. It is for this reason, and also because HRD incorporates many areas such as education, training, development and coaching, that ‘international human resource development’ is a more appropriate description.

There is also a strong case for bringing the disciplines of education, training, development and coaching closer because many of the theories which underpin them are common to them all. Furthermore, many of the trainers, teachers, tutors, coaches, mentors, consultants and organization development specialists naturally move between these disciplines. The reality is that the landscape of international human resource development is a dynamic one that responds to individual, group, organizational, national and international learning requirements.

Yet, despite its maturing years, its component parts are still being debated and it is often erroneously subsumed within HRM. These arguments are mostly healthy but they also indicate a sense of insecurity, perhaps neuroticism, and the fact that these debates are largely in the realm of academia. The most important point about HRD is that it is an applied subject and practitioners are getting on with the job of supporting people to achieve objectives efficiently and effectively.

This edition, like the previous ones, is designed to provide a bridge between theory and practice. The theories inform and guide practice, and practice provides



empirical evidence about what works and does not work, thus leading to a refinement of the theories. Also, the various chapters have been mapped against the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) standards to enable students to swiftly identify areas which they need to study. As Kurt Lewin said, 'There is nothing so practical as a good theory.'

## **Part One: International human resource development and learning**

Chapter 1 begins by exploring the meaning of the core terms of training, education, development and learning, and then explores the nature of HRD and IHRD. Chapter 2 puts HRD in its strategic organizational context, and Chapter 3 examines in depth the process of learning from six different perspectives.

## **Part Two: Organizational learning**

This part incorporates the areas of change management and organization development that are often implemented by those involved with training and development. It also addresses the increasingly important area of knowledge management, which incorporates learning and development.

## **Part Three: National and international learning, education, training and human resource development**

This part expands HRD and shows how it has a truly national and international application. It begins with a consideration of national systems of education and shows how they are essential to national prosperity, and social and personal well-being. The complementary aspects of vocational education and training are gradually expanded from a consideration of the UK VET, to European VET, and to examples of HRD in Brazil, Russia, India and China. Development is also examined through the roles of the European Training Foundation and a United Nations Development Programme.

## **Part Four: The training cycle**

The traditional training or learning cycle addresses the key components of: identification of learning needs; designing learning events; delivering training and other

forms of learning opportunities, including coaching and mentoring; and finally, assessing and evaluating the intervention. Multicultural and multilingual considerations should be applied to all the areas addressed by the book.

## Part Five: Managing HRD

The final part explores leadership and management and how to apply these to the HRD function. Being an HRD specialist also requires one to be able to thoroughly examine and research business issues. The role of the trainer, teacher, tutor, coach, mentor or other professional is often that of the internal or external consultant; undertaking this role requires many skills not least of which is operating in an ethical manner. It is also necessary to look beyond the training room or classroom and consider other arenas where much learning occurs.

## Acknowledgements

This book would not have been published without the efforts of a great many international experts downloading their knowledge and composing it in a clear and accessible form. I am very grateful for their dedication, professionalism and willingness to share with others. The book was also delivered due to the encouragement of Kogan Page staff, particularly Martina O’Sullivan, Sarah Cooke, Shereen Muhyeddeen, Paula Mye, Chris Caw, Anita Clark, Anne Hayward and team. Thanks are also due to those individuals and organizations that have given permission to publish diagrams, standards etc, including: Samuel Otoo of the World Bank, Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, Investors in People, Learning and Skills Improvement Service, and Management Standards Centre/Council for Administration.

## Mapping the Contents to the CIPD Professional Standards for Learning and Development

In 2009 the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) conducted research that helped them identify a comprehensive overview of the HR profession, which resulted in the development of the CIPD Profession Map. This map describes the underpinning skills, knowledge and behaviour, and consists of 10 professional areas, eight behaviours and four bands of professional competence.

The 10 professional areas are:

- 1 Insights, strategy, and solutions.
- 2 Leading HR.
- 3 Organization design.
- 4 Organization development.

- 5 Resourcing and talent planning.
- 6 Learning and talent development.
- 7 Performance and reward.
- 8 Employee engagement.
- 9 Employee relations.
- 10 Service delivery and information.

The eight behaviours are divided into three areas:

- *Insights and influence:*
  - curious;
  - decisive thinker;
  - skilled influencer.
- *Operational excellence:*
  - driven to deliver;
  - collaborative;
  - personally credible.
- *Stewardship:*
  - courage to challenge;
  - role model.

And the activities of the four bands involve:

Band 1: Administrative, client support and processing activity.

Band 2: Advising and managing individual or team-based human resources issues and problems.

Band 3: Leading the professional area. Addressing the human resources challenges at the organizational level.

Band 4: Leading the function or professional area. Leading the organization. Developing the organizational strategy. Developing the HR strategy.

The chapters within this book are mapped onto and cover all the relevant units for human resource development described in the CIPD awards at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The following table displays the coverage and guides the student and teacher to the relevant chapters.

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**TABLE 0.1** Mapping the contents to the CIPD Professional Standards for Learning and Development

| Foundation Certificate in Learning and Development Practice units         | Chapter    | Intermediate Certificate in Human Resource Development | Chapter    | Intermediate Diploma in Human Resource Development        | Chapter              | Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Development            | Chapter                  |
|---|------------|--|------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Core units</b>   |            | <b>Core units</b>                                      |            | <b>Core units</b>   |                      | <b>Core units</b>   |                          |
| Developing yourself as an effective learning and development practitioner | 1, 7, 12   | Developing professional practice                       | 1, 7, 20   | 1. Developing professional practice                       | 1, 7, 20             | 1. Human resource management in context                   | 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 |
| Understanding organizations and the role of learning and development      | 2, 20      | Business issues and the context of HR                  | 2, 4, 5, 6 | 2. Business issues and the context of HR                  | 2, 4, 5, 6           | 2. Leading, managing and developing people                | 1, 2, 4, 19, 20, 24,     |
| Recording, analysing and using learning and development information       | 12, 20, 21 | Using information in HR                                | 12, 21     | 3. Using information in HR                                | 4, 12, 21            | 3. Developing skills for business leadership              | 19, 20, 21, 22           |
|   |            |  |            | 4. Managing and coordinating the Human Resources Function | 1, 4, 19, 20, 21, 24 | 4. Investigating a business issue from an HR perspective. | 12, 14, 21, 22           |

| <b>Optional units</b>   | <b>Optional units</b>                                       | <b>Optional units</b>                                      | <b>Optional units</b>                                      | <b>Optional units</b>  | <b>Optional units</b>   |   |              |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--------------|
| Resourcing talent   | A1. Contemporary developments in human resource development | 1, 2, 6, 7, 8  | A1. Meeting organizational development needs               | 13, 15, 16, 18, 23   | A1. Learning and talent development   | 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24                            |              |
| Supporting good practice in managing employment relations     | A2. Meeting organizational development needs                | 13, 15, 16, 18, 23   | A2. Developing coaching and mentoring within organizations | 17, 22, 24   | A2. Designing, delivering and evaluating learning and development provision | 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24                             |              |
| Supporting good practice in performance and reward management | A3. Developing coaching and mentoring within organizations  | 17, 22, 24   | A3. Knowledge management                                   | 5  | A3. Leadership and management development                                   | 12, 19, 20, 21, 24  |              |
| Contributing to the process of job analysis                   | 12  | A4. Knowledge management                                   | 5  | A4. Organization design: implications for human resources      | 2, 4, 16  | A4. Knowledge management and organizational learning      | 2, 5, 16, 24 |
| Supporting change within organizations                        | 4   | A5. Managing and coordinating the human resources function | 1, 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24                                   | A5. Organization development: implications for human resources | 4   | A5. Understanding and implementing coaching and mentoring | 17, 22, 24   |
| Undertaking a learning needs analysis                         | 12  | A6. Organization design: implications for human resources  | 2, 4, 16   | A6. Human resource service delivery                            | 15, 16, 23  | A6. Organization design and organization development      | 4, 21, 18    |

**TABLE 0.1** *continued*

| <b>Foundation Certificate in Learning and Development Practice units</b> | <b>Chapter</b> | <b>Intermediate Certificate in Human Resource Development</b>  | <b>Chapter</b> | <b>Intermediate Diploma in Human Resource Development</b> | <b>Chapter</b> | <b>Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Development</b> | <b>Chapter</b> |
|--|----------------|--|----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|
| <b>Optional units</b>  |                | <b>Optional units</b>  |                | <b>Optional units</b>                                     |                | <b>Optional units</b>                                 |                |
| Preparing and designing learning and development activities              | 13             | A7. Organization development: implications for human resources | 4,             | B1. Resourcing and talent planning                        |                | B1. Resourcing and talent management                  |                |
| Delivering learning and development activities                           | 15, 16         | A8. Human resources service delivery                           | 15, 16, 23     | B2. Reward management                                     |                | B2. Performance management                            |                |
| Evaluating learning and development activities                           | 18, 21         | B1. Resourcing and talent planning                             |                | B3. Improving organization performance                    |                | B3. Reward management                                 |                |
| Developing coaching skills for the workplace                             | 17, 22, 24     | B2. Reward management  |                | B4. Employee engagement                                   |                | B4. Managing employment relations                     |                |
| Developing mentoring skills for the workplace                            | 17, 22, 24     | B3. Improving organization performance                         |                | B5. Contemporary developments in employment relations     |                | B5. Employment law                                    |                |
|  |                | B4. Employee engagement  |                | B6. Employment law  |                | B6. Employee engagement                               |                |
|  |                | B5. Contemporary developments in employment relations          |                |   |                |   |                |
|  |                | B6. Employment law   |                |   |                |   |                |



PART ONE  
**International  
human resource  
development and  
learning**

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## 01

# International human resource development

JOHN P WILSON

*The most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings and of that capital the most precious part is the result of the care and influence of the mother.* (ALFRED MARSHALL, 1890: VI. IV. 11)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the differences and similarities between education, training, development and learning;
- understand the nature of human resource development (HRD);
- be familiar with the pyramid of HRD and the six main areas;
- understand the broader considerations of international HRD;
- understand the relationship between HRD and HRM;
- understand the importance of human capital.

## Introduction

---

The field of international human resource development (IHRD) is a large one, encompassing formal education, personal education and training, training and development in organizations, and learning and training at national and international levels. Often, these areas are considered separately in order to narrow the scope and simplify

understanding; however, this has resulted in a number of significant limitations. Firstly, and perhaps most fundamentally, many underlying theories, principles and practices are common to all of these areas. Secondly, boundaries between the disciplines inhibit the transfer of ideas and innovations, thus slowing the potential for improved learning. Thirdly, the boundaries are relatively porous to the movement of labour, and many teachers, trainers, coaches, developers and other personnel move between schools, colleges, universities and other organizations, transferring ideas and practices. In addition, the multiplicity of disciplines also prevents joined-up thinking for strategists, particularly at organizational, agency, governmental and supra-national levels. Furthermore, these boundaries or divisions also have the potential to create conflict: with employers accusing educators of not considering the work skills needed by young people, educators accusing employers of thinking purely about their own needs and not the lifelong requirements of people, governments challenging both, employers restricting training to specific work-related skills, and other problems.

Without a broader awareness of the importance of learning across boundaries the various disciplines will fail to appreciate the broader context in which strengths can be increased and limitations overcome by sharing experiences. The quotation at the start of this chapter from the economist Marshall illustrates the importance of early care and nurturing by parents – is this not also human resource development?

In this chapter we will explore the foundations of human resource development and human capital and connect this with other chapters in this book.

## Defining education, training, development and learning

---

Education, training, development and learning are closely related concepts, and we explore the latter in detail in Chapter 3. Below we compare and contrast these areas in order to provide some of the underpinning concepts of HRD.

### Education

Traditionally, education has been associated with schools, colleges and universities and has a less immediate and less specific application than training. Education is regarded as encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes (Bloom et al, 1956), and two helpful sources of definitions used here are the Manpower Services Commission's (1981) *Glossary of Training Terms*, and Cedefop's (The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) (1996) *Glossarium* of educational and training terms in nine European languages. This glossary was developed to encourage understanding and cooperation between countries; the original intention was to standardize the meaning of terms in Europe, but partly due to linguistic and cultural differences the proposal was not adopted.

Education is:

activities which aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than a knowledge and skill relating to only a limited

field of activity. The purpose of education is to provide the conditions essential to young people and adults to develop an understanding of the traditions and ideas influencing the society in which they live and to enable them to make a contribution to it. It involves the study of their own cultures and of the laws of nature, as well as the acquisition of linguistic and other skills which are basic to learning, personal development, creativity and communication.

(Manpower Services Commission, 1981: 17)

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(Cedefop, 1996: 48)

## Training

The historical antecedents of training have their roots in the Medieval crafts and guilds where the purpose of training was to enable indentured apprentices to work for a period of years under the supervision of a master craftsperson. Eventually, the apprentices learned the skills required of that occupation and would produce a complex piece of work, a 'masterpiece', incorporating much of what they had learned. This would then enable them to become members of the specific guild. Hence, today, we have the term 'Master's degree', which illustrates that the person is, or should be, fully conversant with that area (see Chapter 7: UK vocational education and training).

The Manpower Services Commission (1981: 62) defines training as:

a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities.

Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organization.

Cedefop (1996: 52) defines vocational training as:

Activity or programme of activities designed to teach the skills and knowledge required for particular kinds of work... Training... usually takes place at working places, whereas education... takes place at *educational establishments*.

Both of the definitions above illustrate the application of training to the requirements of the organization and the fact that this training tends to occur in the workplace. They also indicate a relatively narrow limitation to specific skills and operations. Moreover, training normally has an immediate application and is generally completed in a shorter timescale than education (Van Wart, Cayer and Cork, 1993).

Distinguishing between education and training can be quite problematic. One very illustrative example of the difference between education and training would be a young child coming home and saying, 'We had sex training today!' This is in stark contrast to sex education classes that imply a theoretical rather than a practical application of learning!

## Development

Development indicates movement to an improved situation, which for people means advancing their physical and mental potential. Lee (2001) suggested that the word development was used in four ways: development as maturation, development as shaping, development as a voyage and development as emergent. And the Manpower Services Commission (1985: 9) stated that:

Development is the growth or realization of an individual's or a group's ability, through conscious or unconscious learning. Development programmes usually include elements of planned study and experience, and are frequently supported by a coaching or counselling facility.

## Learning

One common theme that can be found in many of the definitions of training, education and development is that they contain the word 'learning'. Nadler (Nadler and Nadler, 1990: 1.18) gathered these terms together and stated that:

Training = learning related to present job.

Education = learning to prepare the individual but not related to a specific present or future job.

Development = learning for growth of the individual but not related to a specific present or future job.

An in-depth exploration of learning is covered in Chapter 3; therefore, only a definition will be provided here:

Learning is a relatively permanent change of knowledge, attitude or behaviour occurring as a result of formal education or training, or as a result of informal experiences.

As a postscript to the discussion on these definitions, a brief mention of indoctrination should be included since it is rarely covered in the training and development literature. Indoctrination can be found in a number of areas such as religious cults, political indoctrination, some military training, company culture and company songs. In some ways it may be regarded as a slightly less intensive form of brainwashing, in which individuals or groups are encouraged, persuaded, or forced to adopt a particular mental model or approach to specific areas or even whole lifestyles. Rogers (1986), who analysed the relationship of indoctrination, training and learning, described it as having very restricted objectives and providing for one way of thinking. Training, while still having narrow goals, allows slightly broader thinking, while learning has the fewest constraints and tolerates diverse ways of thinking.

## Human resource development

Some of the foundations of HRD originated during the Second World War through the Training Within Industry programmes (Dooley, 1945). (There was also a training Within Industry for Supervisors scheme in the UK that ran from 1944 to 1984.) The first use of the term 'human resource development' was provided by Harbison and

Myers (1964) in the context of human capital or human development. Subsequently, it was used to specify a discipline or professional area of practice by Leonard Nadler at the 1969 Miami Conference of the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD), and he provided a definition in 1970. Initially, the focus of many of the early definitions of HRD was described from a US perspective, and nearly all emphasized an organizational dimension (Weinberger, 1998). With time, definitions expanded to incorporate organization development (McLagan and Suhadolnik, 1989).

A wide range of views and interpretations are held about what constitutes HRD, and more than 20 definitions were compiled by Hamlin and Stewart. They analysed definitions of HRD and identified four core purposes:

- improving individual or group effectiveness and performance;
- improving organizational effectiveness and performance;
- developing knowledge, skills and competencies;
- enhancing human potential and personal growth.

(Hamlin and Stewart, 2011: 210)

A number of definitions are provided below in chronological order to illustrate the progression, complexity and different understandings of the subject:

Human resource development is the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills, and the capacities of all the people in a society. In economic terms, it could be described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In political terms, human resource development prepares people for adult participation in political processes, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, the development of human resources helps people to lead fuller and richer lives, less bound by tradition. In short, the processes of human resource development unlock the door to modernization.

(Harbison and Myers, 1964: 2)

Human resource development is a series of organised activities conducted within a specified time and designed to produce behavioural change.

(Nadler, 1970: 3)

HRD is the integrated use of training and development, career development, and organisation development to improve individual and organisational effectiveness.

(McLagan and Suhadolnik, 1989: 1)

Human resource development is concerned with learning and with how it might be managed. It is concerned with interventions that might facilitate learning. It is concerned with change – of behaviour, as reflected in the demonstration of new or enhanced skills, new knowledge and understanding and new attitudes. It is concerned with both intentional and accidental learning. It has a vocational aspect to it. Thus its focus is vocational learning.

(Walton, 1999: 78)

HRD as an organisational process comprises the skilful planning and facilitation of a variety of formal and informal learning and knowledge processes and experiences, primarily but not exclusively in the workplace, in order that organisational progress and individual potential can be enhanced through the competence, adaptability, collaboration and knowledge-creating activity of all who work for the organisation.

(Harrison and Kessels, 2004: 4–5)

The HRD strategy can broadly be defined as the pattern of planned and unfolding activities that focuses on developing capabilities to achieve current and future strategic objectives.

(Swart et al, 2005: 83)

HRD involves a *process* of observation, planning, action and review to manage the cognitive capacities, capabilities and behaviours needed to enable and improve individual, team and organisational performance in work organisations.

(Gibb, 2008: 6)

Human resource development (HRD) encompasses a range of organisational practices that focus on learning: training, learning, and development; workplace learning; career development and lifelong learning; organisation development; organisational knowledge and learning.

(Mankin, 2009: 6)

HRD is a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individuals, team, work process, and organisational system performance.

(Swanson and Holton, 2009: 4)

HRD encompasses planned activities, processes and/or interventions designed to have impact upon and enhance organisational and individual learning, to develop human potential, to improve or maximise effectiveness and performance at either the individual, group/team and/or organisational level, and/or to bring about effective, beneficial personal or organisational behaviour change and improvement within, across and/or beyond the boundaries (or borders) of private sector (for profit), public sector/ governmental, or third/voluntary sector (not-for-profit) organisations, entities or any other type of personal-based, work-based, community-based, political-based or nation-based host system.

(Hamlin and Stewart, 2011: 213)

It is clear from these definitions that different perspectives of HRD exist; indeed Garavan et al (2007: 3) stated that HRD was 'segmented, incomplete, lacking comprehensiveness and coherence, with diverse theories and models offering competing explanations'. However, this accusation can be levelled at many disciplines in the social sciences, and those for education, training and development also lack clarity and transparency, but that has not stopped them being used without people being overly, and perhaps neurotically, introspective. Moreover, the lack of a clear and consistent definition might even be an advantage, with Mankin (2001) suggesting that this ambiguity makes HRD 'distinctive'. Indeed, Lee (2001) refused to define HRD because of the wide variations of practice around the world.

Also, there would appear to be a minimalist approach of constructing a definition with short pithy descriptions, and an extended approach that attempts to cover all the bases. In reality, neither the short nor the long definitions are fully capable of incorporating all the dimensions of HRD and remaining lucid and explanatory. In many ways, it depends on your own personal perspective as to which is the most appropriate.

Another factor regarding the seemingly obsessive concern with definitions is that HRD is still a relatively young and evolving discipline. In many ways this is healthy since a sense of identity is necessary to carve out and delineate the territory from other areas, and particularly from human resource management (see below). Yet, more recently, it appears HRD has taken on societal, national and international dimensions,

perhaps reflecting a form of land-grab but also demonstrating a maturity and inner confidence about its purpose.

That HRD draws from a number of disciplines would appear to be a source of strength, particularly for those organizational HRD departments that have multiple responsibilities. For example, Dilworth (2003) proposed that a number of sub-elements were contained within HRD and included: career development, change management, healthy and productive workplaces, knowledge management, leadership development, learning processes and team building. In reality, HRD is a multidisciplinary field and can be said to include:

- career planning and development;
- change management;
- coaching;
- development studies;
- leadership development;
- management development;
- organization development;
- outdoor development;
- performance improvement;
- personal development;
- technical training;
- training and development;
- vocational education and training.

Finally, having considered the nature of HRD and a range of definitions, this author concludes that:

*Human resource development involves the processes for increasing the cognitive, affective and behavioural capacities of all people and organizations in a society.*

## **Human resource development versus human resource management**

The relationship between human resource development and human resource management (HRM) is a rather confused one that is not helped by the fact that many university courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels subsume HRD within HRM. And the same is true for some textbooks which subordinate HRD within HRM (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007; Collings and Wood, 2009). Furthermore, in UK business and management schools there were more than 100 full professors of HRM and only six professors of HRD (Wilson, 2007). So what is the cause of this disparity and should it be allowed to continue? Wilson (2007: 7) stated:

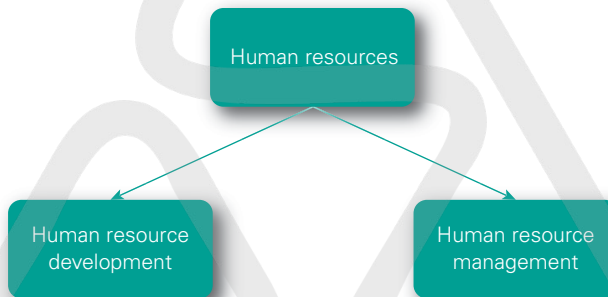
The 'management' element of HRM is undoubtedly sexier sounding. This is reinforced by the fact that a manager's status is perceived as higher than someone in 'development'. Also, courses with HRD in their title do not recruit as well as HRM. So, in the beauty stakes, I'm afraid, HRD is the loser.



However, there have been a number of serious criticisms of the education provided in business and management schools (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Minzberg, 2005). How many professors of HRM, or indeed professors of other subjects, are qualified to teach and are not just subject specialists? Might not the respect for business and management schools be higher if there were more HRD specialists involved?

The assumption is, often, that HRD is subordinate to HRM, whereas in fact they are partners within the broader area of human resources as Figure 1.1 illustrates.

**FIGURE 1.1** The roles of HRD and HRM within HR



Drawing on the human resource wheel of McLagan and Suhadolnik (1989) and the wheel of HRM (Harrison, 1997), a human resource compass (Figure 1.2) has been developed because the analogy of a compass indicates an overview of the territory and also indicates the distinct areas that fall under HRD and HRM, and the overlapping areas of responsibility.

### **National human resource development**

National human resource development at one time might have been called vocational education and training; however, this is too narrowly restricted to skills training and development. Increasingly, broader issues such as health education to address smoking, substance abuse and nutrition are communicated nationally and often internationally.

At one stage NHRD was a US-centric perspective, and this perspective probably developed as a result of the federal nature of the United States where there were fewer national initiatives in comparison with many more centrally coordinated countries. This is changing and Wang and McLean (2007: 101) explained that, 'As NHRD develops around the world, many nations are including education, health, safety, and other factors in their understanding of NHRD' (McLean, Bartlett and Cho, 2003). In fact, vocational education and training, and their equivalent terms in various languages, have been in operation for centuries if not millennia.

During the Second World War the Training Within Industry programmes were introduced to increase productivity and support the war effort. A consultant to the TWI programmes was Charles Riborg Mann, who had also served as Chairman



**FIGURE 1.2** Human resource compass

of the War Department's Committee on Education and Special Training, and he maintained:

National strength may be increased without limit by education that builds men. A nation of strong men may multiply its strength many fold by organization of its manpower into an effective team driving to achieve a common goal. Education and organization are thus the tools with which America must shape her destiny.

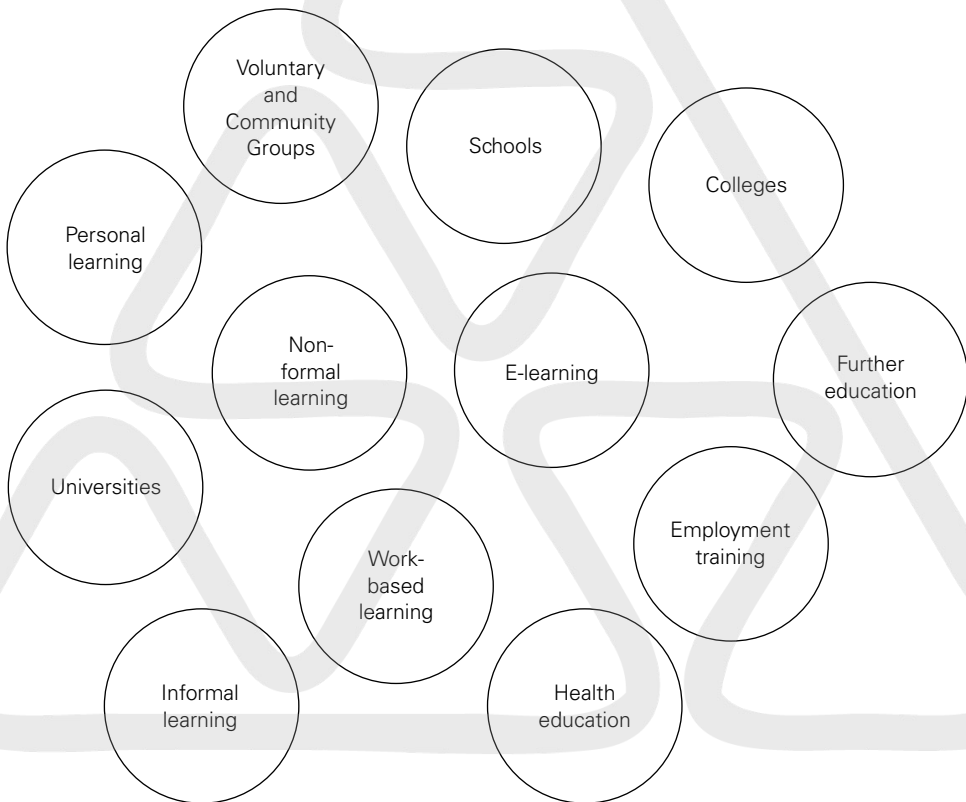
(Dooley, 1945: xii)

Wang and Swanson (2008) criticized the concept of national HRD from a number of perspectives and suggested that development economics already addressed this area. However, development economics is too narrow a definition and too important

a subject to be left to economists, who were asked by Queen Elizabeth II why they were not able to predict the financial crash (British Academy, 2009). Moreover, their conceptual use of 'rational economic man' has been strongly challenged by the behavioural economics developed by Kahneman and Tversky (1979).

The increased investments in education, training for the unemployed and other measures testify to an increased recognition that learning in all its shapes is closely connected and contributes to social and economic progress.

**FIGURE 1.3** Some of the main sources of national human capital development



### **International human resource development**

It was stated at the beginning of the chapter that there were a number of reasons to consider the broader perspectives of IHRD, including: the common underlying theories, principles and practices; disciplinary boundaries that inhibit the transfer of ideas and innovations; labour movement of teachers, trainers, coaches, developers and the like between schools, colleges, universities and other organizations; the constraints on joined-up thinking for strategists; and the conflicting demands arising

from the different groups of employers, educators, governments and individuals. It is evident that a much broader consideration of all aspects of human resource development is necessary for there to be social justice and economic development.

IHRD is also growing as a subject area and there are a number of books (Beck, 2009; Potoker, 2010) on the subject and a growing literature base. Let us consider a few definitions of IHRD:

International HRD is defined as all of the following: unicultural (for example, HRD in Poland), intercultural (for example, HRD in a multinational firm with offices in the United States, Peru, and Sweden), and general (for example, HRD in an international joint venture).

(Peterson, 1997: 64)

Human resource development is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organisation, community, nation or, ultimately, the whole of humanity.

(McLean and McLean, 2001: 322)

IHRD is a broad term that concerns [a] process that addresses the formulation and practice of HRD systems, practices, and policies at the global, societal, and organisational level. It can concern itself with how governments and international organisations develop and nurture international managers and how they develop global HRD systems; it can incorporate comparative analyses of HRD approaches across nations and also how societies develop national HRD policies.

(Metcalf and Rees, 2005: 455)

International HRD (also known, perhaps more appropriately, as cross-national HRD, transnational HRD, and global HRD) is a field of study and practice that focuses on for-profit, not-for-profit, and/or government entities and individuals cooperating in some form across national borders. The purpose of this interaction is systematically to tap existing human potential and intentionally shape work-based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, and politically based expertise through multiple means for the purpose of improving cross-national relationships collaboratively across all involved entities through greater mutual understanding, improved individual and organisational performance, improved standards of living and quality of life, reduced conflict between entities and individuals, and any other criteria that would be deemed useful by the involved entities. International HRD is aspirational rather than realised and serves as a challenge for continuous efforts at improvement.

(Wang and McLean, 2007: 105)

Combining the main elements of these definitions we can see that the emphasis is on individuals, organizations and nations. Implicit in a number of these definitions is that they are referring to adults, and this is specifically mentioned by McLean and McLean (2001); however, as Budhwani, Wee and McLean (2004) comment, this does not include child labour. Moreover, there is no overt reference to formal systems of education, and particularly primary education.

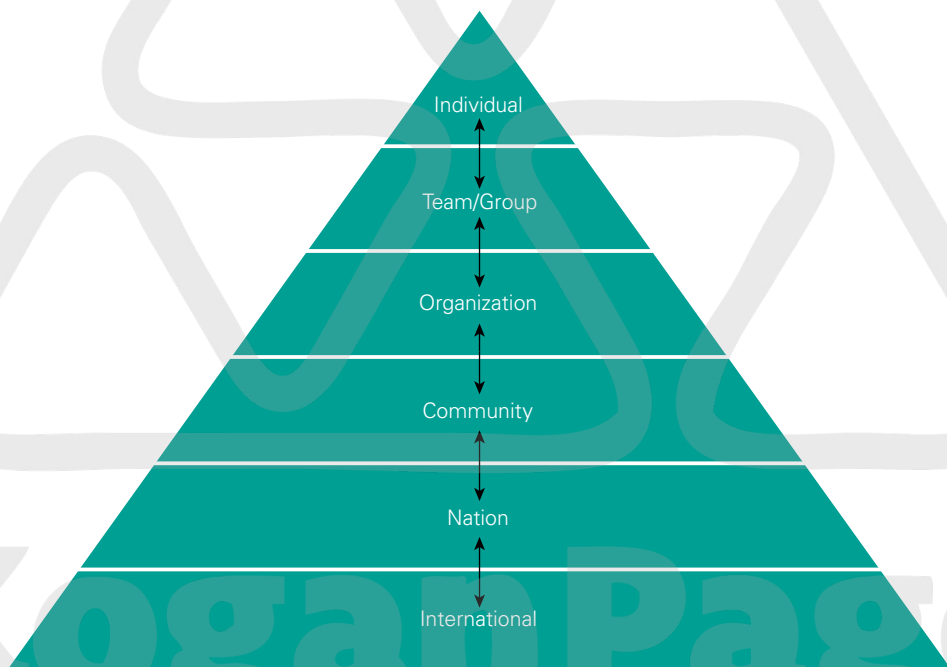
It is not just at the theoretical level that there is an increasingly broad consideration of IHRD; it is also occurring in a practical manner across national borders. The World Bank (2011: 4) has recognized the benefit of a broader strategic focus for the development of people with an expansion of the term 'education system' and stated:

At the country level, the Bank Group will focus on supporting reforms of education systems. The term 'education system' typically refers to the public schools, universities, and training programmes that provide education services. In this strategy, 'education system' includes the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether they are provided or financed by the public or private sector (including religious, non-profit, and for-profit organisations).

Also, at the international level, the European Union operates across 27 countries and provides a range of support and direction, and the European Training Foundation (Chapter 10) extends this HRD support to a wider range of countries. Furthermore, there are a wide range of other organizations that provide a diverse range of support and development, including UNESCO, the World Bank, International Labour Organization, OECD, IMF, UN, Medecins sans Frontiers, Oxfam, the Red Cross, Red Crescent and the numerous state development agencies.

It is clear that the development of human resources extends through six main stages, from the individual level to the international level, and these are depicted in the Pyramid of HRD (Figure 1.4). This figure illustrates the synergistic benefits of improved performance between all the levels.

**FIGURE 1.4** The Pyramid of HRD and the six levels of HRD activity



Finally, in this section and based on the foregoing discussion, we can provide the following definition:

*International human resource development involves the processes for increasing the cognitive, affective and behavioural capacities of all people, organizations and societies globally.*

## Human capital

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So far we have considered HRD, NHRD and IHRD, yet there is another term that is closely related and important, and that is 'human capital'. The relationship between labour productivity and competitiveness has been discussed for centuries and Adam Smith (1776/1904: I.II–I.I.3) stated:

[Productivity] must in every nation be regulated by two different circumstances; first by the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which its labour is generally applied; and, secondly, by the proportion between the number of those who are employed in useful labour, and that of those who are not so employed...

Fourthly, of the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of the society. The acquisition of such talents, by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is a capital fixed and realized, as it were, in his person. Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise that of the society to which he belongs. The improved dexterity of a workman may be considered in the same light as a machine or instrument of trade which facilitates and abridges labor, and which, though it costs a certain expense, repays that expense with a profit.

The first use of the term 'human capital' would appear to have been made by the economist Pigou (1928: 30), who stated,

A country may augment the real resources available for its government by turning its boys and girls on to immediately productive work instead of leaving them to their normal period of school time and training. This corresponds to the device of refraining from repairs and renewals of material capital; for the human capital of the country can only be kept intact if successive generations are trained up to take the place of their predecessors at a like level of educated capacity.

Detailed investigation into 'human capital' appears to have begun during the 1950s when economists such as Solow (1957: 319) observed that the greatest impact on economic growth could not be attributed to land, labour or capital but other 'residuals'. Around the same time, Schultz (1971) conducted research into the astonishing economic recoveries from huge physical devastation that Germany and Japan experienced after the Second World War. These economic growth rates could not be explained by physical capital theories and Schultz argued that there was another unmeasured contributor to production: namely, human capital. This term, he explained, used '*human*' because it is embodied in man, and... *capital* because it is a source of future satisfactions, or of future earning, or both' (1971: 48).

This growing interest in human capital resulted in a book, *Human Capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis with special reference to education*, by Becker (1964: 1), who stated:

The growth of physical capital, at least as conventionally measured, explains a relatively small part of the growth of income in most countries. The search for better explanations has led to improved measures of physical capital and to an interest in less tangible entities, such as technological change and human capital... The result has been the accumulation of a tremendous amount of circumstantial evidence testifying to the economic importance of human capital, especially of education.

Unfortunately, the term ‘human capital’ is not an appealing one because of the way in which it appears to devalue people by describing them as capital, assets or possessions. Also, despite its common usage, it does not reflect the greater emphasis on people that is incorporated within ‘human resources’, although this, too, is not an ideal term. Significantly, Harbison and Myers (1964) first used the term human resource development in the context of human capital, thus highlighting the inter-relationship between the two. This relationship is further clarified by the CIPD (2008: 5), which produced a definition:

Human capital is the knowledge, skills, abilities and capacity to develop and innovate possessed by people in an organisation. It is an aspect of intellectual capital – the stocks and flows of knowledge available to an organisation – and is associated with the concepts of social capital (the knowledge derived from relationships within and outside the organisation) and organisational capital (the institutionalised knowledge possessed by an organisation that is stored in databases, manuals and so on).

The connection between the economy and labour described above by Adam Smith is closely mirrored by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2010: 3) who commented:

Prosperity ultimately depends on (i) the number of people in work (itself a function of the ‘employment rate’ and the number of people in the potential workforce); and (ii) the value that they produce when in work – the ‘productivity rate’.

When one considers the unemployment figures provided by the International Labour Office (2011) in *Global Employment Trends 2011*, it is clear that levels of unemployment are seriously encumbering prosperity. In 2010 the global number of unemployed people was 205 million, or 6.2 per cent of the working population. This figure was 27.6 million higher than in 2007 before the economic crash. The employment-to-population ratio was 61.1 per cent in 2010 and the global unemployment rate for young people was 12.6 per cent (younger workers were particularly badly affected by the crash).

It is the level of productivity that influences the competitive nature of an individual, company or nation, and the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2010: 4) explained, ‘We define competitiveness as the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country.’ The World Economic Forum has synthesized many of the factors that influence competitiveness into 12 pillars. These pillars include education and training, which have fuller explanations provided:

- 1 Institutions: the role of public and also private institutions and their levels of efficiency, honesty, transparency etc.
- 2 Infrastructure: transportation and communications systems significantly impact on the functioning of the economy.
- 3 Macroeconomic environment: a stable macroeconomic environment in which governments manage their economies.
- 4 Health and primary education: without a healthy workforce a country is unable to be fully competitive. In addition, the quantity and quality of basic education is important.

Basic education increases the efficiency of each individual worker. Moreover, workers who have received little formal education can carry out only simple manual work and find it much more difficult to adapt to more advanced production processes and techniques. Lack of basic education can therefore become a constraint on business development, with firms finding it difficult to move up the value chain by producing more sophisticated or value-intensive products.

(WEF, 2010: 5)

#### 5 Higher education and training:

Quality higher education and training is crucial for economies that want to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products. In particular, today's globalising economy requires countries to nurture pools of well-educated workers who are able to adapt rapidly to their changing environment and the evolving needs of the production system. This pillar measures secondary and tertiary enrolment rates as well as the quality of education as evaluated by the business community. The extent of staff training is also taken into consideration because of the importance of vocational and continuous on-the-job training – which is neglected in many economies – for ensuring a constant upgrading of workers' skills.

(WEF, 2010: 5)

- 6 Goods' market efficiency: economies need to have healthy competition encompassing the correct mix of goods and services.
- 7 Labour market efficiency: flexible and efficient labour markets enable workers to move easily from one part of the economy to another.
- 8 Financial market development: the financial sector needs to function well and be properly regulated to allow business and state investment.
- 9 Technological readiness: economies need to have the ability to swiftly respond to the potential of new technologies.
- 10 Market size: economies of scale can be exploited where there are large markets.
- 11 Business sophistication: the quality of operations and the interconnected nature of businesses helps improve productivity.
- 12 Innovation: research and development are needed to support innovation and to enable productive growth.

Once there is talk of human capital, then there is a need to assess and evaluate it, and Baron and Armstrong (2007: 18) maintain that human capital theory raises a number of questions for the organization:

- What skills have we got?
- What skills do we need now and in the future?
- How are we going to attract, develop and retain these skills?
- How can we develop a culture and environment in which organizational and individual learning takes place that meets both our needs and those of our employees?
- How can we provide for both the explicit and tacit knowledge created in our organization to be captured, recorded and used effectively?



These questions led Baron and Armstrong (2007: 21–22) to suggest that human capital management has four fundamental objectives:

- determine the impact of people on the business and their contribution to shareholder value;
- demonstrate that HR practices produce value for money in terms, for example, of return on investment (ROI);
- provide guidance on future HR and business strategies;
- provide diagnostic and predictive data that will inform strategies and practices designed to improve the effectiveness of people management in the organization.

In the UK, the Task Force on Human Capital Management (2003) argued, in their report *Accounting for People*, for ways in which more transparency might be introduced to show how organizations created value through people. The Task Force suggested that, just as companies produce annual accounts and operational reports, so too should they produce a report on human capital that would provide strategic insight for the company and for external stakeholders such as investors. While many of the principles of the report were acknowledged, its inclusion within the Operating and Financial Review was quietly shelved, and indeed the statutory requirement for an OFR was rescinded in 2006. Interestingly, the financial crash and the failure to predict it have enhanced the importance of reporting on intangible assets and an *Accounting for People 2.0* (2011) has been produced to encourage human capital accounting.

## Conclusion

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We have progressed from definitions of education, training, development and learning to more encompassing ones for HRD and IHRD. This journey describing the connection between education and competitiveness and human capital has been relatively complex but has been simplified by Machlup (1984: 8) who explained:

The connection between knowledge and human capital is easily understood if one realizes that capital is formed by investment, that investment in human resources is designed to increase their capacity (to produce, to earn, to enjoy life etc.), and that improvements of capacity, as a rule, result from the acquisition of ‘knowing what’ or of ‘knowing how’.

## Questions for reflection

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- Do training and development professionals need to know about broader areas of the economy and education?
- Does HRD incorporate IHRD or does IHRD incorporate HRD?
- Is a precise definition of HRD necessary?



## Further information sources

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Academy of Human Resource Development: [www.ahrd.org](http://www.ahrd.org)  
 American Society for Training and Development: [www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)  
 Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development: [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)  
 International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO):  
[www.iftdo.net](http://www.iftdo.net)  
 Training Within Industry: <http://www.trainingwithinindustry.net/>  
 University forum for Human Resource Development: <http://www.ufhrd.co.uk>

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# 02

# Strategic human resource development

THOMAS N GARAVAN and RONAN CARBERY

*In real life, strategy is actually very straightforward.  
You pick a general direction and implement like hell.*

(JACK WELCH, 2005)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter you should be able to:

- describe the defining features of SHRD;
- differentiate traditional notions of HRD from SHRD;
- understand the theoretical reasons for why SHRD can add value to the business;
- describe a number of theoretical and practical models of SHRD;
- describe factors that facilitate or enable SHRD in organizations;
- understand, through the use of case scenarios, how SHRD operates in practice.

## Introduction

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There is a growing recognition that well-chosen HRD practices can have a direct impact on individual and organizational performance. This finding is built on the notion that people play a significant role in an organization's success (Garavan,

2007). However, in order for HRD to make a contribution it needs to move away from a process-oriented and administrative approach to one that is more strategic, and in doing so take a leadership role in the development of people (Gold et al, 2011). Strategic HRD, which is the focus of this chapter, requires that specialists with responsibility for learning and development in organizations think differently about the functional requirements and activities of HRD as a set of organizational practices. It requires the possible relinquishment of the more operational, low-value training and development activities and finding more time to develop the competencies to perform a variety of strategic roles. Strategic HRD (SHRD) is premised on the view that HRD practitioners possess the competencies to assume the role of strategic partners, strategic players and players in the business rather than simply reacting to the events in the business. They are expected to act as leaders in ensuring that HRD functional activities are conducted in a way that focuses on organizational needs and are implemented in an ethical and sustainable way. Specialists are expected to perform the role of change agents by demonstrating the need for change and helping the organization to build adaptability, alignment and execution capabilities.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the defining features of SHRD, to show how SHRD differs from more traditional conceptualizations of HRD, and to demonstrate how SHRD can add value to a business. It addresses both theoretical and practice models of SHRD. The chapter finally addresses the enabling or facilitating conditions that can make SHRD a reality in organizations.

## Defining strategic HRD

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It is accepted that SHRD represents a particular model of HRD. Swanson and Holton (2009) define HRD as a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual and teamwork processes, and organizational systems. HRD represents a concept that focuses on how individuals develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities with the objective of ensuring a better integration between work and learning. Mankin (2009: 6) views HRD as:

encompassing a range of organizational practices that focus on learning; training, learning and development; workplace learning; career development and lifelong learning; organizational development; organizational knowledge and learning.

Hamlin and Stewart (2011) have, however, highlighted some of the definitional challenges in setting the boundaries of HRD. They reached a number of important considerations:

- HRD is conceptualized as a process that occurs in workplace settings and is designed to facilitate individual and group learning in the context of jobs, work and careers.
- HRD focuses on organizational learning, change and development.
- HRD focuses exclusively on work-related issues within organizations. It is less concerned with societal and global issues.

It is arguable that these features in many ways define the scope of SHRD; however there are a number of distinguishing points. SHRD has as its primary focus an emphasis on performance. Grieves (2003: 108) suggested that: 'it emerged as a result of a new climate of disorganised capitalism and from debates within organisational development.' Garavan (2007: 25) defined SHRD as a 'coherent, vertically aligned and horizontally integrated set of learning and development activities which contribute to the achievement of strategic goals'. It is possible to delineate a number of the defining features of SHRD: it is concerned with the long-term development of human resources in organizations; it is a shaper of business strategy in addition to its role in strategy implementation; it emphasizes learning for the purpose of performance; it utilizes a multiplicity of strategies to facilitate performance, learning and change in individuals and organizations; and it is continuously aligned with the strategic goals of the organization.

The word 'strategic' emphasizes the organizational perspective and seeks to make the link between HRD, organizational goals and objectives (Wognum and Fond Lam, 2000). Robinson and Robinson (2005) argued that the mission of SHRD is to implement development strategies that enhance employee performance and lead to business results. The SHRD strategies utilized are fundamental to moving HRD from an operational to a strategic activity. Investment in HRD activities are linked to organizational performance in the belief that the greater the investment, the greater the likelihood that the organization will perform better.

The concept of strategic HRD has been criticized on a number of fronts. Millmore et al (2007) highlight four particular limitations of the concept. There is a presumption that HRD specialists are actually important stakeholders in an organization; it is acknowledged that this may often not be the case. The concept has a strong managerialist focus in that it emphasizes the strategic imperatives of the organization and de-emphasizes employee needs. The concept of strategic integration is presented in a vertical way rather than as a multi-dimensional concept. Initial models of HRD such as McCracken and Wallace (2000) were somewhat silent on the articulation of the roles of different stakeholders such as top management and line managers. Subsequent explanatory models have accounted for these factors.

## Understanding the contribution of SHRD to individual and business performance

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A number of theoretical perspectives – human capital theory, resource-based theory and the behavioural perspective – can be utilized to understand the contribution of SHRD to both individuals and organizations. However, it should be pointed out that some researchers and practitioners consider it something of a Holy Grail to establish a causal link between SHRD and performance at the level of the organization. It should also be said that few SHRD models place strong emphasis on individual needs.



## **Human capital theory**

Human capital theory recognizes that investment in education, training and experience can bring significant wage and job benefits to individuals. SHRD can be viewed as an investment in human capital, and the decision to participate in training activities and acquire skills is viewed as a rational choice on the part of individuals. Human capital theory has at its core a very simple argument: investment in either formal or informal training and education increases an individual's performance, productivity and earnings (Gattiker, 1995). Human capital theory also makes an important distinction between two types of training investment: general and specific. Firm-specific training is non-transferable and has limited value outside of the organization. General training, however, has value in the labour market and has career-enhancing value. Garavan et al (2001: 48) make this argument concerning human capital:

This perspective on human capital takes as its starting point the view that human competencies are one of the resources available to organizations. The origins of this notion of human capital can be attributed to the work of Prahalad and Hamel (1990), who analysed the competitiveness of organizations and attributed it to the possession of core competencies. They postulated that an organization can possess unique clusters of factors that allows it to be competitive, and human capital is one of these. This resource-based view represents a current paradigm on firm competitiveness and conceptualizes the organization as a collection of competencies that draws attention to issues of learning, HRD investment, knowledge accumulation and experience.

Hamel and Prahalad (1994: 223) describe core competencies as 'a bundle of skills and technologies rather than a single skill or technology'. This line of thinking clearly indicates that SHRD has value in enhancing core competencies, some of which are grounded in human capabilities. These skills need to be developed over time in order to confer on organizations a set of capabilities that other firms will find it difficult to imitate. However, they also need to be rented to the organization in order for them to be of value in strategic terms.

## **Resource-based theory**

The resource-based perspective rests on the assumption that differences in HR configurations between firms result in a fundamental heterogeneity in their potential to contribute to organizational performance. The long-term competitiveness of an organization will in part be determined by whether its human resources are durable, difficult to imitate and substitute, and enable the organization to differentiate itself from other competitors (Festing and Eidems, 2011). Human resources provide the potential for sustained competitive advantage through the use of SHRD to develop competencies that are firm-specific and generate tacit organizational knowledge (Lado and Wilson, 1994). It is well established that tacit and industry-specific knowledge has the most value in a strategic context. The resource-based approach emphasizes the need for organizations to implement a specific SHRD strategy, one that seeks to achieve competitive advantage by enhancing both the competence and commitment of human resources. It requires that organizations implement an internally consistent



set of SHRD practices. Research has suggested a set of universal SHRD practices that are of value. These include job training, leadership development, technical competency development, strategies to generate tacit organizational knowledge and social networking strategies (McWilliams, Van Fleet and Wright, 2001; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). The 'best practices' approach suggests that particular universal HRD practices are associated with enhanced business performance.

### ***The behavioural perspective***

The behavioural perspective on SHRD argues for the use of HRD practices as tools to shape patterns of behaviour that help organizations achieve organizational goals and objectives. Different organizational goals and objectives require different types of behaviours and therefore different SHRD practices (Snell, 1992). This configurational approach emphasizes an external fit highlighting a contingency perspective on SHRD. Factors that become relevant in this context include: organizational size, technology, ownership, sector and location, and are important contingency variables. The argument that SHRD practices should be aligned with strategy is compelling; however, the empirical base for this argument is weak (Tharenou, Saks and Moore, 2007; Yorks, 2004). The focus on generic strategies proposed by Michael Porter has not produced compelling results in the SHRD context. Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1998) proposed a potential reciprocal interdependence between an organization's business strategy and its SHRD strategies. This suggests that the demand for skilled employees will be dictated by competitive strategy. In turn, the availability of quality human resources will impact on competitive strategy and, where an organization has significant growth expectations combined with a high level of skill and competence readiness, this will lead to expansion and growth. However, where the organization lacks skills and competencies, it will lead to a change in strategy. There is good support for the notion that where organizations pursue growth-oriented strategies this will lead to the utilization of SHRD to enhance organizational readiness (Tharenou, Saks and Moore, 2007).

## **Theoretical models of SHRD**

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Models of SHRD tend to be either prescriptive or explanatory. We will focus here on four models that fall into these two categories.

### ***Prescriptive models of SHRD***

The two primary prescriptive models of SHRD are those proposed by Garavan (1991) and McCracken and Wallace's enhancement of the Garavan model in 2000. Garavan (1991) introduced a prescriptive model of SHRD consisting of nine key characteristics: integration of HRD activities with organizational mission and goals; environmental scanning; management support for HRD; formulation and implementation of HRD policies and plans; line manager commitment to and involvement in the design; alignment of SHRD with complimentary HRM activities; an expanded

role for the training of HRD specialist; the recognition of culture in the design and delivery of SHRD; and the evaluation of the contribution of SHRD to individual and organizational effectiveness. This model, while useful as a starting point in explaining the concept of SHRD, suffered from a number of limitations: it advocated a one-size-fits-all approach; it emphasized characteristics rather than seeking to explain the relationships between the various components; and it was essentially normative in nature. These initial formulations of the model provided little in the way of empirical support for their propositions.

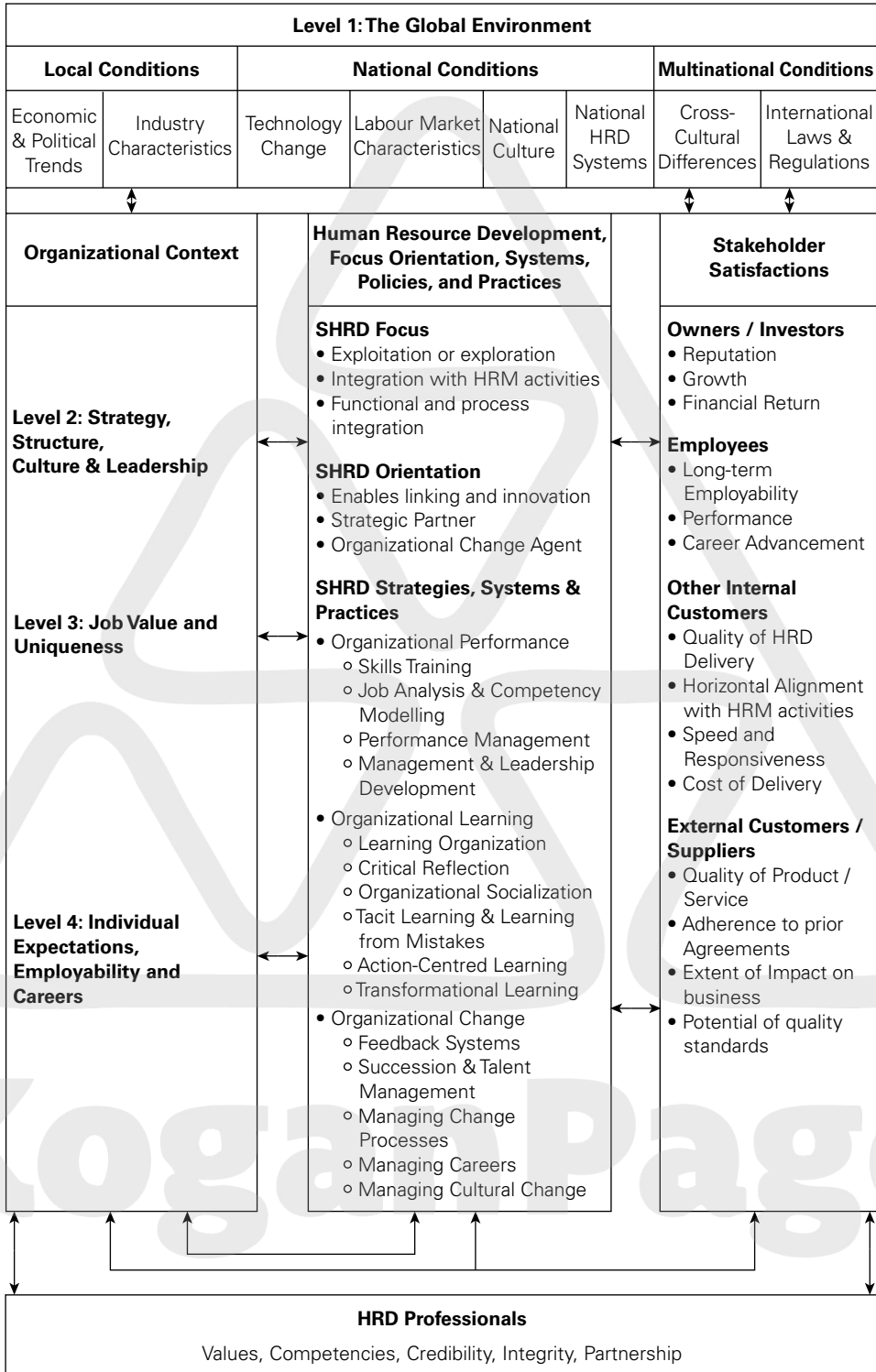
McCracken and Wallace (2000) and Garavan, Heraty and Morley (1998) expanded and developed these characteristics further. The essence of the three formulations of the model focused on creating a learning culture through mutual and reciprocal relationships between SHRD and business strategy. SHRD is viewed as both responding to and shaping business strategy as it evolves. The trajectory of growth envisaged for the HRD function is one that diverges away from an administrative, operational, and reactive and delivery-focused entity towards one that works within a strong learning culture, adopts a strategic approach to HRD and focuses on organizational change. McCracken and Wallace (2000) envisaged that SHRD would exhibit different characteristics depending on the level of maturity of HRD in the organization. Prescriptive models in general are open to criticism because of their assuming that there is an endpoint for SHRD rather than adopting the view that SHRD is an emergent process (Lee, 2001). These issues were subsequently addressed in the models of SHRD that followed.

### ***Explanatory models of SHRD***

Two significant explanatory models are those by Garavan (2007) and Peterson (2008). The Garavan (2007) model proposes that SHRD operates within a context that is dynamic (Figure 2.1). He suggests four different levels of context that impact HRD. The first level of context concerns the global environment, which encompasses local, national and multinational conditions. The local factors are concerned with economic and political trends and industry characteristics, while the national factors include technology change, labour market characteristics, national culture and national HRD systems. The multinational dimensions focus on cross-cultural differences, and international laws and regulations.

The second level of Garavan's model, the internal context of the organizations, includes the strategy, structure, culture and leadership of the firm. Strategy refers to the firm's product and services in relation to cost orientation, differentiation and focus. The second level also includes the structure of the organization, whether domestic or global; the culture of the organization and whether it is in line with its vision, values and strategy; and leadership style, which is considered key to implementing vision and values and to developing culture. Level three focuses on the job and emphasizes its value and its uniqueness. SHRD strategies will vary according to the level of value and uniqueness attached to different positions within the organization. Organizations decide which strategic practices they should use depending on the importance they attach to the particular job. Finally, the fourth level focuses on individual expectations, employability and careers. Employee expectations,

**FIGURE 2.1** Garavan’s model: contextual and dynamic framework for SHRD (2007)



talent-management practices and employees identified by management as ‘stars’ – those employees who are viewed as having great potential – play a major part in influencing SHRD practices. Practices will be influenced by employees’ ambitions and career aspirations, their willingness to upskill and their commitment to achieve organizational goals.

Espedal (2005) and March (1991) suggest that firms should implement a mix of practices that focus on exploitation and exploration. Efficiency or exploitation-focused SHRD practices tend to be short term and focus on the internal development of competencies. SHRD can be used to refine firm-specific capabilities and skills, and includes practices such as socialization, skills training and performance management. SHRD should also contribute to adaptive capability. This represents an exploration focus. It is achieved through the adoption of change-focused SHRD strategies. They emphasize tacit learning and knowledge-management initiatives, and include learning from experience and the facilitation of experimentation and risk taking.

Another dimension of SHRD focus concerns the degree to which its activities are horizontally integrated with SHRM activities. Jackson and Schuler (2003) suggest that synergies can be achieved when bundles of HRD and HRM practices are horizontally aligned and contribute to a defined set of behaviours and performance expectations. Guest and Peccei (1994) suggest that in addition to horizontal integration it is important to have functional and process integration. Functional integration emphasizes the need to have a high-quality HRD department to ensure high SHRD impact. It focuses on both the quality of specialists and their location within the organization. Process integration focuses on the delivery processes used by the organization: their quality and level of customer focus.

The increased assignment of HRD activities to line managers and the tendency toward decentralization indicate a changed role for HRD professionals. Schuler and Jackson (1992) suggest that HRD professionals will be involved in linking HRD issues with challenges to the business, shaping the strategic direction of the firm, developing innovative solutions and approaches to enhance organizational effectiveness, and enabling line management to ensure that things happen. Ulrich (1996) suggests that HR professionals could adopt up to four possible orientations. HRD professionals frequently adopt a traditional orientation and implement transactional HRD practices such as induction, skills training and management training. These activities are designed to achieve efficient performance. They frequently adopt an employee perspective and implement activities designed to enhance the competence and commitment of employees. Both orientations are operational in focus and are less likely to be performed by a strategic HRD function. A strategic approach is indicative of strategic partnership and organizational change-agent orientations. A strategic partnership orientation requires the HRD professional to translate strategic priorities into SHRD priorities and activities. An organizational change orientation requires the HRD professional to engage in activities that enable the organization to be ready for major change so as to respond to environmental uncertainty.

The model suggests that strategies, systems and practices of HRD focus on organizational performance, organizational learning and organizational change.

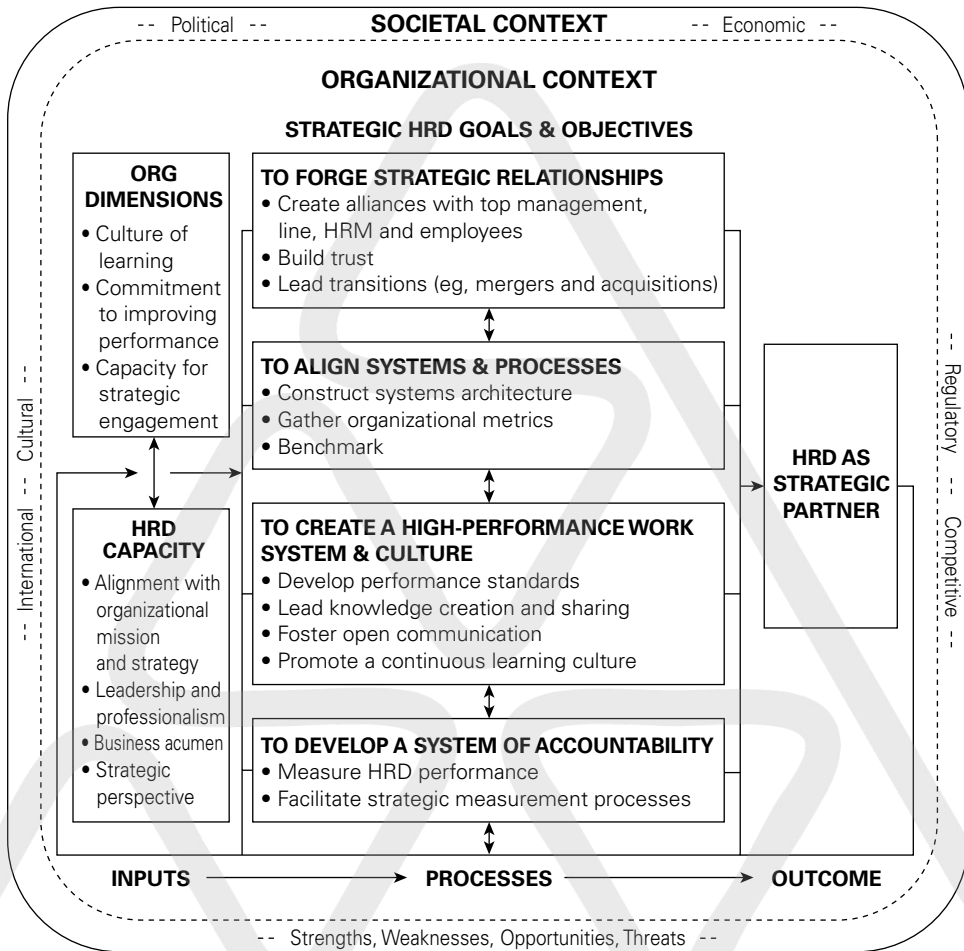
Organizational performance focuses on strategies such as skills training, job analysis, competency modelling, performance management, leadership and management development. A recent study by CIPD (2010) on learning and talent development indicates that interventions are considered the most beneficial HRD strategy; with the most valued interventions being coaching and mentoring. Learners value the opportunity to focus on self-development in addition to performance enhancement. Organizational learning strategies focus on tacit learning communities of practice, learning from mistakes, critical reflection, action-centred learning and transformational learning. Organizational change strategies focus on feedback systems, talent development, career management and employee empowerment.

The model highlights two particularly important but frequently ignored dimensions of SHRD: the management of stakeholder expectations and the characteristics of HRD professionals. Firstly, stakeholder expectations and satisfaction are important to explaining the positioning of HRD in organizations and whether it can be strategic or not; stakeholder perceptions will be important in explaining the type of practice model that prevails within an organization. Secondly, the values, competencies and capacity of the HRD role and/or function are extremely important. The model emphasizes the capacity of HRD specialists and whether they possess the technical and leadership capability to implement SHRD. The way in which SHRD specialists are developed represents an important challenge for organizations, and helps to explain their perceived credibility and impact.

The Peterson model (2008) is based on system-thinking ideas. She acknowledges the importance of the external environment but the primary focus is on the dimensions of the internal environment such as HRD capacity, strategic HRD goals and objectives, and the role of the HRD specialist as strategic partner. Like the Garavan model, the Peterson model assumes that SHRD operates within a broader societal context that includes economic, regulatory, competitive, international, cultural and political factors. Sometimes, these factors will influence organizations to respond through proactive anticipation; however, on other occasions, organizations are forced to react to these forces (Figure 2.2).

The model proposes three internal organizational dimensions that facilitate SHRD: a culture of learning, a commitment to performance improvement and a capacity for strategic engagement. A culture of learning is one that provides systematic, sustained and continuous opportunities for employees to develop capabilities (Peterson, 2008). The culture values learning as an intrinsically important activity. A commitment to improved performance concerns the extent to which an organization promotes performance improvement; where such a commitment exists, it enables HRD to provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for high performance. A capacity for strategic engagement highlights the readiness of the organization to learn, to review itself and to focus on strategic issues.

The concept of HRD capacity is one that is central to both the Garavan and Peterson models. Dimensions of strategic capacity highlighted in the Peterson model are the extent to which HRD goals and objectives are aligned with the organization's mission and strategy, the capacity of the HRD specialist to demonstrate leadership and articulate professional values concerning HRD, the business capability or acumen of the specialist, and the extent to which the specialist is comfortable with

**FIGURE 2.2** The Peterson model of strategic human resource development

and skilled at adopting a strategic perspective. An important characteristic of a strategically oriented HRD function concerns its focus on articulating strategic HRD goals and objectives. The model proposes four dimensions of this strategic focus: the extent to which the HRD function forges strategic relationships with line managers, the HRM function and the senior executive team, and cross-functional collaboration; the alignment of HRD systems and processes; the focus on creating a high-performance work system and culture; and the development of accountability systems within the organization. The Peterson model ultimately envisages that the HRD specialist will act as a strategic partner: someone who engages with the wider strategic agenda and contributes to strategic change within an organization.



## CASE STUDY

### In practice: GE and an SHRD culture

It is generally accepted that General Electric (GE) has placed emphasis on SHRD to build a strong culture of learning and innovation. This culture was primarily driven by Jack Welch. The learning culture within GE is founded on the Work-Out Philosophy. This philosophy is based on three Ss: engendering self-confidence, encouraging challenge and simplicity to systems, and utilizing working practices that result in speed of responsiveness. GE has as its strategic goal to be the first or second in the marketplace in terms of volume, customer service and profitability. SHRD plays a major role in driving and sustaining the culture of GE. The company has introduced change management initiatives such as the change acceleration process (CAP), which emphasizes a culture of learning, growth and development.

GE places a strong emphasis on developing the skills of HRD professionals. Training programmes are used to develop HRD professionals' skills. Professionals are rotated through job assignments in non-HRD functions to help them learn about the business and become more strategic business partners. Many of the transactional components of HRD are outsourced and performed with the use of technology. GE focuses on developing HRD specialists so that they can take on the role of internal consultants. It has a global HRD curriculum that helps HRD specialists understand what the goals of SHRD are, what the changes in SHRD at GE mean to them, and what the plans are for SHRD. HRD professionals gain business knowledge such as finance and change management skills, and the ability to develop the relationships across the organization. Senior HRD specialists work under line managers to help them understand that HRD is there to help the managers implement strategy.

### Practice models of SHRD

Models of SHRD practice are largely non-existent in the literature. However, it is clear that it is not a case of one size fits all when you examine the practice of SHRD in organizations. We suggest four variants of SHRD practice that we have observed in organizational operations: a predominantly traditional function but with increased recognition of the need to be strategic; a function that supports strategy implementation; a function where the HRD specialist is viewed as an expert in the strategic process; and a fully fledged SHRD function based on strategic partner ideas.

#### A predominantly traditional function with increased recognition of the need to be strategic

In this functional set-up, the HRD department or specialist is not involved in strategic issues; however, the role holder recognizes that this is problematic and has initiated various steps to get the HRD department/role more involved in the strategic issues of the organization. The HRD specialist has a clear understanding that HRD can contribute to the achievement of strategic goals but is also aware that significant barriers exist to the department playing an important strategic leadership role. In these organizations, the stakeholders of HRD do not understand or appreciate that

it can make an important strategic contribution. A particular barrier that is evident in this context is the lack of understanding on the part of the senior team of the value of SHRD. There is also a significant cultural barrier where stakeholders typically characterize the HRD function or role as administrative or reactive in focus. It is therefore necessary for the views of key stakeholders to change in order for HRD to play a strategic role. This model represents an initial step in the process of adopting a strategic approach to HRD. In order to acquire more impact, HRD specialists will need to manage the policies of the organization and manage the dialogue with key stakeholders so they begin to understand the potential of HRD to be strategic.

### A function that supports strategy implementation

In this model of practice, the HRD specialist demonstrates significant strategic thinking and makes a contribution to the implementation of strategy. In organizations that adopt this model, there is a clearly articulated strategic plan that provides the specialist with opportunities to demonstrate that HRD can make a strategic contribution. The HRD specialist typically works closely with the senior leadership, and the senior team view the specialist as having a role to play in supporting strategy. Stakeholders do not, however, consider that the specialist can make a contribution to strategy formulation. The specialist will, however, select strategies that can create impact and demonstrate that the HRD role makes a long-term contribution to the organization. Many of these interventions will fall into the typical types of solutions provided by HRD.

### HRD specialist as an expert in the strategic process

In this variant the HRD specialist is actively involved in the strategic formulation and implementation process. The involvement of the HRD specialist can best be described as being a consultant rather than a strategic business partner. Typically, the HRD specialist will be asked to provide advice on the potential impact of particular strategic goals or proposed actions. This may involve conducting research, specifying the HRD implications of particular actions and the provision of knowledge resources. The lack of a strategic partnership role may be curtailed due to the views of stakeholders who consider HRD to have an operational focus. The HRD function may not have sufficient capacity to deliver on the demands made by the strategic partner role.

### A fully fledged SHRD function

In this model of practice, the HRD specialist and department contribute to the broader strategic issues within an organization. The HRD specialist is viewed as a key component of the strategic change and transformation process. The specialist will be involved in all significant strategic conversations about HRD issues, and issues that are beyond the remit of HRD, to focus on different types of change. The HRD specialist delivers an end-to-end set of solutions and performs operational as well as strategic roles. The HRD role will perform advice, consultancy, change and support roles simultaneously. The specialist and/or function will possess the capacity to respond with agility to a multiplicity of problems and situations. The role holder



will utilize a variety of interventions, such as coaching and mentoring, training, leadership development and challenging the status quo. The function will possess technical, leadership and management skills to deliver the strategic brief. Success depends on a top-down understanding of the strategic role HRD can play within an organization. The top team will trust the HRD specialist to demonstrate effective leadership and develop strong working relationships with stakeholders.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Strategy HRD: a 'develop from within' approach – Procter & Gamble

Procter & Gamble is the world's largest consumer-product company. It is a Fortune 500 American multinational corporation with headquarters in Ohio. Consistent with a 'promote from within' policy and the belief that P&G's human resources are a major source of competitive advantage that are hard to replicate, the development of employees is all pervasive and is central to the organizational culture. Employees receive multi-source reviews starting within a year after they join the company, and can take advantage of numerous development programmes over their career. There is a strong focus on ensuring that line managers take their responsibility for development seriously. They are evaluated and rewarded on the basis of their skills and efforts in developing people. P&G have found that where managers are considered strong as people developers, they create a flow-through of employees into their division or department. This encourages high performers to gravitate towards strong people-developing managers and they are motivated by a realization that they will receive many development opportunities.

P&G considers that it is important to eliminate silos. Mobility of employees for development purposes is considered vital. This mobility is supported through personal development plans, work assignments and the use of open-job postings. In the case of managers, P&G emphasizes learning and growth opportunities, internal mobility, job rotation, broadening assignments and temporary or permanent career moves. As part of the internal development approach P&G has also established a corporate university with the explicit purpose of reinforcing and perpetuating the corporate culture.

## Facilitating and enabling conditions for SHRD in organizations

The factors that facilitate and enable SHRD in organizations are generally well documented. We will focus here on five factors: the articulation of a strategic vision, mission and strategy; the preparation and implementation of a SHRD strategy; the extent to which SHRD is viewed by top management as strategic; the technical leadership capability of the HRD specialist; and line management engagement with SHRM. We will address each one in turn.

## ***Clear articulation of an organizational strategic vision, mission and strategy***

The theoretical and practice models discussed in this chapter are all premised on the existence of a clearly articulated set of strategic processes in the form of a vision, mission and strategy. Vision, mission and strategy create the context that enables the HRD function to set its objectives, clarify its priorities and select its programme of activities and interventions. The nature of the business strategy sets the agenda for SHRD. In organizations that adopt a cost leadership strategy, for example, the SHRD requirement is to develop skills to ensure efficacy. However, in organizations that emphasize differentiation, the challenge for SHRD is more complex. Differentiation is dependent on a complex set of interpersonal and tacit capabilities, and people are at the core of the value proposition. Organizations that emphasize a focus strategy will emphasize strong technical development.

Noe (2009) suggests that different types of business strategies mandate particular requirements for SHRD. He identifies four specific strategies: concentration, internal growth, external growth and divestment. In the case of concentration, the focus is on enhancing market share, creating a sustained market niche and managing costs. SHRD will respond to this strategy agenda through a focus on cross-training strategies, on-the-job training, team building and interpersonal skills training. Internal growth strategies emphasize market and product development, innovation and joint ventures. SHRD will respond through an emphasis on the development of organization culture, technical competence, development, cultural training, and the development of an organizational culture that stresses creative thinking and effective conflict-resolution skills.

External growth strategies emphasize diversification and integration. They require SHRD to provide interventions that facilitate team building, the integration of learning resources and the assessment of the capabilities of the employees of acquired firms. Divestment as a business strategy focuses on retrenchment, turnarounds, divesture and liquidation. SHRD contributes strategically to this context through outplacement, assistive job-search skills training, leadership development and the management of structural change.

## ***Preparation and implementation of a SHRD strategy and a broad portfolio of interventions***

There is some agreement concerning the elements of an effective SHRD strategy. Themes identified include a commitment to people as a strategic resource, a strong articulation of shared purpose, a philosophy of shared learning and development, partnerships in the context of HRD and the articulation of enabling structures for SHRD delivery. Noe (2009) suggested that SHRD needs to focus on a number of important strategies to achieve success in organizations. Table 2.1 provides a synthesis of different contributions on strategic HRD strategies. There is an increased need for SHRD to broaden the options available. We suggest that this range of options can be basically categorized into formal and informal. Formal strategies will focus

**TABLE 2.1** SHRD strategies and their implications for organizations

| Strategy  | Implications for practice  |
|---|--|
| Diversity of the SHRD portfolio                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize competencies to drive SHRD interventions.</li> <li>● Provide customized and personalized learning interventions.</li> <li>● Emphasize non-formal and informal in addition to formal learning strategies.</li> <li>● Utilize new technology to encourage self-managed learning.</li> <li>● Blend learning solutions synergistically.</li> </ul>  |
| Ensure speedy delivery of SHRD strategies       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize just-in-time learning strategies.</li> <li>● Systematically identify learning needs and provide quality learning solutions.</li> <li>● Shorten significantly the time from needs identification to delivery of solution.</li> <li>● Ensure that learners have access to learning resources on a needs basis.</li> <li>● Avoid one-size-fits-all solutions and be aware of shelf-life issues.</li> </ul>                             |
| Communicate SHRD strategies to all stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure employees are aware of development opportunities.</li> <li>● Develop appropriate learning-management systems.</li> <li>● Use technology to communicate to stakeholders.</li> </ul>   |
| Leverage knowledge and tacit learning           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish strategies to ensure that organizational knowledge is readily available.</li> <li>● Utilize communities of practice to share tacit learning.</li> <li>● Learning occurs everywhere and it should be leveraged throughout the organization.</li> <li>● Codify valuable knowledge for effective knowledge sharing.</li> <li>● Capture 'real time learning' and use real organizational changes as vehicles for learning.</li> </ul> |
| Focus on the learning transfer environment      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on managing constraints to learning transfer.</li> <li>● Ensure that managers and peers are supportive of learning transfer.</li> <li>● Develop the capabilities of employees to apply learning.</li> <li>● Develop strategies to promote reflection and capture employee learning.</li> </ul>  |

on instructor-led training, virtual classrooms, simulations, e-learning and games. Informal strategies can include on-demand social and embedded learning. On-demand includes podcasts, books and articles, learning knowledge portals, videos and e-learning. Social strategies include blogs, forums and wikis, expert directories, social networks, communities of practice, coaching and mentoring. Embedded informal learning strategies include feedback, performance support, developmental planning and rotational arrangements.

## **Top management support for SHRD**

Top management provide a number of important aspects of support for SHRD. These include: providing a clear vision, serving as a sponsor of SHRD, performing a governing role, serving as role models for SHRD, committing resources to SHRD and serving as subject-matter experts. The reality is that such support is frequently not there. Top management support is considered to be one of the most important facilitating conditions (McCracken and Wallace, 2000). Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell (2003) have suggested that executives must be willing to allocate valuable resources and to sustain these resources during times of economic downturn.

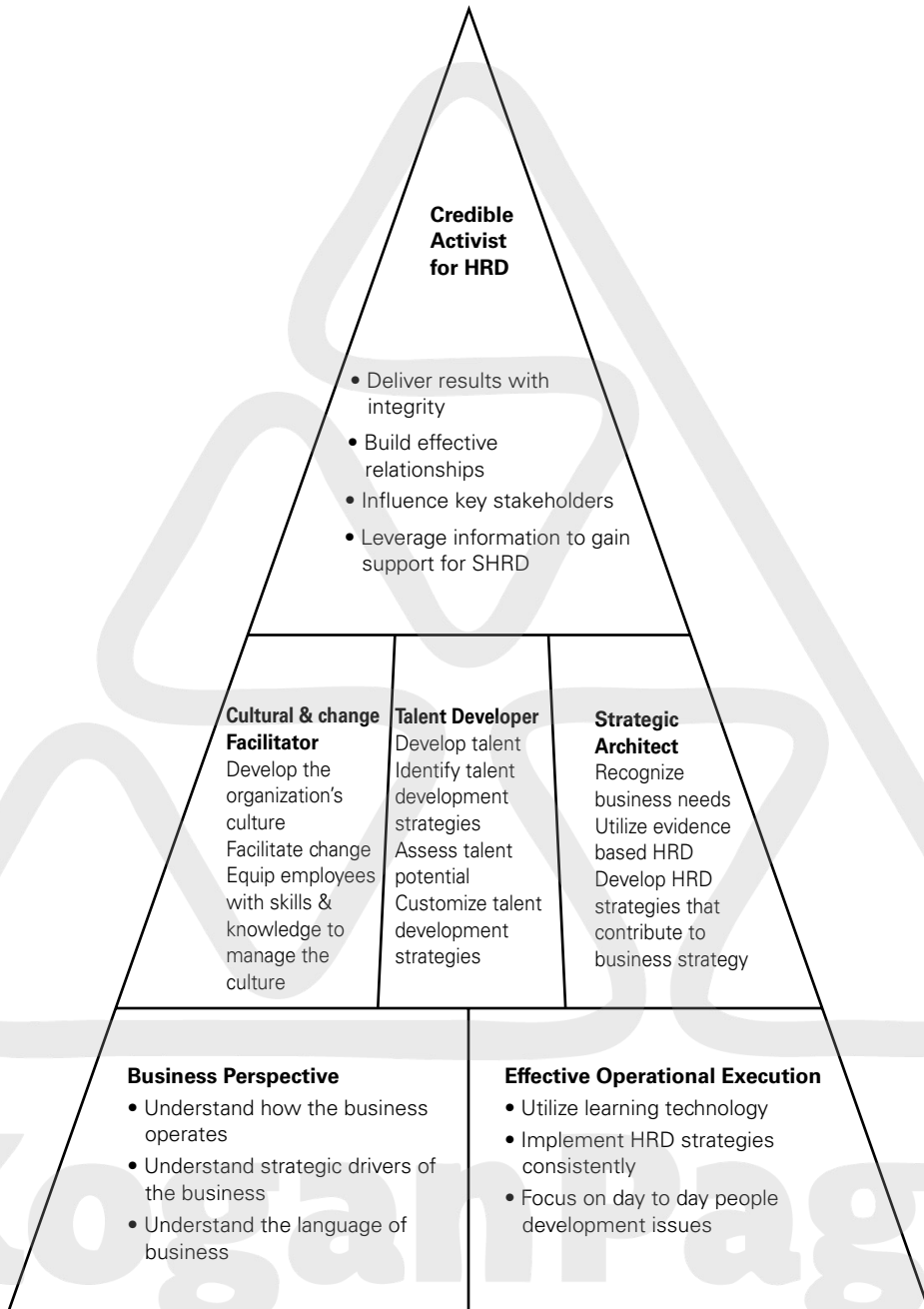
HRD specialists can look to a number of important indicators of active top management support for SHRD. These include:

- Top management are key drivers behind a particular SHRD initiative or they were the initiators of a key policy initiative related to SHRD.
- Top management attend key kick-off meetings such as the launch of a programme or policy initiative.
- It is possible to give an elevator speech on SHRD. For top management to be able to explain SHRD, its return on investment and its components within the attendance span of a spectator is considered a key hallmark of top management commitment.
- Top management are willing to support a HRD initiative during a significant economic downturn.

## **The technical leadership capabilities of the HRD specialist**

HRD specialists need to possess a combination of technical and leadership competencies in order to demonstrate effective SHRD leadership. Figure 2.3 represents an adaptation of the new competencies for HR Model provided by Grossman (2007). The framework places significant emphasis on the strategic role of the HRD specialist; however, it also acknowledges the importance of effective execution of the operational dimensions of SHRD. A key dimension emphasized in the framework is the need to be a credible activist for HRD. These competencies include building effective relationships with key stakeholders, influencing stakeholders inside and outside the organization, leveraging information to build support for HRD and delivering business results with professionalism and integrity.

It is acknowledged that the HRD role is constrained by a variety of conflicts. Tseng and McLean (2008) highlight three such conflicts: internal specialist conflicts, the management of conflicting priorities and managing line-specialist conflicts. Such conflicts place significant demands on the competences of the HRD specialist.

**FIGURE 2.3** The competencies required of HRD specialists

Adapted from Grossman (2007).

## Line manager engagement with SHRM

The HRD specialist needs both the involvement and the engagement of line managers in the delivery of SHRD. A 2007 CIPD study emphasizes the key role of the line manager in delivering SHRD. This study highlighted a number of factors important to the involvement of SHRD. These include building a shared language concerning SHRD, creating a supportive organizational culture where line managers and HRD specialists can communicate with each other, and the development of the capabilities and competencies of line managers to work on learning and development issues. Other suggestions that are made to enhance line manager engagement with SHRD issues focus on more practical matters such as encouraging line managers to actively participate in the HRD strategy-development process, strategic partnering on strategic HRD problems, and providing the line manager with goals that are related to SHRD.

Reasons why line managers do not engage with SHRD issues focus on: a lack of skills, negative attitudes to HRD, time issues and conflicting priorities, poor HRD systems and procedures, and a lack of confidence to take on the role. Table 2.2 summarizes some of the actions that can be taken to enhance line manager engagement with SHRD.

**TABLE 2.2** Engaging line managers with SHRD: some suggestions

### At strategic level:

- Ensure that the HRD strategy underpins the corporate strategy.
- Focus on developing a learning culture. Develop attitudes, values and practices that support continuous learning and development.
- Demonstrate a tangible link between SHRD strategies and organizational performance.
- Ensure that the performance management process includes KPIs related to SHRD.
- Reward positive learning and development behaviours among managers.

### At operational level:

- Focus leadership development initiatives on developing people-development skills such as coaching, facilitation, feedback giving and seeking.
- Share the successes of SHRD with line managers where it is possible to demonstrate a tangible link between SHRD and performance.
- Follow up with line managers on training and development issues related to their employees.
- In the development-planning process, get line managers to think about their business goals and translate these goals into learning needs and outcomes.

### At team-member level:

- Hold sessions on learning and development opportunities and reinforce why learning is important for both performance and advancement.
- Help team members select development strategies and development opportunities.
- Encourage team members to be proactive in terms of their own development.
- Provide mechanisms to encourage informal learning and development.

**CASE STUDY****In practice: SHRD: how Dell does it**

Training and development has always been part of how Dell operates as a business. However, by 1995 it was clear that it needed to place greater emphasis on the capabilities of its human resources in order to sustain competitive advantage. As a result it created the office of Dell Learning, which became responsible for all HRD activities within the corporation. It was given the following primary objectives: to align learning with key business goals, to make learning available to everyone who needed it, to create clarity around competencies required for continued success and to provide consistency where required through global curricula.

In order to give effect to these objectives, a centralized corporate team was established with the role of designing processes for HRD. HRD specialists reported directly into each business or function and were tasked with developing a business-based HRD plan, holding business leaders accountable and responsible for the execution of the plan, ensuring that resources were available to execute it, and evaluating its implementation.

The Corporate Learning group also included fulfilment teams to serve Dell's different businesses on demand. One team produces learning tools to train sales and technical employees in Dell's products and services. Another team, called Education Services, manages registration, scheduling, tracking and learning logistics. A third team consists of experienced and qualified instructional designers who manage development projects requested by the business. The HRD function within Dell operates as a federation consisting of corporate regional (HR) training and regional (non-HR) training. These various components are managed by the senior management team and a number of Dell Learning Councils.

The Corporate Learning group consists of six key elements: corporate and regional operations that focus on global HRD; Dell Learning Services, which provides instructional design services and counselling; Dell Learning Technology Services, which provides specialized services charged with the utilization of learning technology; Education Services, a centralized support function dealing with vendor management, event management and registration; New Product Training, which focuses on learning materials for product and service training; and a Programme Management Office, which focuses on the development of HRD strategies to support strategic initiation. The Corporate Learning group reports to Human Resources, as do a number of business-based training groups that tend to be functional, geographical and business-segment focused. These groups participate in the training councils that Dell Learning organizes around key needs. The key philosophy driving Dell Learning is that all HRD activities should be business and issue based, respond quickly to business needs, make the most effective use of resources and demonstrate a direct contribution to business performance.

The principles of operation that support this philosophy are that SHRD should be flexible and competency-based, and business managers should be in charge of managing their own learning investments. SHRD solutions have limited shelf life and should be treated accordingly; learning occurs everywhere so the obligation of managers and employees is to leverage it across the organization.



## Conclusion

Human resource development has emerged as a significant strategic issue within organizations. One of the reasons for this is the increased recognition that people are an important source of sustained competitive advantage. Skills and competencies enable an organization to be more flexible and to reconfigure to meet strategic challenges. Consistent with the ideas proposed by the resource-based theory of the firm and behavioural approaches, organizations should implement best-practice SHRD strategies or best-fit strategies to maximize business performance.

SHRD represents a particular variant of HRD. It differs from more traditional models of HRD in that it proposes a model of HRD that is aligned with the needs of the business or organization. Idealized models of SHRD envisage that HRD specialists will act as shapers of business strategy and be strategic business partners. The majority of prescriptive and explanatory models of SHRD emphasize vertical and horizontal alignment with strategy and HR strategy, the implementation of structures and strategies that contribute to the bottom line, the enhancement of the capacity of the HRD specialist to contribute at a strategic level and the utilization of a strategic perspective to consider learning issues in the organizations.

A variety of enabling conditions are necessary to ensure that SHRD makes an optimum contribution. These include: a clearly articulated organizational mission, vision and strategy; the formulation and implementation of an aligned SHRD strategy; top management support for learning; engagement and involvement of line managers in the development and delivery of learning solutions; and an HR specialist who possesses the appropriate combination of technical and leadership competencies to deliver in an organization.

Ultimately in any business it is the quality of human capital that produces results. Developing a talented workforce represents the single most important priority of and challenge for SHRD. This challenge must focus on developing existing employees as well as successfully developing new employees so that they can contribute quickly in terms of performance and discretionary effort.

## Questions for reflection

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- Shouldn't all HRD be strategic? Why do we need to talk about strategic HRD?
- To what extent is the training provision in your organization (or an organization you know) strategic?
- How is it possible that firms that do not provide training and development to their employees manage to survive?

## Further information sources

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Foras Áiseanna Saothair Training and Employment Authority (Ireland): [www.fas.ie/](http://www.fas.ie/)



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## 03

# What is learning?

JOHN P WILSON

*Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous. (CONFUCIUS, 551–479 BC)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand some of the main components of behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning, humanism and neurology;
- understand the main similarities and differences between these areas;
- choose a learning approach that is suitable for the learners and the context;
- recognize that the main theories of learning apply to most adult and child learners;
- relate these theories to other relevant chapters in the book.

## Introduction

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The word ‘learning’ is in such common usage that it might be assumed that its meaning is clearly understood; however, when closely examined it tends not to be as transparent as was first assumed. For example, different learning strategies might be used for the following activities: learning calculus, playing a musical instrument, playing golf, interacting successfully with other people, analysing our inner thoughts, painting a landscape, and learning a foreign language. Each of these activities requires different knowledge and skills, and therefore different perspectives are necessary to gain insights into what is, essentially, an invisible operation.

Developing insights into how people learn and which approaches are more effective will benefit both learners and providers in education, training and development. Therefore, this chapter will consider learning from six main perspectives: behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning, humanism and cognitive science. It should

be noted from the beginning, however, that learning is complex and these areas not only tend to overlap, but their abilities to explain learning differ (Bruner, 1985).

## Defining learning

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It is generally helpful to have a definition of a subject in order to understand its nature and boundaries; unfortunately, no single definition provides a complete insight into learning. Indeed, Jarvis (2004: 1) stated, 'Human learning is the preserve of no single discipline; definitions that fail to recognise it are incorrect.' Therefore, it is perhaps more useful to provide a range of learning definitions to illustrate different views about a wide and complex subject:

An individual may be said to have learned when his behaviours after the learning occasion remain significantly different from his behaviour before.

(Revans, 1971: 100)

Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

(Kolb, 1984: 38)

The process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide for future action.

(Mezirow, 2000: 5)

The combination of processes whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – is in a social situation and constructs an experience which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual's own biography.

(Jarvis, 2004: 7)

The process of learning has generally been understood to be the process through which individuals go in acquiring their knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and senses.

(Jarvis, Holford and Griffin, 2004: 4)

Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour or in behavioural potentiality that results from experience and cannot be attributed to temporary body states such as those induced by illness, fatigue, or drugs.

(Hergenhahn and Olson, 2005: 8)

Any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or ageing.

(Illeris, 2007: 3)

A process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences – learning occurs through personal reflection, reconstruction and social interaction. Learning may take place in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

(Cedefop, 2008: 111)

Learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour that results from experience.

(Klein, 2009: 2)

Learning is an enduring change in behaviour, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience.

(Schunk, 2009: 2)

As can be seen, there is no complete agreement among these definitions; some place emphasis on behavioural change, others on cognition, and others experience. Drawing from the preceding discussion:

*Learning is a relatively permanent change of knowledge, attitude or behaviour occurring as a result of formal education, training or development, or as a result of informal experiences.*

Therefore, to gain more understanding we will now consider learning from six main perspectives: behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning, humanism and neurology.

## Behaviourism

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The term behaviourism derives from psychologists who focused on observable behaviour rather than people's self-reported internal thoughts and experiences, which are extremely difficult to measure and quantify. Early research tended to focus on two main types of behavioural conditioning: classical and operant. Classical conditioning is exemplified by the well-known experiments conducted by Pavlov, who rang a bell shortly before he fed his dogs. He noticed that the dogs associated the ringing of the bells with the arrival of food and that they began salivating when the bell was rung and before the food had arrived. Essentially, this process involves a stimulus and a response (Figure 3.1).

Another psychologist, Thorndike (1898), proposed that learning involved making connections or associations between a stimulus and a response. Some of his experiments involved placing a cat inside a box; the cat responded in a variety of ways until it accidentally opened the box and was rewarded with food. The cat was repeatedly placed inside the box with the result that it learned to release itself more quickly.

The term 'behaviourism' was first used by Watson who, in one experiment, introduced a white rat to Albert, a young child of 11 months. At first Albert was merely curious about the rat and was not afraid; however, Watson then arranged for an iron bar to be hit loudly with a hammer whenever the rat was present. Eventually, Albert associated the rat with the loud, frightening noise and became very agitated and attempted to crawl away (Watson and Rayner, 1920). Watson suggested the laws of frequency and recency to explain the degree of behavioural response.

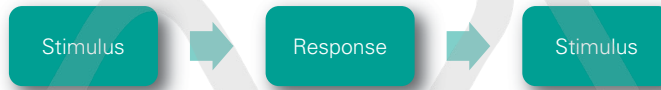
**FIGURE 3.1** Classical conditioning

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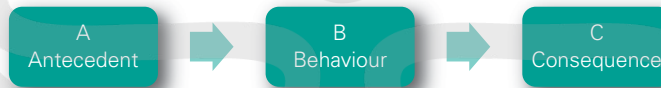


Operant conditioning, which describes how behaviour ‘operates’ on the surrounding environment, was proposed by Skinner (1953), who initially conducted experiments with animals and then transferred these findings and applied them to humans (Figure 3.2). Apart from the effects of genetic inheritance, Skinner (1971: 211) contended that, ‘A person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon the person.’ In other words, he believed in determinism, where people have no real freedom of choice. Operant conditioning is similar to classical conditioning but the conditioned response is then followed by a further stimulus or reinforcement; for example a trainer might tell trainees (stimulus) to carry out an activity (response), which may then be praised or rewarded by the manager. It is commonly referred to as the A–B–C model (Figure 3.3).

**FIGURE 3.2** Operant conditioning



**FIGURE 3.3** The operant conditioning A-B-C model



Many education and training courses have course objectives that are described in behavioural terms. This behavioural approach can be seen in the competence-based approach of National/Scottish Vocational Qualification programmes, which describe what a person should be able to do. When the UK competency movement was in its early stages there was no description of what people should know, only what they should do. Subsequently, this shortcoming was recognized and knowledge descriptions were included (see the Management standards in Chapter 19 or Learning standards in Chapter 7).

A trainer, educator or developer who draws predominantly from behavioural theories of learning is likely to incorporate physical activities. This type of training is regularly to be found in the military and emergency services where responses often need to be automatic, particularly during times of extreme danger and stress.

## Cognitivism

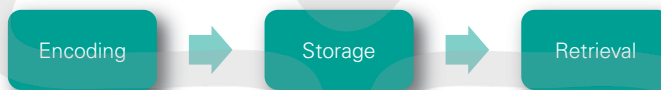
Behavioural psychologists argued that people’s behaviour was determined by their environments; however, by the 1950s, there was an increasing dissatisfaction with

behaviourism, which failed to adequately explain the role of thought processes on behaviour. This resulted in the growth of cognitivism, which described the active use of the mind in interpreting and making sense of stimuli and thereby influencing behaviour. In this section we will consider memory, different forms of intelligence and metacognition – thinking about thinking.

## Memory

Learning is closely associated with memory and it would appear that memory systems – human, physical or electronic – require three main components: encoding, storage and retrieval (Baddeley, Eysenck and Anderson, 2009) (Figure 3.4). For example, an index card requires a person to write or type onto the card specific information such as the details of a book. This card is then placed alphabetically with other cards, containing the details of other books, in a drawer or place where they can be accessed. Finally, when we need to find the details of the book, we look in the card drawer and retrieve the information – perhaps where the book is located in a library. Likewise, humans need to encode information, store it in their brains and then retrieve it when they need it: for instance, ‘Where did I leave my car keys?’

**FIGURE 3.4** A simplified process of memory operations



## Intelligence

During the early 1900s two Frenchmen, Binet and Simon, began to measure the intellectual abilities of children and constructed a scale that described the expected average mental abilities of children at a particular age. This Binet–Simon Scale gave an assessment of the mental age of a child that could be compared with their chronological age. Binet acknowledged the limitations of the scale, including the fact that intelligence is very diverse and that children develop at different rates.

In 1908 the scale was taken to the United States, translated into English and incorporated within the Stanford–Binet Intelligence Scale. During the First World War a variation of the test was used as a fast-track measure to assess the ability of army recruits so that they could be more accurately deployed. Subsequently the Stanford–Binet Intelligence Scale has been widely used in education systems and in recruitment to assess capability.

However, despite the widespread use of intelligence tests such as the Scholastic Assessment Test, there are numerous limitations and criticisms. Many disadvantaged and minority students tend to achieve lower scores on intelligence tests than do other groups, and Herrnstein and Murray’s (1994) book *The Bell Curve* suggested that racial differences explained the difference in scores. This created great controversy and debate about nature–nurture effects on performance.



Cultural background can also affect a person's score on some tests that do not take culture into account. This raises the question, 'What exactly is meant by intelligence?', and Boring (1923) famously stated that intelligence is 'whatever intelligence tests measure'. More precisely, Sternberg (1994: 395) stated that: 'Intelligence is the cognitive ability of an individual to learn from experience, to reason well, to remember important information, and to cope with the demands of daily living.'

Another criticism of intelligence tests is that they measure only small dimensions of human capability and do not consider, for example, sporting ability, musical ability, happiness, human sociability and so on. Indeed, Gardner (1999: 3) argued that: 'Intelligence is too important to be left to the intelligence testers.' Instead Gardner (1983) proposed a much broader perspective of intelligence and suggested that there was not one form of intelligence but multiple intelligences; however, he has not fully validated this perspective:

- *Mathematical-logical*: the ability to organize thoughts sequentially and logically.
- *Verbal-linguistic*: the ability to understand and express ideas through language.
- *Bodily-kinesthetic*: the gaining of knowledge through feedback from physical activity.
- *Musical*: sensitivity to tone, pitch and rhythm, and the ability to reproduce them.
- *Visual-spatial*: the ability to learn directly through images and to think intuitively without the use of language.
- *Interpersonal*: the ability to notice and make discriminations regarding the moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions of others.
- *Intra-personal*: having access to one's own feelings.

Gardner has subsequently amended the number of intelligences and added an eighth – 'naturalistic intelligence', which is linked to survival and recognizing predators (Gardner, 2006). The concept of multiple intelligences has proved to be very appealing to many people; others have proposed additional intelligences, including spiritual intelligence (Zohar and Marshall, 2000) although Gardner suggests that this does not fit within his categories. He (2006: 23) argued that multiple intelligence theory produces three conclusions: human beings have a full range of intelligences, all individuals have different intellectual profiles, and 'Having a strong intelligence does not mean that one necessarily acts intelligently.'

Another form of intelligence is emotional intelligence, which is closely related to Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. This concept was developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and popularized by Goleman (1996: 35), who stated, 'IQ offers little to explain the different destinies of people with roughly equal promises, schooling and opportunity.' Indeed, Goleman (1996: 41) also quoted Gardner and Hatch (1989):

Many people with IQs of 160 work for people with IQs of 100, if the former have poor interpersonal intelligence and the latter have a high one. And in the day to day world no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal. If you don't have it, you'll make poor choices about who to marry, what job to take, and so on. We need to train children in the personal intelligences in school.

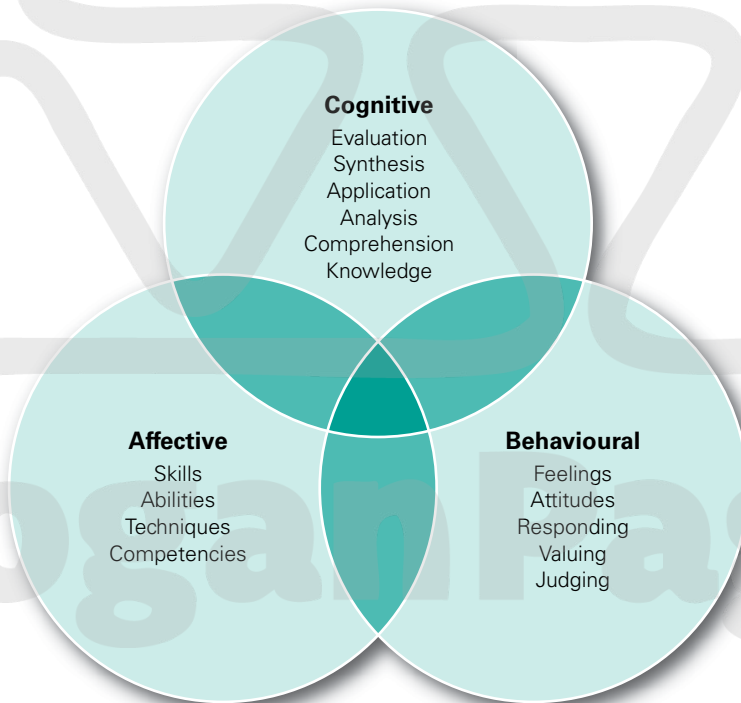


It would also appear that recent generations have been getting more intelligent than previous ones (Flynn, 2007) although the reasons for this would not appear to be fully clear. Flynn drew from a range of research in a number of countries and his own studies of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, and concluded that intelligence had increased by three IQ points per decade. A number of reasons have been proposed for this Flynn-effect, including longer and better education, and improved nutrition and health; however, whether this increase will continue into the future is not clear as gains have decreased in developed nations.

### Domains of learning

Three domains of learning – cognitive, affective and behavioural – were identified by Bloom et al (1956: 1) in their seminal *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. The purpose of the taxonomy (Figure 3.5) was to ‘provide for classification of the goals of our education system’, and encourage educators to design more effective curricula through addressing each of these domains. The authors were able to construct a hierarchy of cognitive abilities and list some of the affective areas, but did not proceed to the behavioural domain. The hierarchy of cognitive abilities enables programme designers, trainers and teachers to organize courses that encourage students and

**FIGURE 3.5** Taxonomy of educational objectives



**SOURCE:** Bloom et al, 1956.

trainees to extend their abilities. Instead of talking vaguely about ‘thinking’ and ‘problem solving’, the hierarchy can be used to more closely determine levels of ability.

## Developmental psychology

One area that appears to straddle both behaviourism and cognitivism is developmental psychology, which describes how intellectual growth is related to personal development. School education, in particular, has been influenced by the work of Piaget, who conducted much of his research by observing the development of his daughter and local children. Piaget (1950) described how children are born with schema or mental models that encourage them to hold and suck. As the children grow older, schema progressively develop and he identified four main stages of cognitive development:

| Age   | Developmental stage     | Characteristics  |
|-------|-------------------------|--|
| 0–2   | Sensori-motor           | The infant learns to differentiate itself from the external environment.   |
| 2–7   | Pre-operational thought | Children are ego-centric and classify objects along one dimension; for example, all men are ‘Daddy’. They then develop classifications but do not fully understand them. |
| 7–11  | Concrete operations     | Children develop logical abilities to classify, reverse and organize objects, and to be more conceptual.   |
| 11–15 | Formal operations       | Abstract conceptualization and testing of hypotheses.  |

A classic exercise for discovering if a child has progressed from the pre-operational stage to the concrete operational stage is through the use of the ‘conservation of substance test’. This can involve rolling a ball of clay into a thin sausage and asking, ‘Which is more, the ball or the sausage?’ If the child is at the pre-operational stage he or she will say that the sausage is more because visually it appears much larger than the ball of clay. A child who has reached the concrete operational stage will recognize that the shape of the clay has been transformed but is still the same amount.

Piaget suggested that the formal operations stage develops throughout life for most people but not everyone reaches this stage.

## Metacognition

One of the biggest challenges trainers and learners face is that new knowledge progressively replaces old knowledge. This has resulted in the concept of the half-life

of knowledge (Machlup, 1962), based upon the analogy with radioactive decay, and has raised questions about the validity of teaching subject content.

If what is learned becomes obsolete rapidly, what is the point of teaching it? Instead, many educationalists have argued that there is an increasing need to provide learners with the skills to 'learn how to learn' and so give them greater control and independence. This involves reflection and thinking about one's thoughts, or what is sometimes known as sapience or metacognition. Flavell (1979: 906) coined the term 'metacognition' and described it as 'knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena'. This 'cognition about cognition' draws upon some of the developmental psychology of Piaget and his higher-order formal operations (Flavell, 1963).

Metacognition involves thinking about what one knows, what one is presently doing or one's affective state (Hacker, 1998). This ability to assess oneself would appear to be a significant factor in learning, and Butler and Winne (1995: 245) stated, 'Theoreticians seem unanimous – the most effective learners are self-regulating.'

Thus, thinking about how we think is an essential learning skill. Also, a range of applications using metacognition have developed, including cognitive therapy, a form of psychotherapy (Beck, 1975). This approach involves the examination of dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs that adversely affect the holder. The thoughts and beliefs are then modified in order to reduce the negative emotions and behaviour that may arise from the original way of thinking.

Another form of metacognition is cognitive behavioural therapy, and one illustration is the concept of learned optimism developed by Seligman (1998). His starting point was that optimistic people tended to be more successful and more healthy. He maintained that adversity caused some people to respond negatively and limit their actions where there was potential for further failure. Seligman suggested this learned helplessness could be reduced by personal disputing of the situation.

## **Reflective practice**

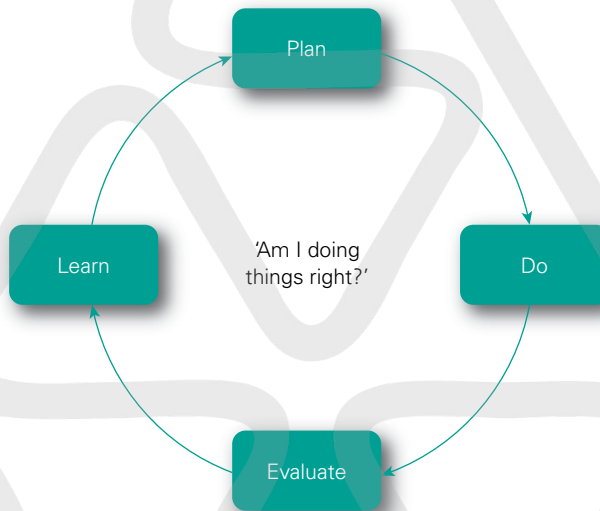
One of the most familiar applications of metacognition is reflective practice, which was championed by Schön (1983), who wanted to explore the epistemology of what professionals knew. He wished to draw out what they often knew instinctively, what Polanyi (1967) described as tacit knowledge, and make it explicit so that learning could be shared by the whole group, leading to improved performance. Schön described two main concepts. The first, reflection-on-action, describes the examination of a prior event as a means of learning to improve performance in the future. The second concept was reflection-in-action, which uses internal knowledge to inform and guide behaviour in the immediate present (that is, thinking on our feet).

## **Single-loop and double-loop learning**

Single-loop learning and double-loop learning are associated with the writings of Argyris and Schön (1974), who suggested that people have mental maps about how to act in specific situations. This involved a plan–do–review process of actions and was termed single-loop learning (Figure 3.6). 'Single-loop learning is like a thermostat that learns when it is too hot or too cold and turns the heat on or off. The thermostat can perform

this task because it can receive information (the temperature of the room) and take corrective action' (Argyris and Schön 1978: 3). This approach is very suitable in predictable situations where relatively minor adjustments are necessary. However, in more complex situations single-loop learning may not be appropriate, and meta-cognition involving a closer examination of the broader system may be necessary. 'Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives' (ibid) (Figure 3.7).

**FIGURE 3.6** Single-loop learning



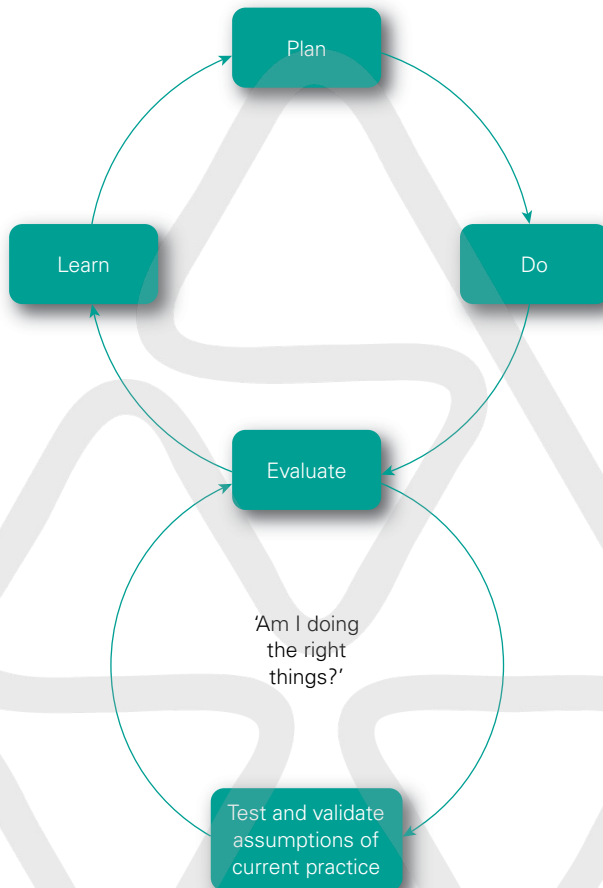
## Constructivism

Constructivism is based on the view that people develop their knowledge and understanding through interaction with the world. It is similar to cognitivism and addresses the interaction between physical experiences and their internal mental representations.

### Experiential learning

One illustration of constructivism is experiential learning, which can be traced back to the Greek philosophers and others such as John Locke (1690/1911: 335). Experience is twofold:

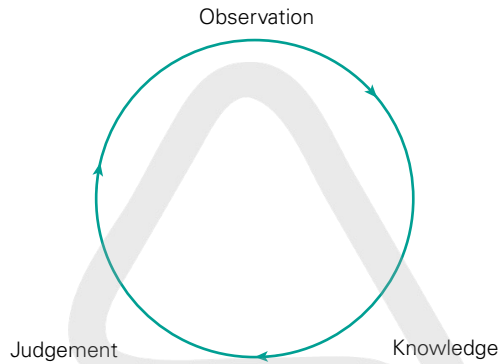
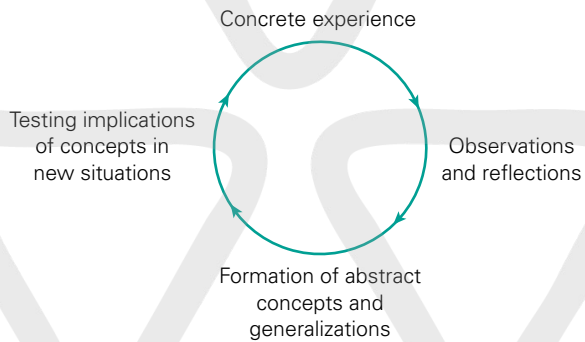
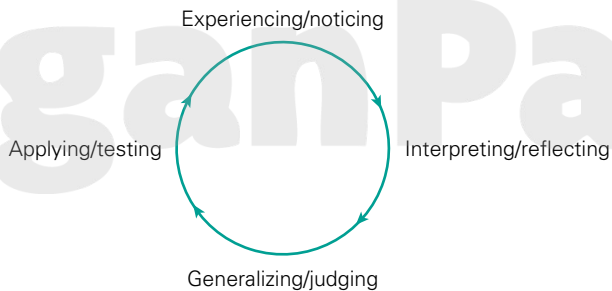
Our observations may be employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds. The former is the source of most of the ideas which we have, and, as it depends wholly on our senses, is called sensation. The latter is a source

**FIGURE 3.7** Double-loop learning

of ideas which 'every man has wholly in himself', and it might be called 'internal sense'; to it he gives the name 'reflection'.

(Locke, 1690/ 1911: 335)

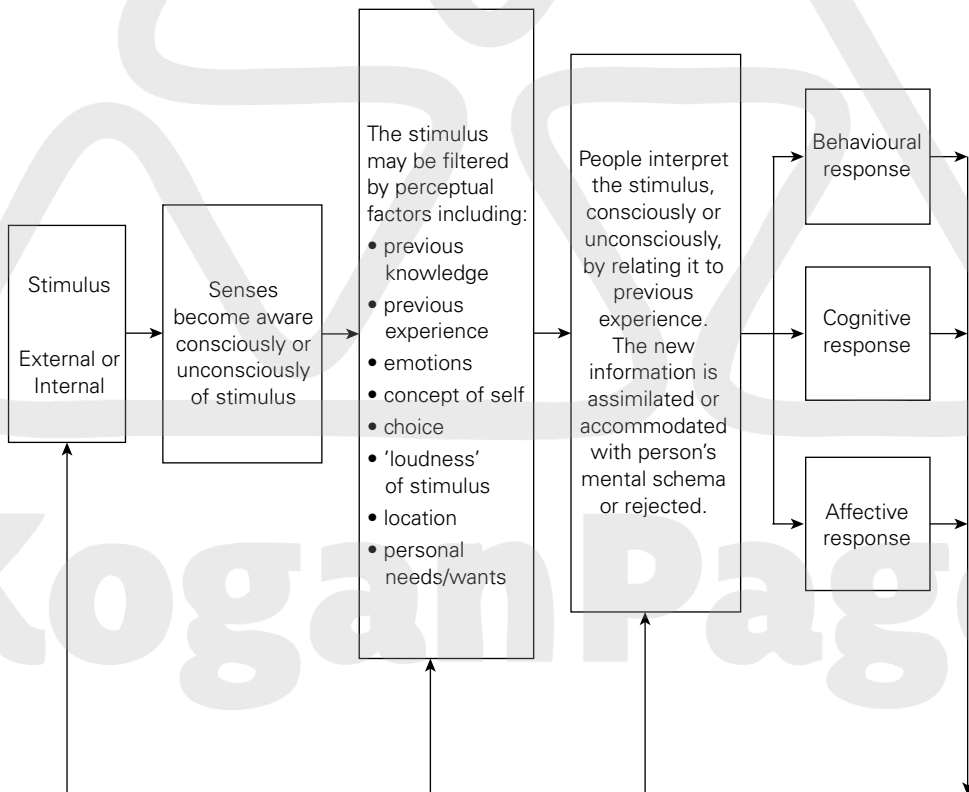
This sense-making about the world can be seen in Dewey's (1938) process of observation, learning and judgement (Figure 3.8). Similarly, Lewin's feedback process taken from experimental methods (Figure 3.9) influenced Kolb's development of the learning cycle (Figure 3.10). The learning cycle has been highly influential and essentially describes the process of experiencing or noticing something, then interpreting and reflecting on this experience; next, forming a generalization or judgement about it, such as a theory; and finally testing or applying the theory to see if it works in practice, before beginning the process again.

**FIGURE 3.8** Dewey's learning process**FIGURE 3.9** Lewin's feedback process**FIGURE 3.10** Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Drawing on Kolb's learning cycle, Honey and Mumford (1982) proposed that people had preferences for learning in particular ways, and called these learning styles. These learning styles (of activist – learning through experience; reflector – learning through reviewing; theorist – learning through generalization; and, pragmatist – learning through testing and application) appeal to people because they appear to explain how some approaches are more effective than others in helping them learn. Numerous other learning-style inventories have since been developed; however, when more closely examined their validity and reliability has been challenged (Coffield et al, 2004; Pashler et al, 2009).

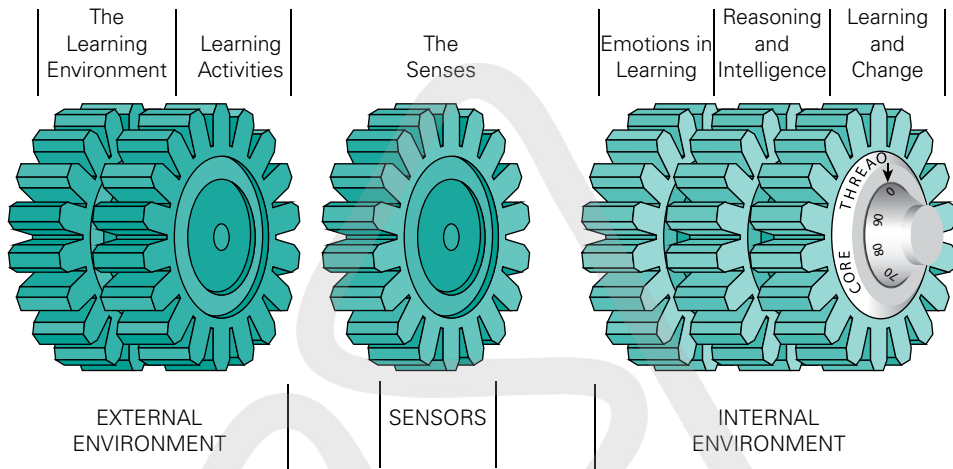
Two models of experiential learning that illustrate the constructivist nature of learning are Beard and Wilson's (2002) process of perception and experiential learning (Figure 3.11) and the learning combination lock (Figure 3.12). These models illustrate how perception shapes and is shaped by external stimuli and internal mental models. In the cognitive processing model (Figure 3.11) we can see that the stimuli can come from two main sources: external stimuli in the environment, and internal ones such as a pain or feeling hungry. Awareness of these stimuli may occur at a conscious or subconscious level – for example, 'I feel hungry' – or, alternatively, without us being aware; for example, on a warm day our physiology may adapt to keep us cool.

**FIGURE 3.11** The process of perception and experiential learning



**SOURCE:** Beard and Wilson, 2006.



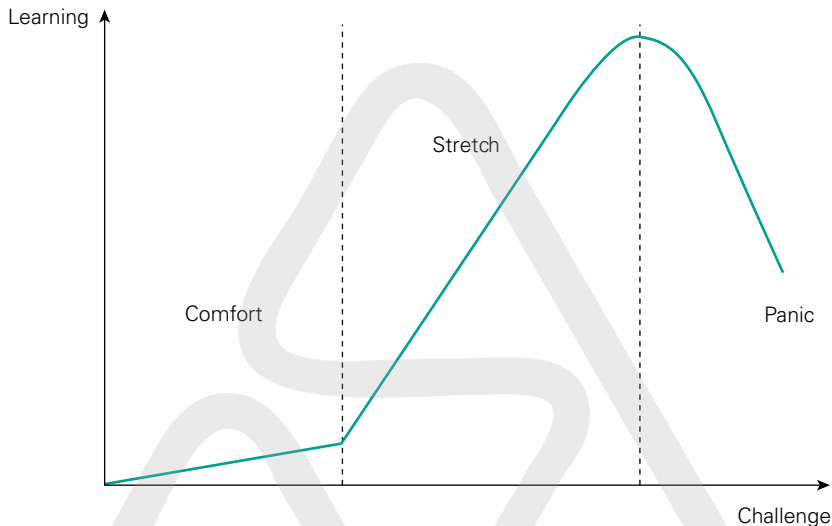
**FIGURE 3.12** The learning combination lock

**SOURCE:** Beard and Wilson, 2006.

The extent to which we perceive the stimuli can depend on a range of factors, such as previous knowledge and experience of the stimuli, our emotional sensitivity, how 'loud' it is, our sense of self, and needs and wants. We have the ability to filter or turn-up or turn-down the loudness of the stimulus depending on our judgment of how important it is to us. To make an impact on learning, an experience needs to be significant; if it is a routine and mundane task it will not be noticed. Similarly, if an experience is too extreme it may cause panic and minimize the learning potential (Figure 3.13) (Palethorpe and Wilson, 2011).

Next, when we receive a stimulus we compare it to previous experiences or mental models. If the stimulus closely matches our mental model we will normally *assimilate* it without changing the model, as with a routine journey to work when we pay little attention. If the stimulus is different from our mental model of 'how things are' we may choose to modify the construct and *accommodate* the new information and experience: for example, deciding that a new product in the supermarket is much better than the one we currently use. The third possibility is that a stimulus is so alien to our mental models that we *reject* it because it is exceptional, biased or incorrect (Piaget, 1950). The final stage involves the type of response, whether it is behavioural, cognitive or affective (Bloom et al, 1956).

Problem-based learning might be considered a form of constructivism in which course participants are given a problem for which they have to find a solution. In this way they are forced to use knowledge, experience and ingenuity to identify potential solutions, assess their efficacy and then apply and evaluate their performance. This approach to learning allows for multiple solutions, different forms of interaction within group activities, and possibly broader learning than might have been anticipated by the trainer/teacher (Albanese and Mitchell, 1993). The degree of intervention by the trainer depends on a range of factors, including success in solving the problem, available time and the degree of conflict, between group members.

**FIGURE 3.13** The comfort, stretch, panic model of learning

**SOURCE:** Palethorpe and Wilson, 2011.

## Social learning

Social learning theory involves ‘a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental determinants’ (Bandura, 1977: vii). It also provides a range of opportunities and advantages for learning that are not directly available to individual learners. For example, Bandura (1977: 22) observed:

Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Because people can learn from example what to do, at least in approximate form, before performing any behavior, they are spared needless errors.

Close contact with a group reinforces behaviour such as styles of language, attitudes and the like, and role models and significant other people influence behaviour; for example, advertisers often use celebrity endorsement for their products. However, observation alone is insufficient: ‘people cannot learn much by observation unless they attend to, and perceive accurately, the significant features of the modeled behaviour’ (Bandura, 1977: 22). Moreover, Bandura noted that we may learn from the behaviour of others but not put it into practice, thus contradicting the behaviourist stance, which describes learning as visible behavioural change. This reasoning caused Bandura (1977: 10) to argue that, ‘A theory that denies that thoughts can regulate actions does not lend itself readily to the explanation of complex human behaviour.’

A powerful illustration of social learning was initiated for street children in India by Mitra (2003). He installed a computer in a 'hole in the wall' of his Delhi office and watched slum children quickly and intuitively learn to use the computer and then navigate their way around the internet. Further skills rapidly developed, all through a process of incidental learning and peer-to-peer learning. The experiment has since been extended and is encouraging remarkable enthusiasm and learning among children in a number of countries.

## Zone of proximal development

Another influential psychologist, Vygotski (1978: 57), proposed that a child would learn in social situations and that:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapyschological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals.

In contrast to Piaget, who said that a child's development preceded learning, Vygotski proposed that learning came before development. In particular, he described a 'zone of proximal development', which refers to the development a child might achieve alone, compared to what he or she might achieve learning with other more capable children or under the guidance of an adult. In this way children can scaffold additional learning onto that which they already possess.

## Communities of practice

Another form of social learning was identified during a study of apprenticeship by Lave and Wenger (1991: 29), who discovered that much learning happened not only as a result of the formal interaction between the apprentice and the 'master', but also as a result of informal interactions with other workers and apprentices. They stated:

Learning viewed as situated activity has as its central defining characteristic a process that we call *legitimate peripheral participation*. By this we mean to draw attention to the point that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community.

Basically, Lave and Wenger's perspective is that knowledge is not acquired in an abstract way but is situated in a context in which people engage. Wenger (1998: 3) emphasized this perspective by stating that, 'Learning is, in essence, a fundamentally social phenomenon', and proposed that a social theory of learning should integrate four components:

- *Meaning*: learning as experience.
- *Practice*: learning as doing.
- *Community*: learning as belonging.
- *Identity*: learning as becoming.

Lave and Wenger have been influential in encouraging the establishment of physical or virtual ‘communities of practice’ where groups of people come together to address issues they consider important.

## Humanistic learning

Another area of learning involves the purpose of learning. Is it personal enlightenment or is it functional, with subject content specified by the state and designed to provide physical and mental labour to satisfy the needs of organizations? Rogers (1969), an advocate of humanistic learning, challenged behaviourism and quoted from Skinner (1953: 477), ‘The hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behaviour.’ Rogers’ response (1969: 4) was to write *Freedom to Learn*, in which he proposed two kinds of learning along a continuum of meaning (Figure 3.14). The first involved learning the meaningless syllables devised by psychologists, which he suggested was similar to the curricula in some schools. He argued, ‘Such learning involves the mind only. It is learning which takes place “from the neck up”. It does not involve personal feelings or personal meanings, it has no relevance for the whole person.’

**FIGURE 3.14** Continuum of learning



**SOURCE:** Rogers, 1969.

The second type of learning proposed by Rogers (1969: 4) involved ‘significant, meaningful experiential learning’. He argued that people have a natural ability to learn and used an example taken from McLuhan:

If a five-year-old child is moved to a foreign country, and allowed to play freely for hours with his new companions, with no language instruction at all, he will learn the new language in a few months, and will acquire the proper accent too. He is learning in a way which has significance and meaning for him, and such learning proceeds at an exceedingly rapid rate. But let someone try to *instruct* him in the new language, basing the instruction on the elements which have meaning for the teacher, and learning is tremendously slowed, or even stopped.

Rogers (1969: 5) defined the elements that were involved with experiential learning:

*It has a quality of personal involvement* – the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being *in* the learning event. *It is self-initiated*. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery, or reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. *It is pervasive*. It makes a difference in the behaviour, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner. *It is evaluated by the learner*. He knows whether it is meeting his need, whether it leads toward what he wants to know,

whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance he is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides in the learner. *Its essence is meaning*. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience.

Rogers supported his concept of ‘freedom to learn’ with examples from different educational settings, including a primary school and a college. He drew on the relatively extreme practice of headmaster AS Neill (1962) at Summerhill school, where children were given freedom to do what they wanted. This ‘freedom to learn’ or ‘freedom not to learn’ will have been encountered by many teachers and trainers. Not everyone wants to learn what has been prescribed by someone else and sometimes much encouragement is needed. Therefore, Rogers also suggested a number of methods that help support freedom, including: providing resources, using learning contracts, separate groups for those students who were uncomfortable with too much freedom and wanted direction, conduct of enquiry, simulation, programmed instruction, encounter groups and self-evaluation.

### **Pedagogy and andragogy**

The word pedagogy derives from the Greek meaning ‘to lead the child’, and more specifically it is the study of the education of children. However, many of the learning theories found in this chapter would not only be taught in teacher training colleges but would also be used by adult trainers in a wide variety of settings.

It is sometimes argued that the mind of a child is a *tabula rasa* or ‘blank slate’ and that when the child is born it has the potential to develop in many directions (Locke, 1690/1911). The implication of this perspective is that when educating children one needs to begin with first principles because they have little underpinning knowledge.

On the other hand, the teaching of adults, or andragogy, is sometimes considered to be different from the teaching of children. This is largely the perspective of Knowles (1970), who maintained that adults come into the educational/training environment with a significant amount of knowledge, and the best means of encouraging learning is to build upon this. Knowles made a number of comments regarding adult learning:

- *Self-concept*: adults need to understand why they are learning something and its relevance to themselves, and they are more self-directed.
- *Experience*: with increased maturity an adult brings more experience to apply to the new learning situation.
- *Readiness*: adults seek to apply their learning to social roles as they mature.
- *Orientation*: adults tend to be more problem-centred, focusing on immediate issues rather than subject-centred, which involves deferred application.
- *Motivation*: adults, generally, are internally motivated to learn.

These principles are useful ones for any trainer or educator to consider when designing and delivering a training programme. Indeed, one can understand why Knowles came to the conclusion that teaching adults is different from teaching children. However, anyone who has brought up or taught children will know that these principles can also apply to children and young people. In particular, children bring their own experiences to the learning situation, and connecting with this often facilitates the learning of new knowledge and skills.

## Cognitive science and learning

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The remarkable advances in neurology, the study of the brain, have largely resulted from technological developments such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), computed axial tomography (CAT), positron emission tomography (PET) and transcranial stimulation. The arrival of these technologies has opened up a new frontier for exploration, and a remarkable number of discoveries have emerged.

One of the most important findings with implications for trainers, educators and developers is the concept of neuroplasticity. This is the ability of the brain to structurally change, for example in response to environmental stimuli, and recover or respond to brain damage. Prior to this discovery it was believed that the structure of the brain was relatively fixed and that brain cells only died, when in fact, there is neurogenesis. The consequence of this finding has been to encourage trainers and learners that they can learn new skills and knowledge, and mitigate previous limitations.

The basic structure of the brain can be remembered through the mnemonic SAND: synapse (the gap and junction between the end of an axon and the dendrites of another neuron); axon (this transmits signals to the synapse); neuron (nerve cell); and dendrites (these receive signals from sensory receptors or adjacent neurons).

It has also been found that the capacity of the brain can grow through experience and practice. For example, McGuire et al (2000) conducted brain scans of London taxi drivers and found that they had larger hippocampi (the part of the brain associated with navigation) than the general population. Furthermore, the hippocampus was more developed in those taxi drivers who had been working for many years compared with those who had less experience. In another study it was found that long-term practice among musicians also causes an increase in the grey matter volume of brains (Gaser and Schlaug, 2003).

It would appear that practice has a significant effect on performance, so what is it that distinguishes exceptional performers? Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) conducted research that suggested the main distinguishing factor between exceptional achievers and very good ones was not pure talent but the additional practice that was undertaken. This 10,000-hour rule has been further popularized by Gladwell (2009), who drew attention to successful people such as Steve Jobs (Apple), Bill Gates (Microsoft) and The Beatles, and argued that the experience and practice they got was more than their contemporaries, thus increasing their chances of success.

The main underlying principle of neuroplasticity is: 'that to which we pay attention grows'. In other words, if we focus on something and repeat the action regularly then those neurons that are fired as a result of the attention will strengthen and increase the number of connections with other neurons that also fire at the same time.

### *Dream learning or future learning*

Dream learning or future learning theory (Wilson, 2012) is a new learning theory based upon the notion of neuroplasticity and, particularly, what is known as Hebbian learning (Hebb, 1949). Hebb proposed that 'cells which fire together wire together':



in effect, brain cells or neurons that are repeatedly excited at the same time may become associated and develop connections through their dendrites. The consequence is that when certain cells are triggered they tend to excite the other ones to which they are connected; for example, perhaps you remember a holiday experience, which then leads on to more detailed recollections of the events surrounding the experience.

Essentially, the more frequently a brain cell is stimulated the stronger the connection becomes as the myelin sheath of the axon grows: in other words, the stronger the memory trace. There is also the converse, where external stimuli occur separately and so they have few if any connections, therefore promoting the saying: ‘cells which fire apart, wire apart.’

When we consider Schön’s (1983) reflective practice we find that he gives attention to learning-on-action (that is, from past experiences) and learning-in-action (learning during involvement in an activity). What was missing from Schön’s helpful conceptualization was a consideration of the future (Wilson, 2008). In fact, we spend much of our time thinking about the future, whether it is about how to do something temporally immediate such as making a cup of tea, or longer term when we plan next year’s holiday. Repeated thinking about future actions strengthens the neural connections, makes them more detailed and makes it easier for us to remember. In other words we learn from the future (Wilson, 2002).

It is not only thinking about activities such as making a cup of tea or planning a holiday that has been called anticipatory learning (Senge and Fulmer, 1993). Research has revealed that we spend a lot of our time daydreaming about a variety of things, some of which are fantasy and some that have the potential to be significantly influential in our lives (Christoff, Gordon and Smith, 2011). This research describes two types of thought: goal-directed thought and spontaneous thought that occurs when the brain tends to go to its default mechanism. We can call this daydreaming but it is not frivolous and it would suggest that it serves a useful purpose in exploring needs and wants and the courses of action required to achieve these dreams.

## **Learning in organizations, cities and beyond**

So far in this chapter, we have discussed the processes of learning in the context of the individual but, increasingly, learning is considered in a much broader context. This perspective on learning was taken by Longworth (2006: 1), who noted that the terms learning cities, towns, regions and communities were becoming increasingly common because, ‘Local and regional administrations have recognised that a more prosperous future depends on the development of the human and social capital in their midst. And the key to that development is encapsulated in three words – learning, learning and learning.’

The learning company was described by Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (1989: 2) as: ‘An organization which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself’. Similarly, Senge (1990: 3) defined a learning organization as, ‘An organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together’. To achieve this, Senge suggested five disciplines:



- personal mastery;
- mental models;
- shared vision;
- team learning;
- systems thinking.

## Conclusion

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The deeper one explores learning the more complex it would appear, and disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, education, psychology and neurology contribute to helping us understand the nature of a multi-faceted area. However, no one perspective or theory fully explains learning and it depends on the trainers/teachers what they take from these theories and, more importantly, how they apply them. Just as a tradesperson has a toolkit containing a range of tools that are suitable for different situations, so too should the good teacher/trainer have a range of learning tools that can be adopted and adapted to suit the specific situation. The measure of success is not what the teacher does but the extent to which there is successful learning. As Galileo said, ‘You cannot teach anyone anything. You can only help them discover it for themselves.’

## Questions for reflection

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- If our brains are designed to learn naturally, why is it necessary to provide formal education and training?
- Of the six main perspectives on learning – behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning, humanism and neurology – which do you think is the most important?
- How much time during the day do you spend daydreaming? Do you think dream learning or future learning is a beneficial use of your time?

## Further information sources

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*The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education:* <http://www.infed.org/>

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PART TWO  
**Organizational  
learning**

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## 04

# Change management and organization development

JOHN P WILSON

*If changing is, as I have argued, only another word for learning, then the theories of learning will also be the theories of changing. Those who are always learning are those who can ride the waves of change and who see a changing world as full of opportunities – not dangers. (HANDY, 1990: 44)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- provide a definition of change;
- describe the factors that stimulate change;
- describe types of resistance to change;
- use a variety of strategies to overcome resistance to change;
- describe Lewin's stages of change;
- identify performance gaps at individual and organizational level;
- describe organizational development;
- state a number of strategies to involve people in the change process;
- appreciate how you respond to change and how you cope with it.



## Introduction

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The quotation from Handy, above, encapsulates the close relationship between learning and change. Indeed, there is also a close relationship between learning and organization development (OD), with Burke (2007: 23) observing that: ‘Much of OD evolved from training and development, particularly experiential learning methods... Many of the activities included under the rubric OD are really “ID” individual development.’ It is for reasons such as these that this chapter forms an important part of this book. Moreover, and probably more significantly, the number of organizations that possess departments for organization development and change are relatively few; therefore, it is generally those people in learning and development, and HR, who tend to take responsibility for the delivery of change initiatives. Indeed, many of the strategies employed to facilitate change are people-related and thus it falls to learning and development specialists to deliver these aspects of change. This chapter consists of three main parts: firstly it will consider the nature of change, then examine organizational development, and finally consider some of the strategies that are common to both.

## Competition and the nature of change

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In December 1998, Hamel and Sampler (1998) wrote an article for *Fortune Magazine* in which they began:

Somewhere out there is a bullet with your company’s name on it. Somewhere out there is a competitor, unborn and unknown, that will render your business model obsolete. Bill Gates knows that. When he says that Microsoft is always two years away from failure, he’s not just blowing smoke at Janet Reno. He knows that competition today is not between products, it’s between business models. He knows that irrelevancy is a bigger risk than inefficiency. And what’s true for Microsoft is true for just about every other company: The hottest and most dangerous new business models are out there on the Web!

What Hamel and Sampler probably didn’t know at the time was that another large company had been formed only a few months before that would become Microsoft’s biggest competitor – Google. Their words were uncannily prophetic and marked a significant watershed that has led Microsoft to chase the progress of Google. Ten years later, Steve Ballmer, Bill Gates’ successor as CEO at Microsoft, launched their cloud-computing initiative and made a significant comment, which indicated the drive, fear or even paranoia that coexist with competition. He said, ‘The last thing we want is for somebody else to obsolete us; if we are gonna get obsoleted, we better do it to ourselves’ (Naughton, 2008: 10).

Yet even Google has not completely had its own way in the marketplace; another contender, Facebook, has emerged which may displace the pre-eminence of Google. Furthermore, Apple Corp., briefly in 2011, became the largest company in the world, exceeding the valuation of oil giant Exxon. What this brief description illustrates is that competition is fierce and that both companies and public organizations must adapt and respond to external forces if they wish to survive.

## Lessons from evolution

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

(Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*)

The term dinosaur is often used pejoratively to describe people and organizations that have failed to move with the times and have become peripheral or extinct. Yet, dinosaurs emerged about 200 million years ago and remained for 130 million years; human beings, as we know them, have been around for a much shorter period of time. In 2009, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated that climate change was the biggest threat facing the world and urged governments to reach an agreement at the Copenhagen Climate Conference to identify and agree measures to address global warming. The conference ended with no substantial developments, indicating how problematic behavioural change can be, especially across nations with different agendas and objectives. As Baker (1986: 16) reminded us, 'True, dinosaurs are extinct, but we ought to be careful in judging them inferior to our own kind. Who can say that the human system will last another thousand years, let alone a hundred million?'

A classic example often used to illustrate evolutionary change is the story of the peppered moth. Originally, this light-coloured moth was able to camouflage itself among light-coloured vegetation and so protect itself from predators such as birds. However, the Industrial Revolution in Britain produced so much pollution that it darkened vegetation and buildings, making the peppered moth more visible and thus more of a target. At the same time, dark peppered moths began to increase in number because of their ability to hide themselves on darker surfaces, with the result that they increased to approximately 95 per cent of the total population (Haldane, 1924). In more recent times, legislation to improve air quality has resulted in the proportion of dark peppered moths in the United States, UK and other countries declining, and lighter-coloured peppered moths have proportionately increased as the pollution on vegetation and other surfaces has diminished (Grant, Owen and Clarke, 1996).

So what does this story of lepidoptera signify? Well, firstly, it illustrates how adaptation is necessary in order to overcome adversity, so that when whole industries have collapsed – shipbuilding, textiles, watchmaking and coal mining among others – the former employees can either respond and learn new occupations or they may remain unemployed for decades. Similarly, governments and development agencies must identify and support the development of new industries to replace the ones that have disappeared.

## Change and learning

It is clear from the discussion above that adaptation and learning are necessary in order to survive the impact of external change, and *Webster's Dictionary* defines change as, 'The act, process or result of changing – alteration, transformation, substitution'. Indeed, change is ever present and is continuous, whether it be a mountain being slowly eroded by the elements, a person aging or an organization adjusting to competition.

Continuing these lessons from nature, Garratt (1990: 54) observed, 'It is a fundamental law of ecology that for any organism to survive, its rate of learning must be equal to, or greater than, the rate of change in its environment.' Garrett based this thinking on Revans' equation (1982), in which the rate of internal learning needs to be equal to, or greater than, the rate of external change:

$$\text{Learning} \geq \text{Change}$$

Another, more detailed equation, that describes the change process was described by Beckhard and Harris (1987: 98) and based on the work of Gleicher:

$$C = [ABD] > X$$

C = Change

A = Dissatisfaction with current situation

B = Desirability of change and end state

D = Practicality of change minimizing risk and disruption

X = 'cost of changing'

This equation can be simplified:

$$\text{Change} = \text{Dissatisfaction} \times \text{Vision} \times \text{First Steps} > \text{Resistance to Change}$$

## Types of change

Change can come from two directions: the first is deliberate proactive behaviour that is designed to improve operations and anticipate what may happen in the wider competitive environment. The second form of change is reactive, resulting from external factors such as customer pressure, new legislation, political pressures or new technology. Generally, the change that happens in most organizations tends to be a combination of both.

Change also happens at different speeds, and Johnson and Scholes (1989) described four types: continuity – where there is stability and little change; incremental – where there are step-by-step adjustments to competitive forces; flux – where the markets etc are continually changing; and discontinuous – for example where new technology completely changes the competitive landscape.

## Learning and competitive advantage

During the 1980s and the 1990s, increased national and international competition led organizations to intensify their efforts to develop strategies that might be more successful and more reliable. Porter (1985) in *Competitive Advantage* mapped the competitive landscape with his five-forces model of: market competition, the strengths of buyers and suppliers, and the threats from new market entrants, and new products and services. He also described the value chain as a strategic tool for identifying the areas where higher returns on investment might be achieved. However, Porter's focus was predominantly on the competing forces and less on developing the capabilities of the firm.

The pressure of continuous competition generally encourages firms to be more creative and innovative; however, these new products or services force competitors into counter-measures of imitation or developing their own alternative offering.

Most, if not all, inventions or innovations therefore only give a firm a temporary competitive advantage before competitors catch up or overtake, with the result that many companies quickly flower and die. To successfully survive over a longer period of time companies have to develop sustainable strategies, and Shell's former strategic planner De Geus (1988: 71) maintained that, 'The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage.' This view was reiterated by Stata, the co-founder of Analog Devices (1989: 64), who said, 'In fact, I would argue that the rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage, especially in knowledge intensive industries.' It is this train of development that is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

**FIGURE 4.1** Competition and the learning organization



This emphasis on organizational learning was encouraged by Senge (1990) with *The Fifth Discipline* approach of personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, team learning and systems thinking, which incorporated the other four disciplines. Around the same time Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (1991) identified 11 characteristics of a learning company:

- 1 The learning approach to strategy.
- 2 Participative policy making.
- 3 Informating.
- 4 Formative accounting and control.
- 5 Internal exchange.

- 6 Reward flexibility.
- 7 Enabling structures.
- 8 Boundary workers as environmental scanners.
- 9 Inter-company learning.
- 10 Learning climate.
- 11 Self-development opportunities for all.

What is very clear for organizations is that change is ever present and this is a natural part of the economy. As Joseph Schumpeter (1950: 82) stated, 'Capitalism is by nature a form or method of economic change and not only never is but never can be stationary... This process of creative destruction is the essential fact about capitalism.'

### Resistance to change

Introducing change is often a complex and challenging process, with the result that it sometimes fails. This may of course be a result of poor planning and implementation; however, it can also be caused by resistance from individuals or groups for a range of reasons, some of which were identified by Plant (1995: 18):

|                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Fear of the unknown                  | Low-trust organizational climate |
| Lack of information                  | Poor relationships               |
| Misinformation                       | Fear of failure                  |
| Historical factors                   | Fear of looking stupid           |
| Threat to core skills and competence | Reluctance to experiment         |
| Threat to status                     | Custom bound                     |
| Threat to power base                 | Reluctance to let go             |
| No perceived benefits                | Strong peer group norms          |

One of the most powerful of these forces is fear, and it is not an easy emotion to overcome or influence, particularly if there is a lack of trust in the organization; however, fear must be overcome if progress is to be achieved. Often people prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't know and thus they tend to stay where they are unless the pain of staying there becomes too much or the future incentives become irresistible. The question is, 'How?' To address the challenge of fear, Schein (1994) introduced the notion of two types of anxiety.

- Anxiety One is 'the fear of learning something new' or 'the fear of changing, based on a fear of the unknown'.
- Anxiety Two is the fear that, with a rapidly changing world, people who do not adapt will fall behind.

By introducing these two types of fear Schein argued that to achieve movement the fear of not changing must outweigh the fear of change itself.

Another reason for change is that people can become mentally and physically exhausted if it happens too frequently. This is known as innovation fatigue and should be taken into consideration when choosing to introduce change.

## Failure of change initiatives

The failure rate for change management interventions is high and it is often said that two-thirds of interventions are, to some extent, unsuccessful. Yet, although this figure is commonly cited it is difficult to locate its original source; however, Hamlin, Keep and Ash (2001: 16) observed that, 'The management literature reports many examples of management failure in both the formulation and implementation of strategy, particularly strategies involving significant organizational change and development.' However, US basketball coach, John Wooden said, 'Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.'

### CASE STUDY

#### In practice: Agenda for change

Between 2004 and 2006 The National Health Service in England introduced the *Agenda for Change* programme (Department of Health, 1999), which was designed to reform and standardize pay and employment conditions for approximately 1.1 million employees across 54 professions plus administrative, maintenance, support and technical staff. With a pay bill of £28 billion and a wide variety of pay scales, terms and conditions, it was felt necessary to develop a standardized and consistent approach related to work undertaken and the knowledge and skills that were used.

NHS organizations were required to evaluate all jobs (consultants, doctors and dentists were subject to their own review) against the national NHS job profiles, and the job evaluation scores then specified the pay band for the posts. These job profiles, or job descriptions, enabled the introduction of a competency-based staff development framework known as the Knowledge and Skills Framework. Each post possessed a description of the knowledge and skills, which enabled employees to be annually reviewed and personal development plans agreed where skills gaps were identified.

A review of *Agenda for Change* by the National Audit Office (2009: 7) made a number of observations identifying both benefits and limitations. The ambitious deadline for completion was not achieved and it took a further six months before 99 per cent of staff were established on the new pay scales. The Knowledge and Skills Framework was also re-launched as a consequence of slow implementation and some managers felt that it was 'complex and burdensome'. Also, the productivity gains were difficult to measure because no measures were established when the changes were introduced. Additionally, the benefits of having a national system may be minimized as Foundation Trusts were granted greater freedom to implement local terms and conditions. More positively, it was felt that the new system was more fair and equitable, and it also enabled managers to estimate staffing costs. The NAO (2009: 8) concluded that, 'Agenda for Change cannot yet be shown to have enhanced value for money.'



## Organization development

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order.

(Nicolo Machiavelli (1513), *The Prince*)

Organizational/organization development (OD) has existed since at least the 1940s when it emerged largely as a human relations response to the scientific management principles advocated by the likes of Taylor (1911). Since then its fortunes have fluctuated and it currently appears to be in some form of crisis in the United States. Bradford and Burke (2005: 1) argued that leaders ought to make more use of OD, given the challenges that organizations face. Moreover, OD does not occupy executive responsibility and 'is either relegated to the lower ranks in the hierarchy or brought in periodically to "clean up problems"'. In contrast, there is growing recognition of OD in the UK, where it is increasingly being attached to HR and is illustrated by an increase in advertised jobs titled, for example, Director of HR and OD (Garrow, Varney and Lloyd, 2009). This linkage is also visible in Ulrich's (1997) original four roles of human resources: strategic partner, change agent, administrative expert and employee champion. Subsequently, Ulrich has suggested five roles: employee advocate, human capital developer, functional expert, strategic partner and HR leader (Arkin, 2007), thus making the position of change/OD more obscure.

The origins of the term organization development are unclear; however, it was used by McGregor and Beckhard in 1959 to describe an intervention by General Mills at Dewey Balch; and by Shepard and Blake at the Esso refinery in Bayway, New Jersey (Cheung-Judge and Holbeche, 2011). Perhaps, because OD is a field of practice and draws from many disciplines, it is not easy to provide a clear and widely accepted definition (Wirtenberg, Abrams and Ott, 2004). However, without some form of definition it becomes difficult to describe job roles and objectives and one of the earliest definitions was provided by Beckhard (1969: 9) and subsequently by others:

Organization development is an effort: (1) *planned* (2) *organization-wide* (3) *managed* from the *top* (4) to increase *organization effectiveness* and *health*, through (5) *planned interventions* in the organization's processes using *behavioural-science* knowledge.

A set of behavioural science-based theories, values, strategies, and techniques aimed at the planned change of organisational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organisational performance, through the alteration of organisational members' on-the-job behaviours.

(Porras and Robertson, 1992: 722)

Based on (1) a set of values, largely humanistic; (2) application of the behavioural sciences; and (3) open systems theory, organisation development is a systemwide process of planned change aimed toward improving overall organization effectiveness by way of enhanced congruence of such key organizational dimensions as external environment, mission, strategy, leadership, culture, structure, information and reward systems, and work policies and procedures.

(Bradford and Burke, 2005: 12)



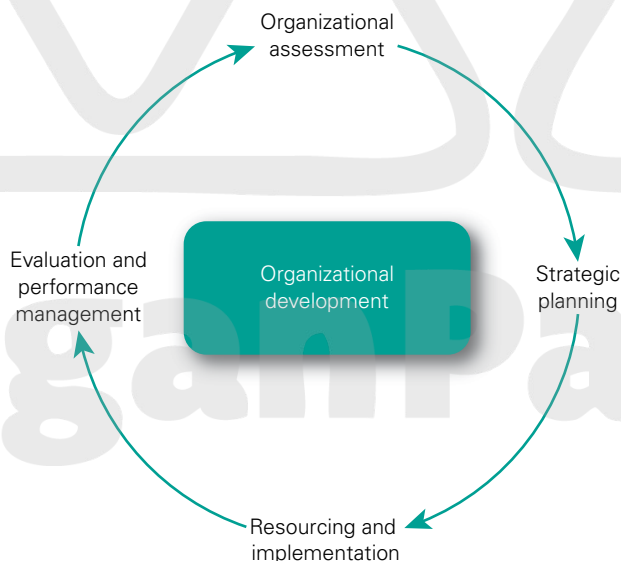
An investigation of OD that was conducted by Garrow, Varney and Lloyd (2009) among OD practitioners identified a number of findings:

- OD is a field of practice and not a functional discipline.
- OD is context dependent and may vary according to the organizational situation.
- OD has a relatively long history and is becoming more popular in the UK.
- OD is systematic but not formulaic and engineered.
- OD does not have a specific location within the organization and often operates across traditional boundaries.
- OD practitioners need to be able to work with contradicting and paradoxical situations.
- OD has similarities with strategic HR and few with operational HR.

### *The organization development cycle*

The organizational development cycle consists of a number of stages (Figure 4.2). Firstly, the internal or external OD consultant becomes involved with the potential project as a result of the client or owner of the project initiating contact: for example, a manager becoming dissatisfied with customer service levels and wishing to improve them. The next stage is to gather and analyse data in order to identify causes, effects and possible strategies. This information, possibly in the form of a report, is then presented to the client so that an agreed strategy can be agreed upon. It is not uncommon for this report to come back with very different findings and desired

**FIGURE 4.2** The organization development cycle



outcomes from those initially discussed. It is important at this stage to get agreement with the client and contract so that misunderstandings and agreements can be minimized before they become bigger issues later in the project. The intervention is then undertaken and should be continuously monitored so that refinements or even changes in direction can be introduced if necessary – always keep the client involved and informed about these adjustments. The project should be finally evaluated and a report produced, and the OD consultant then exits the process. In reality, often there is no finite end to projects because the interventions are likely to be ongoing; moreover, one project often throws up other issues that are in need of resolution and so the OD cycle begins once again.

### **The dark side of organization development**

Fads and fashions are among the biggest challenges facing OD specialists and training providers, often as a result of market demand with many customers wishing to purchase the latest tool or technique even though it may be unproven (Bunker, Alban and Lewicki, 2004). One classic example was the development of business process reengineering (BPR) by Davenport (1993) and Hammer and Champy (1993) which grew into a \$50 billion industry. The original principles were based upon technocratic systems analysis and organizational workflow, which were intended to start with a blank piece of paper and restructure organizations so that inefficiencies might be designed out. Hammer and Champy (1993: 2) loudly proclaimed that, ‘Business reengineering isn’t about fixing anything. Business reengineering means starting all over, starting from scratch. Business reengineering means putting aside much of the received wisdom of two hundred years of industrial management.’ And, on the book cover boldly stated, ‘Forget what you know about how business should work – most of it is wrong.’

Initially, BPR proved very popular with some organizations; however, they used it as a means to drastically reduce headcount, often in a ruthless fashion. The originators were somewhat dismayed by the way in which their theories had been misapplied and only a few years later they issued apologia for what had happened. Davenport’s (1995) *mea culpa* began, ‘Reengineering didn’t start out as a code word for mindless bloodshed. It wasn’t supposed to be the last gasp of Industrial Age management.’

However, the reality is that OD and change often involve making difficult decisions, and because payroll is often the biggest expense for an organization this is where cuts are commonly made. The challenge for OD is to behave and operate in an ethical manner, even if this is much harder in reality than in rhetoric. Swanson and Holton (2009: 289) warned, with regard to whole new systems interventions, that, ‘This is also where the dark side of OD is most evident. The tools of OD (and HRD) are powerful in directing, controlling, and manipulating human behaviour for negative, as well as positive ends. Using OD to get employees to accept unfair and exploitative policies and practices is rarely discussed.’ This is why the Code of Ethics for the OD Network is most valuable in providing a compass for the behaviour of OD and HRD agents.

Having discussed both change and organization development it can be seen that they are relatively similar in focus; however, there are some differences, which were described by Marshak (2005: 24). Respectively for change and OD, the emphasis

was outcomes vs process; methods were elite process vs participatory processes; the dominant values were economic vs humanistic; and, the management of change was engineering and directing vs facilitation and coaching.

## Leading change and organization development

To lead organization change and development requires a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Burke (2007) suggested that the critical skills needed for change leadership are: above average self-awareness; conceptual abilities; tolerance for ambiguity; high energy and enthusiasm; conflict management; and taking the heat.

One of the classic features of organizational development and change is that those change agents involved in the transformation process need to be light on their feet and to be able to alter direction and respond with alacrity. Quinn (2004: 65) emphasized the importance of fast learning when he stated in *Building the Bridge as You Walk On It*, 'What we know from past experience is an asset, but what leads to successful transformation is our capacity to learn in real-time. While knowledge is useful learning is essential.' Quinn also stressed the need for people to take responsibility and lead when they are involved with change processes.

Leading change requires a number of strategies, which should be selected according to the circumstances. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) suggested: education and communication, participation, facilitation and support, negotiation, manipulation and cooperation, and coercion. Later Kotter (1995) suggested an eight-step model of change:

- 1 Create urgency.
- 2 Form a powerful coalition.
- 3 Create of vision for change.
- 4 Communicate the vision.
- 5 Remove obstacles.
- 6 Achieve short-term wins.
- 7 Consolidate and build on the change.
- 8 Embed the changes in corporate culture.

## Strategies for change and organization development

Below we describe some strategies used by change and organization development agents:

### Action research

The term 'action research' is often credited to Kurt Lewin (1948: 202–3) who described it as, 'The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as

research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice.' His approach consisted of a series of spiral steps involving planning, action and evaluation.

### **Appreciative enquiry**

The concept of appreciative inquiry (AI) developed by Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008) consists of two main elements. The first, appreciation, acknowledges in a positive way things that happen and might happen in the organization. Its underlying principle is that although fear, anger and other negative emotions often drive change, they tend to focus attention too narrowly and decrease the potential to consider wider and possibly more relevant solutions. Instead, Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros propose that positive emotions encourage wider thinking processes and therefore potential opportunities.

The second element of appreciative enquiry is to ask questions in a positive and constructive manner. For example, instead of asking, 'Why do we keep getting poor customer service feedback?' the question should be positively restructured: 'How do we help our customers to have a fantastic experience?'

There are four stages to AI: Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny (Deliver). Sometimes, another stage, Define, is used at the beginning to provide a focus for the inquiry. Discovery involves finding and appreciating the key strengths of the organization. The Dream stage encourages individuals to draw out their dreams for themselves and for the future of the organization. Design involves agreeing a common future dream and the actions that are necessary to achieve this. Finally, Destiny requires people to plan and form action groups to start the movement towards change (Lewis, Passmore and Cantore, 2008).

### **Crises**

It can be argued that organizations go through a series of crises caused by the previous actions that have been taken (Greiner, 1972):

- Growth through creativity leads to leadership crisis.
- Growth through leadership leads to autonomy crisis.
- Growth through delegation leads to control crisis.
- Grow through collaboration leads to staff crisis.
- Growth through coordination leads to unknown crisis.

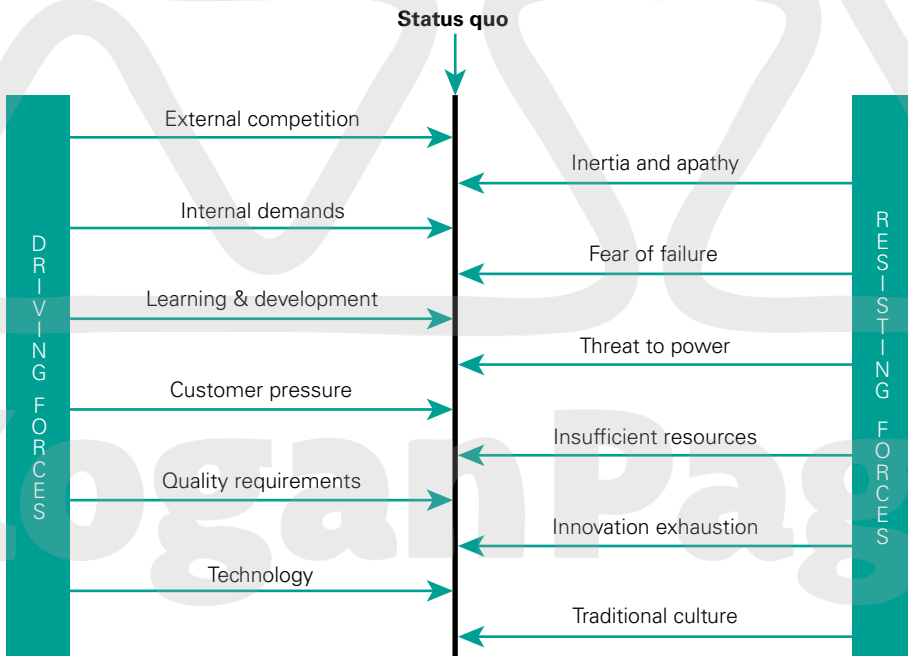
Crises are inflection points when the current ways of operating or seeing the world are no longer applicable. The Chinese character for 'crisis' consists of two characters representing danger and opportunity so, for example, economic crises are often used to drive forward initiatives that would not be considered during more stable times. As Rahm Emmanuel, the former White House Chief of Staff, said, 'Rule one: Never allow a crisis to go to waste. They are opportunities to do big things.'

The political arena is a classic illustration of change, with political parties vying to introduce their own agendas. This is particularly evident during election periods and the slogans adopted by opposing parties illustrate this desire to move from the present to a more desirable future. Examples include the United States (Barack Obama: ‘Change We Can Believe In’), and the UK (David Cameron: ‘Year for Change’; Nick Clegg: ‘Change for Real, Change for Good’).

### Force field analysis

Force field analysis (Figure 4.3) developed by Lewin (1951) involves a detailed consideration of the factors driving an organization forward and those that are restraining this momentum. In effect, this organization has reached a state of equilibrium or a status quo in which the forces driving the organization forward are balanced, somewhat, by those holding it back. Systematically identifying each of these factors allows them to be addressed in a coordinated fashion. Forward movement can be achieved by increasing the driving forces (for example with more personnel, more skilled people and so on) or by removal of resisting forces (by, for example, reducing fear or threats to power or status), or by a combination of both.

**FIGURE 4.3** Force field analysis

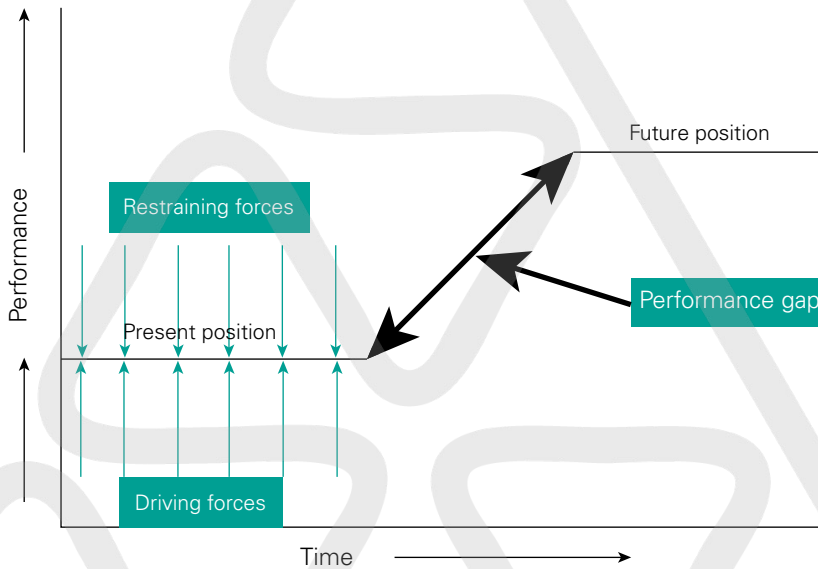


**SOURCE:** Lewin, 1951.

## Gap analysis

The gap analysis approach involves a consideration of where the organization is presently positioned and where it would like to be in the future. To overcome this performance gap and reach the future position the organization needs to implement new initiatives in order to break out from the current constraints that are holding it back (see Figure 4.4).

**FIGURE 4.4** Gap analysis and force field analysis



## Images of the organization

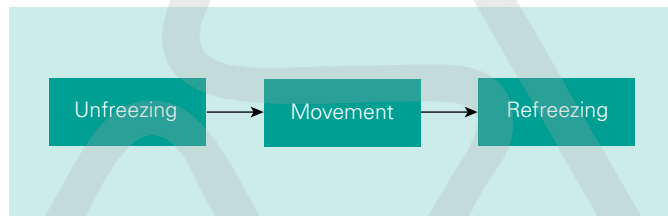
An influential book on change *Images of Organization* by Morgan (1997) described how we visualize organizations in different ways, and the way in which we do this influences how we will respond. For example, if we see the organization as a machine we will just replace a faulty part; if we consider the organization as an organism we might prune branches or feed and nurture the plant. Morgan described a number of images:

- a machine;
- an organism;
- a brain;
- a culture;
- a political system;
- a psychic prison;
- flux and transformation;
- an instrument of domination.

## Lewin's three-step model

One of the earliest attempts to model the change process was provided by Lewin, who suggested that the shape and structure of an organization was relatively fixed and that if it were to change it had to be unfrozen, moved and then refrozen in the new configuration (Figure 4.5). The problem with this interpretation was the assumption that organizations had a relatively permanent structure, which was relatively true in the 1950s; however, this is no longer the case.

**FIGURE 4.5** Lewin's three-step change model



## Open space technology

Open space technology is an approach developed by Owen (2008) to facilitate conferences, meetings and the like, using only a general rather than a formal agenda. Owen observed that much productive interaction at conferences and meetings often happened during the coffee breaks, even though this was not scheduled into the programme. He concluded that a self-organizing method might be more effective and constructed the open space approach, which begins with an open gathering. This is followed by people posting concerns and issues that they have (related to the general theme) on a bulletin board. Breakout groups are then formed in which issues are discussed, and people stay only as long as they have an interest and then go to other groups.

## Paradigm shift

A paradigm is a belief system that in science is based upon research findings. Individual research that is contrary to the paradigm is often ignored until additional findings eventually displace the original paradigm with a new one. This paradigm shift was described by Kuhn (1970); an example is the time it took for Newton's theories to be replaced by quantum theory at the sub-atomic level.

## PESTLE and SWOT

An effective and practical method for identifying the major factors that influence change and organizational development is to plot the issues on a grid. On one dimension the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors are considered. On this dimension the internal considerations of strengths and weaknesses are considered together with the external factors of opportunities and threats.



**FIGURE 4.6** PESTLE–SWOT grid

|   | P | E | S | T | L | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| O |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| T |   |   |   |   |   |   |

### Scenario planning

Having a clear plan of action is normally essential in order to increase the chance of success in change and organizational development. However, detailed planning is not always possible when the world frequently surprises us with ‘black swans’ or unpredictable events (Taleb, 2007). This difficulty – and often failure in strategic planning (Minzberg, 2000) – requires other considerations such as scenario planning to provide a variety of considerations and encourage thinking about how to help shape the future health of the organization. Scenario planning involves an analysis of the organization and some of the possible situations it might encounter in the future. The Mont Fleur scenarios were famously used in South Africa to facilitate the transition from apartheid (Kahane, 1996).

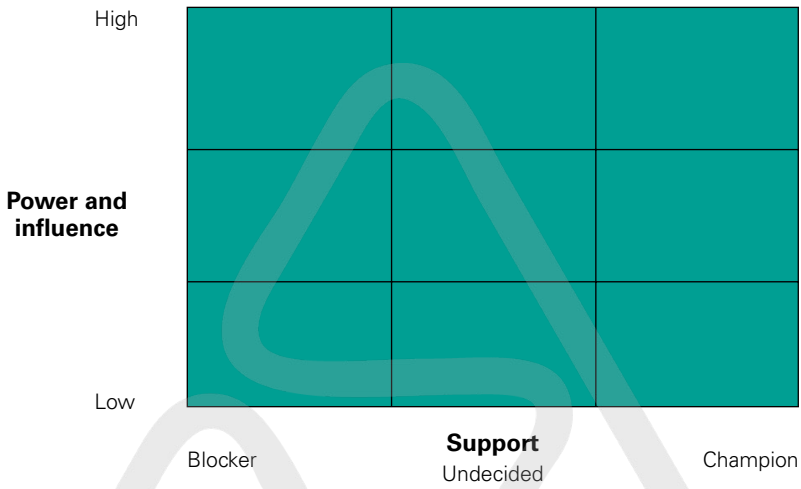
### Stakeholder analysis

An effective strategy for implementing change is to conduct a stakeholder analysis – a stakeholder is any person or group that has an interest in or might be affected by the change initiative. The approach should be to identify those who might resist or champion the changes and map them against the degree of influence they possess. Next, attempts should be made to involve them with the process, particularly those with influence and power.

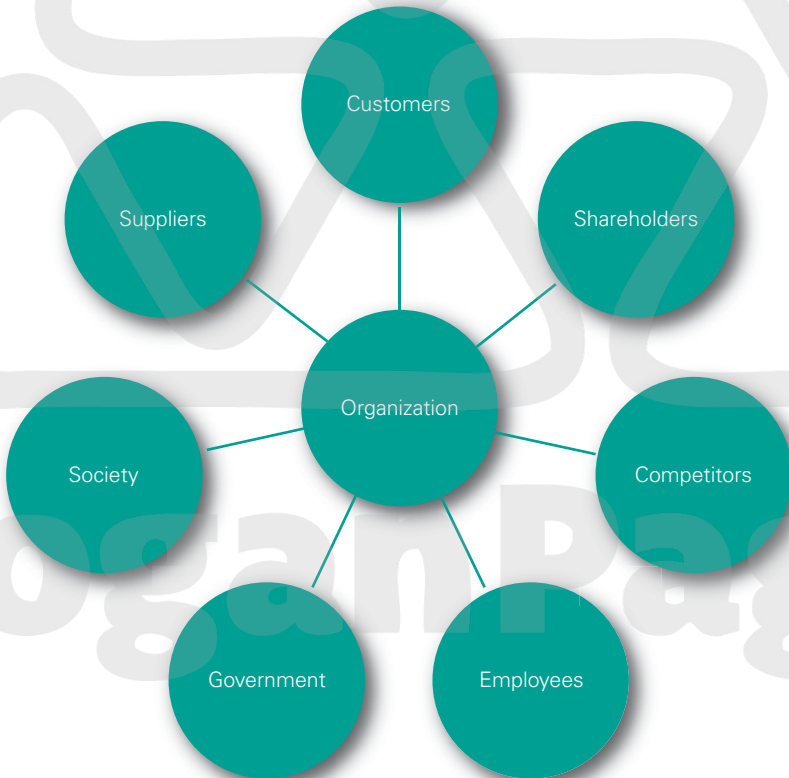
### Systems thinking

One of the earliest writers on systems theory was von Bertalanffy (1968), who drew attention to the necessity of considering the interaction of all parts of a system rather than applying a narrow focus. Similarly, Bradford and Burke (2005: 12) explained

**FIGURE 4.7** Stakeholder mapping



**FIGURE 4.8** Open systems stakeholders and competitors

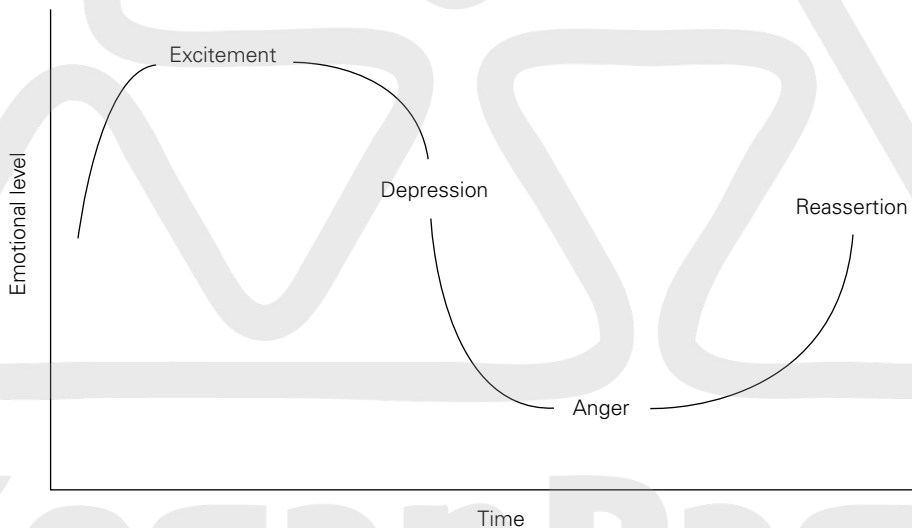


that OD involves a consideration of ‘open systems theory, organization development is a systemwide process of planned change’. In essence, it should involve a wide perspective and not solely involve tinkering in one area; nor should it purely involve a consideration of the organization in isolation but should examine the influence of external factors.

### The transitional cycle

Change for many people is not always a comfortable experience particularly when the disruption caused by moving from one situation to another challenges the person’s sense of self and meaning. As a consequence, a general model has emerged, the transitional cycle, which is often used to help people understand the process of personal change. The origins of this cycle are often attributed to the work of Kübler-Ross (1969), who described the stages of grieving that people undergo at the death of close family and friends: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Although she explained that this cycle did not explain everyone’s behaviour, it has since been used for a range of areas including cross-cultural adjustment, job change and new partners. A variant developed from Kübler-Ross’s analysis is shown in Figure 4.9.

**FIGURE 4.9** The transitional cycle



**SOURCE:** adapted from Kübler-Ross, 1969.

### Vision and mission

It is essential for all organizations to have a clear vision, mission and objectives because everyone needs to see the direction in which they are heading. The vision is a picture of what the organization will look like and the mission describes its

purpose. It is very difficult to introduce change because without a clear vision of what the future might be it is difficult to overcome the inertia and resistance in the organization.

## World Café

World Café is a learning and organizational change tool developed by Brown and Isaacs (2005). Essentially, it consists of a number of small discussion groups who discuss a topic for 20–25 minutes under the guidance of a chairperson. A rapporteur makes notes of the discussion and then presents these conclusions as a starting point for a group of new people to begin a fresh discussion. The participants do not move as a group but as individuals who must ensure that they take part in all the discussions.

## Conclusion

Achieving successful change and organization development is a challenging process that requires a broad range of knowledge and skills drawing from multiple disciplines. This change can be achieved by gently nudging people (Thaler and Sunstein, 2009) or sometimes by coercing them; the extent to which the change processes are effective depends on the situation, the perspectives of those involved and what the definition of effectiveness is! In essence, the main elements of the change and organization development process are illustrated in Figure 4.10.

**FIGURE 4.10** The change and organization development process



Writers such as Gladwell (2001) have also charted how systems can reach a tipping point in which an initial small movement can swiftly become a society-changing avalanche, as in the case of the adoption of fax machines or the reduction of crime in inner cities. An illustration of this gathering momentum can be seen in the fall of the Iron Curtain across eastern Europe in 1989 or the Arab spring in 2011. In effect, it might be considered to be an example of chaos theory or the butterfly effect, and is heartening for change and organizational agents who fear that they have little influence:

The flapping of a single butterfly's wing today produces a tiny change in the state of the atmosphere. Over a period of time, what the atmosphere actually does diverges from what it would have done. So, in a month's time, a tornado that would have devastated the Indonesian coast doesn't happen. Or maybe one that wasn't going to happen, does.

(Stewart, 1997: 141)

## Questions for reflection

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- Why are people, generally, so reluctant to change?
- Using Morgan's descriptions of the images of organizations, describe the type of organization you work in or study in.
- A company has been severely affected by the economic crisis; what learning or organization development intervention would you propose to the CEO?

## Further information sources

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The Organization Development Institute's Code of Ethics [http://www.theodinstitute.org/od-library/code\\_of\\_ethics.htm](http://www.theodinstitute.org/od-library/code_of_ethics.htm)

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# 05

# Knowledge management

**EDUARDO TOMÉ**

*An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.*

(BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC*)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- distinguish between data, information, knowledge and wisdom;
- distinguish between intellectual capital, human capital, relational capital and structural capital;
- understand the historical perspective of labour, knowledge and intellectual capital;
- understand and explain tacit and explicit knowledge;
- understand the relationship between knowledge management and human resource development.

## Introduction

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In the economic world of the 21st century there is little doubt that intellectual capital (human capital, such as people; structural capital, such as information systems, databases, processes; and relational capital, such as external links with customers and suppliers) is the main driver of success and prosperity in developed countries and high-performing organizations. Even if the concept of intangible assets (IA)

(non-monetary assets such as know-how knowledge) might be fuzzy, and even if the management of intangible assets might be considered extremely difficult and hazardous, there is little doubt about the importance of IA. Indeed the available data on company profits and gross domestic product per head (GDPph) show a close relationship between IA management and the levels of profits and GDPph.

However, that importance is matched, if not surpassed, by the number of different studies of the topic. Crucially, the huge number of similar and different studies is, for an outsider, more puzzling than it is illuminating. Indeed, organizations, policy makers and members of the public are engulfed by an increasing wave of studies on IA that tend to address very deeply a small part of the IA mosaic. In the end, the users of those studies may find the solution they searched for, but also may be even more confused than they were at the beginning of the search. Accordingly in this chapter, while addressing the KM question, we try to come to terms with the different perspectives that might be used to analyse intangible assets.

The chapter will be divided into four main sections: concepts, historical perspectives, the knowledge-management perspective on intangibles, and conclusions. In the first section we explain the concepts of knowledge, knowledge management, human resource development, intangible assets, and intellectual capital, and contrast them with one another. We also explain the difference between the analysis of management, economics and social policy and the KM analysis of IAs. In the second section we summarize the historical evolution of the conceptual analysis, in order to place KM in the correct historical frame. In the third section we explore the KM analysis of IAs by addressing the following topics: the knowledge cycle and the dimensions of knowledge, the benefits of KM, the actors on the KM stage and the strategies to implement KM. In the final section we present the conclusions, the limitations and the open questions.

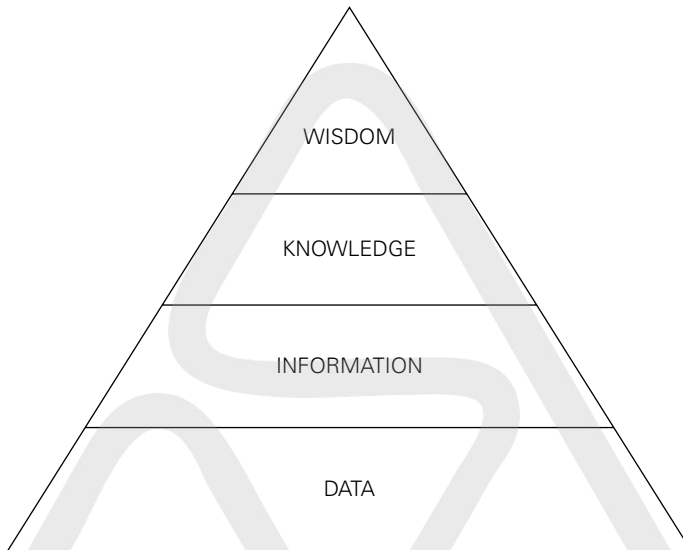
## Concepts

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### *Knowledge, data, information and wisdom*

At the core of the debate over knowledge management lies the problem of the definition of knowledge. ‘What is knowledge?’ is perhaps the most difficult question about KM. The question is extremely challenging, given that there are many other related notions like intelligence, talent, education, experience and competences that also deserve to be considered. The best way to define knowledge is to see it as a process that is related to the understanding of information, and information means organized data (Maurer, 1999). Data are cheap, information is expensive, and knowledge is very expensive. Knowledge is created when a dialogue happens in a certain context: the Ba. The context may be local, virtual or in the mind (Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

Quite crucially, knowledge has a value for individuals, organizations and societies. The consideration of knowledge as an asset with value is one of the dominant views in the literature. The use of knowledge may require some intuition; some authors define that correct use as wisdom (see Figure 5.1) (Wilson and Cattell, 2005).

**FIGURE 5.1** From data to wisdom: knowledge scale

**SOURCE:** Wilson and Cattell, 2005.

## Knowledge management

Knowledge management (KM) may be very succinctly described as an activity and as a science. As an activity, it includes all the efforts of people, organizations, regions and countries to organize and deal with the knowledge phenomenon. Accordingly, knowledge is classified (mainly as tacit and explicit, but also in other categories) and transformed during a cycle in which activities of transferring, sharing, renewing, unlearning, creating and stocking of knowledge are performed (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Importantly, for users (namely organizations) knowledge is not only an asset to be managed, but also one from which returns should be derived. Those returns may be perceived in the short run (profits, market share) or in the long run (employment, stability) (Stam, 2007; Stam, 2010). Therefore, knowledge may be audited and its needs assessed (Reinhardt, 2003). Accordingly, strategies should be defined to invest in knowledge and to change the organization (or the person or the region) according to those needs for knowledge (North, 2010).

As a science, KM includes all the efforts of scientists to understand the knowledge and the KM phenomenon. Indeed, an important part of the analysis of knowledge is made by scholars from other disciplines such as IT, psychology, education, HRD, management, economics, or even sociology and social policy. Therefore, we can distinguish between the KM analysis in the strict sense and other complementary approaches (Tomé, 2005a) (Table 5.1).

**TABLE 5.1** Two economic ways of considering knowledge

| Basic question                           | Asset and returns  | Market of knowledge and IC  |
|--|--|---|
| Variables analysed                       | Assets (stocks, flows)   | Demand, supply, price, quantity, equilibrium, state, private actors           |
| Outcomes analysed                        | Revenues (short-run)   | Returns (economic and non-economic, short and long-run)                       |
| Organizational perspective               | Company and organization-based; residual regions and countries | Microeconomic for companies and macroeconomic, for economic spaces            |
| Management perspective                   | Private business   | Private businesses and public policy  |
| Investment perspective                   | Investment in intangible assets                                | Investment in knowledge and IC  |
| Economic agents that might be interested | Managers and stakeholders also: own workers                    | Managers and policy makers also: voters, job-seekers, students, civil society |

Knowledge management is a relatively new area that needs to consider contributions from other disciplines when trying to examine questions such as:

- What is knowledge?
- How can knowledge be measured?
- What are the outcomes of knowledge?
- Who possesses knowledge?
- How can knowledge be audited?
- What is the best way to manage knowledge?

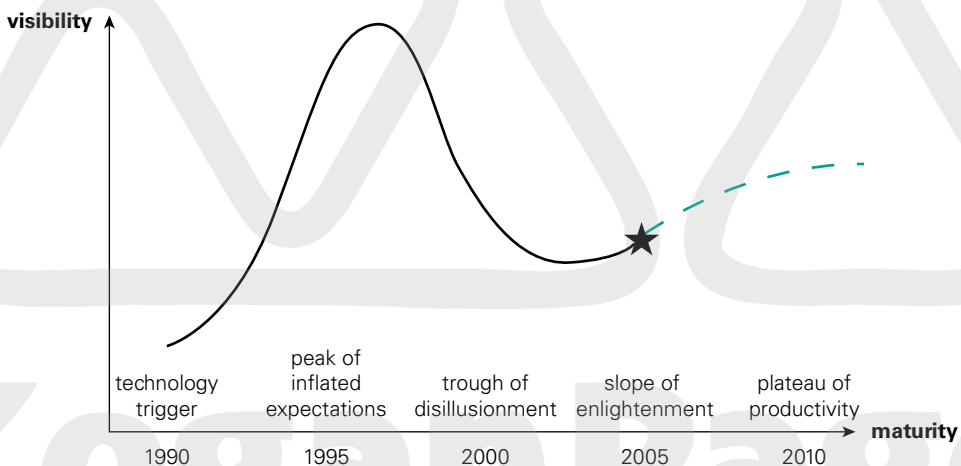
### ***Intellectual capital, human capital, relational capital, structural capital***

There is a very strong link between knowledge management and intellectual capital (IC), which involves two perspectives. First, people, organizations and societies that possess more IC also tend to manage more knowledge. Second, people, organizations

and societies that possess more knowledge also tend to have higher levels of each of the IC constituents. However, comparing knowledge with intellectual capital is like comparing oranges with apples. But in any case comparisons, and more importantly distinctions, have to be made, even if this is difficult. The first essential is to understand the conceptual origin of IC (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997; Sveiby, 1997). In fact IC encompasses the notion of human capital (HC), relational capital (RC) and structural capital (SC). By human capital we mean the characteristics of humans that may have an economic value, such as education, training and experience, but also talent or even beauty. Relational capital relates to the network of an individual or an organization; it also may include brands and relationships with clients. Structural capital comprises routines, databases, technology and other intangible assets that underpin the everyday life of organizations. It can be seen that IC, HC, RC and SC are related, but are different from knowledge, data, information or wisdom.

The second way to distinguish intellectual capital from knowledge is based on an organizational perspective. Intellectual capital appeared in the literature when it became clear that the tangible assets only explained the book value of companies but not their market value. Intellectual capital was the missing link between market value and book value. Again, this perspective is considerably different from the KM perspective. The KM perspective aims at capturing the evasive concept of knowledge and at managing according to the KM cycle (Figure 5.2), using strategies made by agents and trying to achieve particular outcomes.

**FIGURE 5.2** Knowledge management in the developed world: a historical perspective



**SOURCE:** Adapted from Fraunhofer, 2005.

Thirdly, from this perspective, IC is basically an asset, from which many returns may be derived and measured, for example by the balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1994). The IC asset can be measured as a stock and increased in value by investment in a manner similar to financial investments.

## ***The HRD perspective: competences, human resources, skills and learning***

Human resources are defined as the human characteristics that are embodied in humans and that may have economic relevance, like education, training, experience, talent, health and beauty. The economic returns that may be obtained from those characteristics are wages and employment (for workers), productivity and product quality (for companies), and income and exports (for countries).

Human resource development (HRD) is the activity by which human resources are improved. HRD has been analysed as having the following four interrelated functions: 1) organization development; 2) career development; 3) training and development; and 4) performance improvement (McGuire and Cseh, 2006; Wang and McLean, 2007; Abdullah, 2009).

Competences, skills and learning are the main concepts in the HRD literature related to knowledge, and this background was already well developed by the 1950s and 1960s. It is important to define these concepts in order to provide an analytical perspective of knowledge and KM. In the literature, 'competence' usually means 'something that someone does well'. It is a very important concept, and it may be related to knowledge, because in order to be competent the person has to have some specific knowledge; also, if someone acquires knowledge he or she becomes competent in some task. But 'competence' is different from 'knowledge' and the management of knowledge is different from the management of competences, even if the two phenomena interlink and can't fully be dissociated from each other. 'Skills' are usually considered to be certified abilities. An individual who is skilled must be very competent. And, in the scope of this paper, he or she should have much knowledge. But again, skills are different from competences and are different from knowledge. 'Learning' is the process by which individuals and organizations acquire knowledge and become competent. Therefore learning is a concept that sits at the boundary between HR and KM analysis.

One significant difference between HRD and KM, from an HR point of view, is that the focus is centred on the individual or at least on his or her place in the organization. From a KM point of view, what really matters is the knowledge the person has. In theory, at least, a person might leave the organization but if the knowledge remains there will be no problem from a KM point of view, although it can cause issues of trust between the organization and the employee.

In terms of evaluation procedures, the HR perspective aims at defining the direct reflection, and the impact of the experience on the learning and behaviour of the individual and on the outcome for the company (Kirkpatrick, 1959). This perspective is different from that used in KM.

## ***The economics perspective: market or asset?***

Knowledge is both an asset and a good for which there is a market (Table 5.1), and it is important to note that knowledge is more of an economic good than an asset. As an economic good, knowledge can be sold by suppliers and bought by consumers. The price of knowledge represents the amount of monetary units that a purchaser is willing to pay for an extra unit. For a transaction to take place, it requires the value perceived by the purchaser for an extra unit of knowledge to be equal to the value the provider places on that knowledge unit.

In the knowledge market, the price of a unit of knowledge may be funded by the individual or the organization, or it may also be supported by the state. The state's presence in the KM market may relate to production, provision, funding or legislation, and the state presence in the KM market may be explained by concerns over market failures and government failures (Le Grand, Propper and Smith, 2008). In any case, the quantity purchased and sold in the market should be analysed in measurable units. From a rational point of view, both the purchaser and the seller should only buy and sell knowledge if the benefits outweigh the costs. From the buyer's perspective the investment will only be made if the benefits are bigger than the costs. This simple concept provides the basis for the economic analysis of the knowledge cycle (Table 5.2). This is important for organizations because knowledge has to be managed and to generate returns. Finally, the economic analysis of knowledge may be undertaken from personal, organizational, microeconomic and macroeconomic dimensions. An extended version of the market model for national knowledge markets and knowledge companies is presented in Table 5.2.

### ***'Money for nothing': the traditional management and accountancy perspective***

For managers, 'knowledge' is justified if it is profitable, and this depends on the balance, in money terms, between the benefits and the costs of the investment in knowledge. This perspective is considerably more immediate and narrow than the IC perspective explained earlier. The evaluation method to be used is based on the return-on-assets methodology (Fitz-enz, 2000).

### ***Social policy, public good and knowledge***

It is often forgotten that investments in knowledge have a very deep public policy meaning. That meaning results from a market failures versus public failures analysis. The public presence is also very considerable due to the huge public investments made by the European Union (in the Lisbon Strategy) and the United States (in the training programmes funded by the American Federal Government (Tomé, 2005b). The evaluation of those operations is often assessed through the evaluation of socio-economic development results (EC, 2010). When results are measured, the evaluation is based on financial or physical data, accounting for the money spent or the number of people involved.

## ***Summary***

Two very important messages may be derived from this section:

- Knowledge is a very complex concept that must not be confused with other related concepts, such as HR, IC, IA, competences, skills and learning.
- Knowledge management is also one of the approaches that might be used to analyse intangible assets. Other approaches are HRD, intellectual capital, economics, management and social policy. A summary of these approaches is included in Table 5.3.



**TABLE 5.2** Variables analysed and their proxies in an extended model of knowledge

| Element            | National knowledge markets                            |  | Knowledge market in companies                         |   |
|--------------------|---|--|---|---|
|                    | Meaning   | Relevant indicator   | Meaning   | Relevant indicator  |
| <b>Supply</b>      | Production of knowledge                               | Average years of schooling; life expectancy; housing with commodities; number of researchers in R&D        | Production of knowledge                               | Production of knowledge by the company according to a predefined grid |
| <b>Demand</b>      | Use of or desire for IC by organizations              | Number of workers in knowledge-intensive sectors; knowledge intensity of the labour force                  | Desire for knowledge                                  | Priority of knowledge as defined by the grid                          |
| <b>Equilibrium</b> | Relationship between supply and demand of knowledge   | Joint analysis of national values of supply and demand in the country                                      | Relation between supply and demand of knowledge       | Relation between supply and demand for all components of the grid     |
| <b>Need</b>        | Benchmark to developed countries                      | Gap between the national levels of supply and demand and those of the most developed countries at the time | Relationship between priority and investment          | Priority minus investment of a grid of components                     |
| <b>Investment</b>  | Expenses in knowledge                                 | % of GDP spent in education and R&D; expenditures per capita in health                                     | Actions made to develop knowledge                     | Investment on a grid of components of knowledge                       |
| <b>Flow</b>        | International migrations of knowledge                 | Inflow and outflow of human and non-human IC   | New recruits minus personnel who have left            | Inflows minus outflows of knowledge using a grid of indicators        |
| <b>Stock</b>       | Actual level of knowledge constituents in the country | Actual level of human and non-human knowledge in the country   | Actual level of knowledge of the company              | Actual level of knowledge defined by a grid                           |
| <b>Return</b>      | Social impact of knowledge investments                | Evolution of wages, productivity, product exports, GDP   | Impact of knowledge after subtracting investment cost | Comparison of company outcomes 'before-after'                         |

**TABLE 5.3** Scientific approaches to knowledge

| Perspective                | User                                      | Problem  | Variables  | Assessment methods  | Main authors   |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Social policy              | Public administrator                      | Public good  | Expenses, number of supported persons  | Progress reports  | EC (2010)  |
| HR economics               | Human resource economist (micro or macro) | Market or asset. Impacts on individuals, organizations or on the society | Supply–demand price quantity. Wages, employment, productivity. Exports. Income | Micro: Control group input–output methods. Macro: Supply and demand methods. Input Output | Becker, 1993<br>Ashton and Green, 1996<br>Snower, 1996<br>Stevens, 1996<br>Heckman, Lalonde and Smith, 1999              |
| Management/ Accountability | Private manager. Traditional accountant   | Impact on the organization   | Profits  | Return on investment (ROI)  | Fitz-enz, 2000   |
| HRD science                | HRD expert                                | Impact for the agents involved   | Reaction Competences/ learning behaviour, company outcomes                     | <i>Interviews, questionnaire, participant–observer</i>                                    | Kirkpatrick, 1959  |
| Intellectual capital       | New accountants                           | Impacts on the organization  | Asset Return of the asset: Market value minus book value                       | Balanced scorecard; Skandia navigator; Tobin Q; Public VAIC                               | Kaplan and Norton, 1994<br>Edvinsson and Malone, 1997<br>Tobin, 1969<br>Pulic, 2000                                      |
| Knowledge management       | Knowledge manager                         | Impacts on the organization  | Knowledge and the knowledge cycle  | Knowledge sharing, transfer, creation, renewal dynamics, learning and unlearning          | Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995<br>Andriessen, 2008<br>Kianto, 2007<br>Cegarra Navarro and Rodrigo Moya, 2005<br>Edwards, 2010 |

## Historical perspective

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### *From labour to knowledge and intellectual capital, through human resources*

The emergence of KM as a globally important economic factor would seem to have occurred around the time when industrialized economies began to be replaced by service industries. To understand how we got to this stage it is important to understand the role of KM in society.

Knowledge has been the decisive tool of human survival and the basis of all the human civilizations. Museums, books and the world wide web celebrate and promote human knowledge; however, the concept of knowledge management only became influential in literature during the 1990s. Until then, the emphasis had been on the labour force (in the 19th century) or human resources (in the 20th century). Adam Smith and the other classical economists considered that knowledge was related to skills and competences, but at the time most of the labour force was unskilled (Smith, 1977). And, when Karl Marx made his analysis of capitalism, in fact, he was addressing the question of the exploitation of people who possessed almost no knowledge of value to company owners (Marx, 2008).

So, many decades before knowledge was considered to be the decisive asset in society, its existence, use and reward was already fundamental. An underlying recognition of knowledge existed in the first decades of the 20th century, when focus turned to the skills and competences needed for each worker and organization (Taylor, 2003; Mayo, 1933). Even after the Second World War, when the fields of human resource management and human resource economics became pre-eminent (Schultz, 1961; Kirkpatrick, 1959), the focus of the analysis was still related to skills and competences, and not to knowledge. Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s human resources investments were already considered to be a pillar of the societies in the developed world.

Surprisingly, knowledge only became prominent in the academic world and in society with the Third Industrial Revolution. This change implied new types of competences and skills and, with the appearance of the new technologies, data, information and knowledge became decisive company assets for which new theories had to be built (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Also, intangible assets, namely routines, brands, technology, and human resources, became central to successful organizations (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997).

In the last 10 years, hundreds of empirical studies and models of KM have been undertaken, using at least the six approaches we described. KM is no longer a buzzword but it is still a problem (Maier, 2011). However, this has not prevented emerging nations from embracing it with enthusiasm (Kianto, Andreeva and Shi, 2011) and, during the last decade, Brazil, Russia, India and China have become decisive economic powers through massive investments in knowledge (see Chapter 9).

Finally, it might be said that KM is already in its third evolutionary phase. In the first phase, (KM1) in the 1980s and early 1990s, technology was the main concern. Then, with the new century, in KM2, people became the key focus. And in the last few years, in KM3, processes are the essential topic (Edwards, 2010).

## Summary

The unskilled labour force of the 19th century was replaced by the valuable human resources of the 20th. Then, suddenly, knowledge and intellectual capital became valuable assets, subjected to their own analysis. Today, all the different approaches coexist. Moreover, the KM phase 1 (dominated by technology), was replaced by phase 2 (people-centred), and then phase 3 (in which processes are the main concern). The evolution continues.

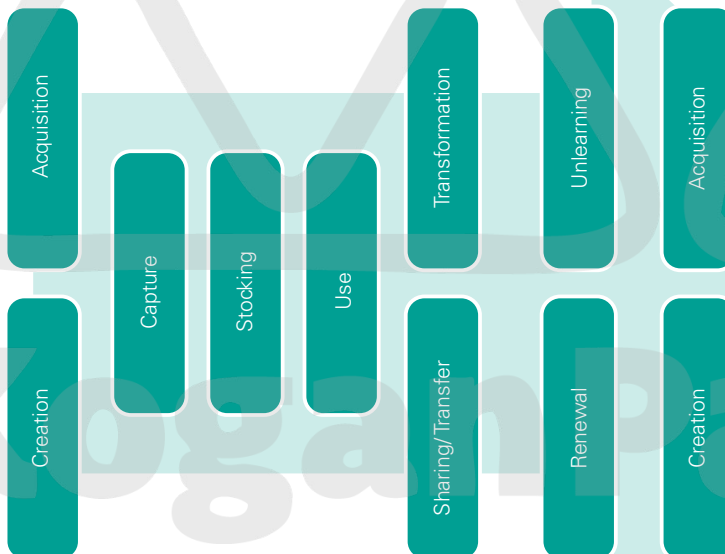
## The knowledge-management perspective on intangibles

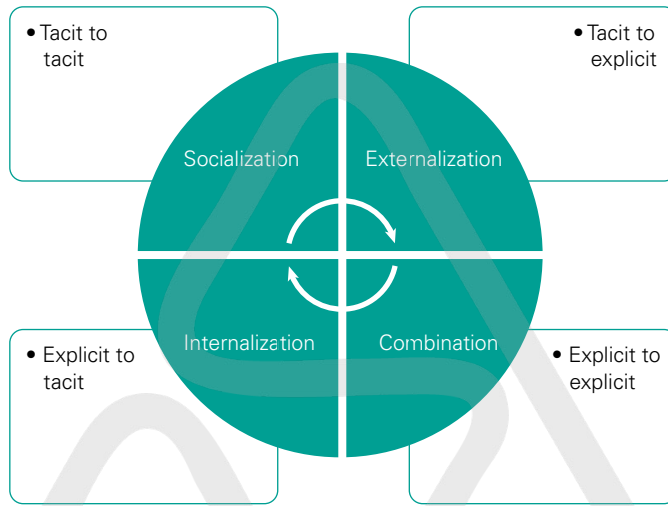
### Fundamentals

#### The knowledge cycle

The most important fact in the analysis of knowledge is to consider its existence as a cycle. This cycle exists within the company. The most important phases of the knowledge cycle are described in Figure 5.3.

**FIGURE 5.3** Main steps in the knowledge cycle



**FIGURE 5.4** The knowledge cycle

**SOURCE:** adapted from Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995.

The best-known version of the knowledge cycle is based on Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) SECI model, shown in Figure 5.4. It consists of four stages:

- 1 *From tacit to tacit (socialization)* – a master sharing knowledge with an apprentice. Nonaka and Takeuchi suggested that this is a form of 'socialization' that is a limited form of knowledge, since neither the master nor the apprentice have a full understanding of their craft knowledge. Moreover this tacit or hidden knowledge cannot be shared easily throughout the organization.
- 2 *From tacit to explicit (articulation)* – people often internalize what they do and how they operate. When they can articulate their tacit knowledge, it becomes explicit and can be communicated to others.
- 3 *From explicit to explicit (combination)* – in this case a person can combine different pieces of explicit knowledge. For example a finance director combines various sources of financial information in a financial report.
- 4 *From explicit to tacit (internalization)* – as explicit knowledge is shared throughout an organization it becomes internalized and so becomes tacit.

These stages from socialization to articulation to combination to internalization are in effect a spiral of knowledge, which in a successful learning organization should be a continuous and reinforcing process.

### Dimensions of knowledge

Strongly related to the notion of the knowledge cycle are a range of classifications describing different knowledge perspectives, which are presented in Table 5.4.

**TABLE 5.4** Main dimensions of knowledge

| Element of classification | Types of knowledge  | Author                             |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Capture                   | Explicit versus tacit   | Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995          |
| Value                     | Valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, no substitution                         | Barney, 1991                       |
| Time                      | Already acquired, just in time, just in case, latent                          | Murdoch, 2002                      |
| Individual                | Subjective, transferable, embedded, self-reinforcing, perishable, spontaneous | Kluge, Stein and Licht, 2001       |
| Possession                | Embodied, embedded, embrained, encultured, encoded                            | Blackler, Crump and McDonald, 1998 |

Tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge are the two most important categories, and are contrasted in Table 5.5.

### Methodologies of measurement

There are basically two ways of measuring knowledge: the direct and the indirect. Using the direct approach, an organization or an individual is questioned using a Likert Scale about its knowledge. Using the indirect method, proxies of knowledge are measured, which include the constituents of intellectual capital: that is, human, relational and organizational capital (Skyrme, 2008). Companies and organizations have huge difficulties in accounting for and evaluating their investment in knowledge (Meritum, 2002; Bornemann and Alwert, 2007); and the situation is even more difficult for countries and regions (World Bank Institute, 2008).

### What do we gain from knowledge? Knowledge, productivity and competitive advantage

How we define, measure, control and appropriate the benefits derived from knowledge, and how we compare it with the costs of the investment, are probably the most important questions about KM. At least from a managerial and economic point of view, this is of paramount importance. It is said that once a KM client doubts the value of KM, the work of the KM consultant is significantly jeopardized. In the competitive world of today, companies or organizations need to have one of three assets: knowledge and organization, cheap labour and/or natural resources. Out of these three, knowledge is without doubt the only one that can be maintained in the long

**TABLE 5.5** Tacit and explicit knowledge

| Tacit   | Explicit                     |
|---|------------------------------|
| Personal  | Codified                     |
| Private   | Shared                       |
| Exists in people's minds  | Available to everyone        |
| Unique  | Systematic                   |
| Hard to formalize   | Formal                       |
| Difficult to communicate  | Articulated and communicable |
| Generated through experience                                    | Captured                     |
| Acquired on the job   |                              |
| Unarticulated mental models held by an individual               |                              |
| Specific to particular contexts                                 |                              |
| Can develop through social learning and socialization processes |                              |

run. Therefore knowledge is the source for long-term competitive advantage and is a key resource and crucial field of investment in today's business organizations (Neumann and Tomé, 2010).

Knowledge is certainly a factor in productivity, and is also linked with innovation. However, recent studies assume that it is impossible to define the precise effect knowledge has in organizations, and therefore 'knowledge productivity' has to be defined as the volume of incremental or radical innovation that is derived from the investment in knowledge (Stam, 2007).

Knowledge benefits may be defined as financial, organizational, human and process-based; the simple evolution of the cycle of knowledge may also be considered one of the benefits of the investment in knowledge. Knowledge costs are essentially measured in money and also in time, and the investment in knowledge may be measured using proxies. Neumann and Tomé (2005) identified 16 proxies to which the investment in knowledge can be measured, and for which costs exist: formal training; informal training; self training; hiring of consultants; communities of practices; meetings with labour psychologists; R&D activities; innovation practices; practices related to



creativity; meetings with invited experts; participation in workshops, conferences and congresses; study visits to other companies, laboratories or cultural sights; study of best practices; participation in external networks of knowledge transfer; establishment of internal networks of knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer; development of informal social networks.

Most of the analysis is made for companies, but in a regional or macroeconomic scope knowledge is assumed to have positive influences that should imply public policies (Bonfour and Edvinsson, 2005). The market for knowledge may be competitive, but some authors have recently suggested that imperfect competition and oligopoly exist. This lack of competitiveness might be a consequence of increasing returns to scale in the knowledge investment (Stam, 2010).

### **Actors on the knowledge stage**

Even if most of the analysis of KM relates to private companies, some other actors exist in the KM world. First and foremost ‘knowledge workers’ (Drucker, 1993, 1998). These people must work with high productivity in the challenging world of the 21st century and possess a number of qualities: liberty, creativity, responsibility, quality of work and quality of service.

Also, in the developed world many non-profit organizations, such as hospitals, universities and municipalities, have been subjected to KM analysis. The analysis of SMEs has been more rare, a fact that is explained by those companies having less scope to fund large surveys on KM. Finally, encouraged by the World Bank (World Bank, 2008) and with the support of very well-known authors (Bonfour and Edvinsson, 2005), knowledge analysis has been applied to regions and countries by extending the intellectual capital/balanced scorecard framework.

### **Strategies for change within KM**

The future of any company or organization is more important than its past, and KM, essentially, must be seen as a factor of change. One of the ways of directing change is to compare the existing level of knowledge with the desired one. Then, using a grid to define each kind of knowledge, audits may be performed. A deficit between the current level of the asset and the desired level will indicate where further investment is justified; otherwise investment should not be made (Reinhardt, 2003).

Furthermore, knowledge is a dynamic not a static resource, due to rapid changes in the economic environment (Kianto, 2008). Yet the question of how to best make use of knowledge as a resource still remains insufficiently answered. To overcome this, knowledge management needs to be seen as a supporting service addressing a company’s personnel, organization and IT. And any knowledge-management activity and knowledge investment must aim to purposefully intervene in a company’s business processes. For this, companies require comprehensive knowledge and in-depth understanding of how to implement KM methods in a customized way. In order to provide companies with specific information and help to manage their human resources, select technology or change the organizational structure, the role of knowledge in business organizations needs to be investigated and assessed further.

Knowledge needs to be both learnt and unlearnt (Cegarra Navarro and Rodrigo Moya, 2005). And, in order to address the competition, people and organizations have to adapt by unlearning old behaviours and learning new ones. Increasingly, this concept is merging with HRD and is also becoming of major importance in the KM arena.

Given the increasing concern with KM processes, trust has also become a major issue (Blomqvist, 1998; Blomqvist and Stahle, 2000). It is not only the problem of sharing your knowledge with a boss, who can therefore fire you, that is at stake. It is also the possibility of surviving in any organization without cooperating with colleagues, and therefore being obliged to trust them and to share and transfer knowledge with and to them.

Finally KM organization comes down to defining the right strategies (North, 2010) and to defining the best KM systems (Maier, 2010).

## Summary

Different types of knowledge exist within the knowledge cycle. Measuring knowledge is the first difficult task, and knowledge matters because it generates positive impacts. Knowledge is possessed by persons, companies, organizations and countries, and each of those agents wants knowledge to change from the present situation to a future one; therefore knowledge strategies and knowledge systems are fundamental management questions.

## Conclusion

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KM is a central scientific field and area of practice in the economy at the beginning of the 21st century. It emerged due to economic changes and its consolidation was also a consequence of the increasing contribution of knowledge to the economic success of countries and organizations. KM became a scientific field parallel to already existing ones like economics, management and social policy, and to other new ones like intellectual capital. Although some scepticism exists, particularly in developed countries, about the validity of KM as the engine of a company, in the developing world intellectual capital is seen as a tremendous tool of enrichment.

## Limitations

There are too many methods, derived from too many perspectives, which have created a maze around KM that in itself is sometimes confusing and misleading.

## Suggestions for further research

The possibility of developing a 'knowledge clinic' that contains concepts, methods, tools, KM theory, implementation, operation and evaluation, and knowledge-based change processes is appealing (Neumann and Tomé, 2011). To achieve this would

require an infrastructure and environment to be designed through the use of an interactive portal. The ultimate aim of the knowledge clinic would be to analyse company/organization needs for support in dealing with knowledge and designing individual knowledge-based change processes.

## Questions for reflection

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- Is knowledge enough to help organizations succeed in the global economy?
- What tacit knowledge do you possess and how might you make it explicit so that others can share it?
- How can we measure the value of knowledge in an organization?

## Further information sources

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European Conference on Knowledge Management

International Conference on Knowledge Management

*Journal of Knowledge Management*: [www.emeraldinsight.com/jkm.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/jkm.htm)

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PART THREE

**National and  
international learning,  
education, training  
and human resource  
development**

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# 06

## National systems of education

JOHN P WILSON

*(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be accessible to all on the basis of merit.*

*(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*

*(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. (UN (1948) DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: ARTICLE 26)*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- be familiar with the driving forces for education;
- understand the economic, social and health reasons for education;
- understand why the World Bank has expanded the concept of 'education system';
- understand why countries are benchmarking their education systems and becoming more competitive;
- appreciate the social benefits of education and not just the economic ones;
- recognize that educational systems have difficulties delivering equality of educational opportunity.

## Introduction

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Approximately US\$2 trillion is spent annually on public education throughout the world, making it one of the largest areas of spending by governments along with health, infrastructure and defence (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). This significant investment in education occurs for a number of reasons, including economic, social and health goals. As has been discussed in several places in this book, the integrated nature of education, training and human development provide the foundation stone on which most other forms of development can occur. It is strongly recommended that the chapters on vocational education and training (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10) and human capital development (Chapter 11) are read in conjunction with this one.

We begin with a consideration of the nature of education systems and then describe how the UK's education system has developed. This is then followed by a consideration of the human right to receive education, and an examination of how countries are increasingly obsessed about educational performance because of its impact on economic productivity. Finally, we consider the social benefits of education and the challenges of attempting to provide equality of educational opportunity.

## Education systems

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Many people, when asked to describe what is meant by an education system, will refer to schools, further education and higher education. However, this is a relatively narrow focus when we consider the development of all the human capital potential of a nation. This book incorporates educational systems within the scope of human resource development, and the World Bank (2011b: 4) has taken a similarly broad perspective:

'education system' includes the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether they are provided or financed by the public or private sector (including religious, non-profit, and for-profit organizations). It includes formal and nonformal programmes, plus the full range of beneficiaries of and stakeholders in these programmes – teachers, trainers, administrators, employees, students and their families, and employers. It also includes the rules, policies, and accountability mechanisms that bind an education system together, as well as the resources and financing mechanisms that sustain it.

## A brief history of UK education

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Education systems are rarely, if ever, designed from the beginning; instead they mostly represent piecemeal responses to specific needs that slowly grow and evolve. Over time, the individual initiatives tend to coalesce in a process of coordination, compromise and confusion as they jostle, negotiate and fight for particular objectives and limited resources. Therefore, the shape of our current education and training

systems is due to historical and cultural factors, and to provide a context and understand this development we will take a closer look at the historical development of education in the UK.

The brains of human beings are designed as learning machines and it is reasonable to assume that people have been learning from very early times just by observing others through social learning (Bandura, 1977) and through the trial and error of experiential learning (Beard and Wilson, 2006). These forms of learning tended to be informal and mostly ad hoc, but gradually education became more formalized and was largely associated with the church. In the British Isles, the main centres of learning were in the monasteries and ecclesiastical centres, and one of the earliest was the monastery and school founded in Wales by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I in the 4th century and re-established in the 6th century by Illtud (Jones and Roderick, 2003). In Scotland, St Ninian's work in the 4th century provided the foundations for St Columba, who travelled from Ireland in 563 and is credited with starting Scottish education. Around 700, in north-east England, St Bede wrote books on many subjects, including history, science and theology, some of which were used in the classroom, and many of these activities were later extended by St Augustine.

The earliest grammar schools, *scholae grammaticales*, taught Latin and were also associated with the church; these included the King's School, Canterbury (597), and the King's School, Rochester (604). Slowly, other languages such as Greek and English were introduced but the curriculum remained narrow until pressure for more practical subjects resulted in the Grammar School Act of 1840.

The first indications of state intervention in education were the writings of King Alfred in the 9th century, who decreed, 'that every youth now in England that is free-born and has wealth enough, be set to learn, as long as he is not fit for any other occupation, till they know well how to read English writing; and let them be afterwards taught in the Latin tongue, who are to continue learning, and to be promoted to a higher rank' (Green, 1883: 160). Later, state sovereignty over some aspects of education was incorporated within Henry II's Articles of Clarendon, 1164, which stated that, 'The sons of tenants in villianage, ought not to be ordained without consent of the lord on whose lands they were born' (De Montmorency, 1902: 32).

The first universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were respectively established in the 12th and 13th centuries and were largely associated with the church. In Scotland, Aberdeen, Glasgow and St Andrew's were established in the 15th century, and the university extension movement in the late 1800s encouraged the founding of a wave of civic universities, including Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield. During the 1960s two more groups of universities came into existence, including East Anglia, Kent, Sussex, Warwick and York, and the Colleges of Advanced Technology, which were given university status. In 1992, more than 30 universities were established when the status of polytechnics was changed.

The Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century resulted in the closure of their schools and the end of most monastic scholasticism. Furthermore, their charitable works ended and left many impoverished people with little support. To address this, a number of Poor Law Acts, beginning in 1601, provided a variety of measures such as workhouses, to support the poor and destitute. These were complemented by charitable support from individuals and voluntary groups, which began to provide asylums and houses of refuge.

However, there was soon recognition that the provision of shelter and accommodation for the poor often created a dependency culture. In the workhouses, many of the tasks were menial and didn't develop the skills necessary for people to support themselves over the longer term. Furthermore, dependent children became institutionalized, thus creating the conditions for intergenerational poverty. As a result, many institutions educated and trained the children and adults in their care, and also taught skills by creating hospital schools, houses of industry, houses of occupations and industrial schools.

With virtually no state provision for adult education, many voluntary organizations and societies emerged in the later part of the 1700s and during the 1800s, driven by curiosity and a desire for self-improvement. A number of groups filled the vacuum, including library societies, mechanics institutes and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Numerous societies were also founded, including the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1831), now the British Science Association, and the Society of Arts (1754), which became the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. The RSA encouraged the Great Exhibition of 1851, which provided a financial legacy helping to endow the museums in South Kensington and led to the establishment of the Department of Practical Art a year later.

In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1760), Adam Smith argued that children should 'read', 'write' and 'account' in order to support economic progress. Another of Smith's ideas influenced education, with Sir Thomas Bernard, a founder of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, describing mass schooling as 'the division of labour applied to intellectual purposes'; he noted that 'the principle in schools and manufactories is the same' (Armytage, 1964: 90). This large-scale teaching of the poor was achieved through the monitorial systems of Bell and Lancaster, in which a schoolmaster instructed the whole school in one large hall and this was then repeated through monitors (older, more educated children) supervising smaller groups of children.

The most common schools in the early 1800s were adventure schools (schools for commercial gain set up by adventurers – that is, entrepreneurs) and dame schools, which provided a living for their owners through school fees. The classes were often held in the living room of the dame's house and the quality of education was poor, with many of the dames being barely literate.

## State intervention in early UK education

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In 1833, the Lords of the Treasury began making small grants towards the cost of building schools. These funds were distributed through the British and Foreign School Society and the National School Society, and in order to supervise and inspect the use of these funds the Committee of the Privy Council on Education was established in 1839.

Many of the early schools not only taught the elementary subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic but also included housekeeping and laundry for the girls and cottage gardening and animal husbandry for the boys. These vocational subjects

tended to diminish, particularly after the Education Department's 1862 Code of Regulations introduced 'payment by results', with HM Inspectors testing the performance of children only in the required elementary subjects. However, a relaxation of the 1880 Code allowed school managers to extend the curriculum for older children to include mechanics, animal physiology, physical geography, botany and domestic economy.

The attention of the Education Department was on the elementary subjects, and so the Department of the Privy Council for Trade established the Department of Practical Art in 1852 to provide skilled artisans to support industry and commerce. The Department for Practical Art became the Science and Art Department in 1853 and, until its full merger with the Education Department in 1899, it provided encouragement and financial assistance to encourage the teaching of art and design related to manufacturing, and the teaching of science, technology and other practical subjects. Since these times, departmental control of education and skills training has fluctuated between combined and separate responsibility; for example in Wales this is the combined responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills, and in England of the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Even during the 19th century educational practices tended to diffuse between nations, examples being Pestalozzi's educational theories and Fellenburg's industrial schools. In addition, educationalists such as Froebel and Montessori established schools in the British Isles.

As the 19th century progressed an increasing number of voices were heard advocating the provision of universal public education. The arguments were expressed for social, religious, economic and even military reasons; for example, the discipline of German conscripts in the Franco-Prussian war was attributed to prior schooling. Eventually the Elementary Education Act 1870 introduced universal education; however, it was not attractive to all parents, with many preferring to send out their children at the earliest age to earn a living. As a result, schooling was made compulsory in 1880 and free schooling was increasingly made available following the Free Education Act of 1891.

Over the next century or so, the provision of education expanded and the school leaving age was progressively increased. The Education and Skills Act 2008 extended this to 18 years from 2015.

## Education for all

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Article 26 of the UN's 1948 Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to free elementary education; however, when this goal was written it was only an aspiration. Since then there has been much improvement and the number of children not attending school declined from 106 million in 1999 to 68 million in 2008. Although there is still a long way to go, attention is now beginning to focus on the quality of education and equality of opportunity, including rights for girls, who are often excluded from education (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007), and minority groups.

This aspiration was given a major boost with the *Education for All* initiative, which was inaugurated in Thailand in 1990 by a coalition of governments, groups and agencies, including UNESCO and the World Bank, with the express purpose of ensuring that ‘every citizen in every society’ benefits from education (World Bank, 2011a). They committed to achieving six educational goals:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- Achieve a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Yet it is not just the provision and the number of years spent attending school that are important but what the child learns; thus the key objective is not schooling but *learning*. For this reason, the World Bank (2011b: v) launched its 2020 strategy document *Learning for All*, which stressed, ‘The driver of development will, however, ultimately be what individuals learn, both in and out of school, from pre-school through the labour market.’

Hence, learning not schooling is the objective, and the development of knowledge and skills leads to improved earning potential and better health at the individual level. When this is multiplied by all the people receiving an education this translates into higher economic growth, a wider range of institutions and more peaceful development.

## **Education and the economy**

The initiatives by UNESCO, the World Bank and others, described above, reflect deep currents regarding the benefits of education that go back to the Greek philosophers and beyond. One illustration of the impact of education on national development was provided by Adam Smith (1827: 328) who observed:

But though the common people cannot, in any civilized society, be so well instructed as people of some rank and fortune; the most essential parts of education, however, to read, write, and account, can be acquired at so early a period of life, that the greater part, even of those who are to be bred to the lowest occupations, have time to acquire them before they can be employed in those occupations. For a very small expense, the public can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education.



However, although there may be individual and national benefits from education, the arguments are not always persuasive. For example, in 1800s Britain many parents sent their young children to work in order to earn money and contribute to household income. Furthermore, some children were complicit in this, preferring to avoid the tedium of school, and it was not until compulsory schooling was introduced and enforced that some groups of children began attending schools. This situation still exists to some extent, and often it is the children themselves who wish to escape school and enter work if the opportunity exists.

One of the main challenges faced by both the providers and consumers of education is the time taken to realize its benefits. It is not just during compulsory schooling that these issues need to be taken into account. When people consider whether or not to invest in personal education and training there are a number of factors that they are likely to consider. Firstly, there are the financial costs of tuition fees, books, computers and so on. Also, there is the opportunity cost of undertaking the education and training and thereby losing the potential for earning during this period.

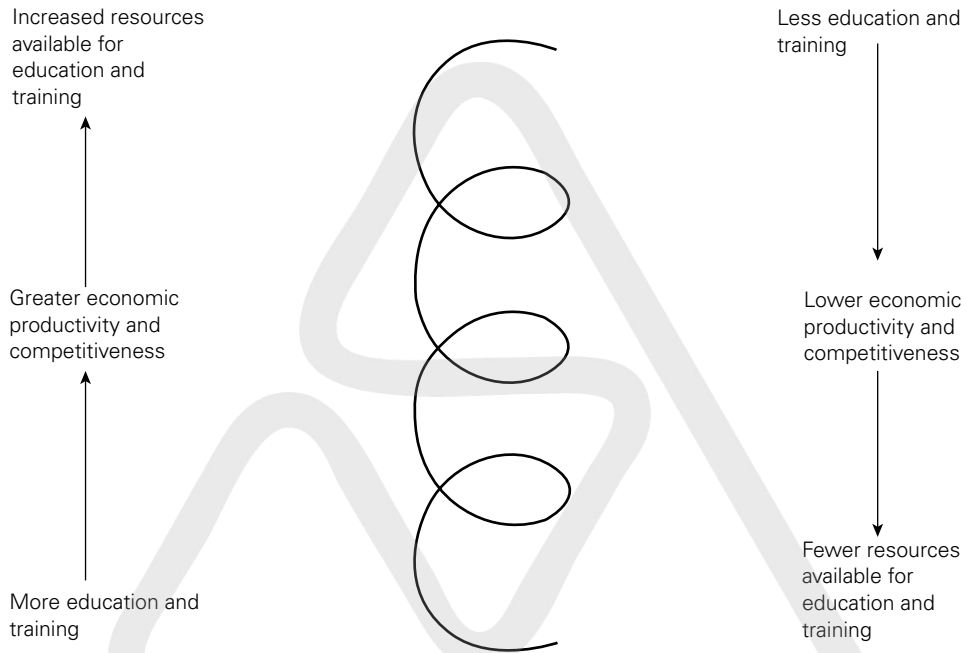
From an employer's perspective the challenge is to estimate a rate of return on training – the problem is the period used to estimate the value of the investment made through the training. As Bosworth, Dawkins and Stromback (1996: 223) stated, 'The difficulties of calculating the *ex ante* rate of return have led some economists to question the whole concept of human capital theory.'

Similar principles apply for national investment in education. Decision makers have to weigh the short-term budgetary pressures against the long-term benefits of education. This is a particular concern for developing nations that need to ensure the immediate health and well-being of their populations, which come before the long-term benefits of education.

Fortunately, there is a growing body of evidence regarding the financial impact of education on people; for example, an examination of the longitudinal data provided by the UK's National Child Development Survey compared young people who left school at 16 with no qualifications and those who achieved qualifications. Those who gained Ordinary Levels earned 18 per cent more, those with Advanced Levels 24 per cent more, and those with higher education qualifications 48 per cent more (Blundell, Dearden and Sianesi, 2004).

Also, in investment terms, the longer the payback period the greater the potential value of the investment. For example, in Britain, the Sure Start initiative of educational and health support for more disadvantaged pre-school children was considered to provide a greater lifetime impact than spending on interventions later in life (Department for Education, 2010). As the World Bank (2011b: 4) stated, 'The bottom line of the Bank Group's education strategy is: Invest early. Invest smartly. Invest for all.'

It is clear that there is a close interconnection between education and the economy (Figure 6.1). The generation of economic wealth through the exchange of goods, services and labour is predominantly achieved through education, which develops the capabilities to deliver higher levels of productivity. As Wilson (2011: xxxviii) stated, 'Without wealth there would be little education and without education there would be little wealth.'

**FIGURE 6.1** The education, training and development economic spiral

### Improving education systems

From the discussion in the previous section, there would appear to be a close synergy between educational investment and economic success. Undeniably, there is a correlation between educational spending and the achievements by children receiving it; yet, despite governmental spending increasing two to three times between 1970 and 1994, the performance of many school systems did not significantly improve (Barber and Mourshed, 2007).

However, the education systems of some countries, including Finland and Singapore, have demonstrably improved their performance. Moreover, it is not always the amount spent on education that produces results: Singapore has a very successful primary education system yet ranks 27th out of 30 OECD countries in the proportion of GDP spending. Which raises the question: 'What are successful countries doing to improve their education systems?'

Ever since the dawn of state education, countries have been exploring other education systems in order to benchmark themselves and identify best practices that might be incorporated within their own systems. However, this process of reform is not easy, and although most countries undertook systematic changes few made significant progress. Research by McKinsey (Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010) suggested that, where there had been success, most of the leaders of change did not know how they had achieved it while some thought they had just been lucky. This lack of clarity was partly ascribed to the complexity of education systems and the fact that they were continually changing, which meant that making comparisons was exceptionally difficult.

Some of the reasons for this failure may be due to a failure to carefully consider the culture, history and structure of a system. Trying to graft successful innovations from elsewhere into a complex education system is fraught with challenges as Sadler (1900, reprinted in Higginson, 1979: 49) argued:

We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties, and 'of battles long ago'. It has some of the secret workings of national life.

In spite of these implementation difficulties there is substantial interest in adopting new ideas, and four stages of policy borrowing have been identified: cross-national attraction, decision making, implementation and internalization (Ochs and Phillips, 2004). There would appear to be three main factors that trigger system change: a political or economic crisis, a negative high-profile commissioned report or a new visionary leader (Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010).

When commitment to change has been reached there are a number of strategies required to improve the system (Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010: 34):

- revising curriculum and standards;
- ensuring an appropriate reward and remuneration structure for teachers and principals;
- building the technical skills of teachers and principals;
- assessing students;
- establishing data systems;
- facilitating the improvement journey through the publication of policy documents and implementation of education laws.

Similar conclusions were found by Hanushek and Woessmann (2010), who said that increasing funding to provide smaller classes will not significantly improve pupil achievement; teacher quality has a major impact on pupil achievement and the quality of teachers is not related to their education and experience; there is a positive impact from inter-school competition, accountability and testing of students, and autonomy of decision making by local schools.

Arguing for major educational reform in the United States, Tucker (2011: 35) identified seven factors that accounted for most of the differences in education systems:

- aggressive international benchmarking;
- the quality of the teaching force;
- the use of aligned instructional systems and external examinations that measure complex thinking skills;
- the decision to get all students to those standards;
- the use of professional systems of work organization instead of blue-collar models;
- funding systems that put the most funds behind the students who are hardest to educate;
- coherence of the design of the overall education system.

## Singapore: thinking schools, learning nation

Singapore has made remarkable progress in economic growth and development since independence in 1963. Indeed, it has become so successful that it has become an exemplar for how nations should shape their education and training systems. Much of this growth was based on encouraging the development of industries and making the country an international hub for a range of activities. However, as the 20th century was coming to a close there was a pressing need to respond to global changes and increasing competition.

To address these challenges the Ministry of Education realized that it was necessary to venture beyond its industrial base and develop a population that could survive and successfully compete in the global economy. In 1997, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong announced the Ministry of Education's vision: 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation', which has been a long-lasting touchstone for determining the direction in which the nation wishes to go.

At the heart of this vision was the aim of developing thinking skills among the pupils and creating learning organizations of all schools in which students would develop the abilities to challenge assumptions and identify more successful ways of operating through the use of participation, creativity and innovation. Over time, thinking students would become learning adults contributing to society.

The Learning Nation vision was intended to create a lifelong learning culture so that Singaporeans learn continually for work and personal improvement. As Prime Minister Goh (1997) stated:

*Education and training are central to how nations will fare in this future. Strong nations and strong communities will distinguish themselves from the rest by how well their people learn and adapt to change. Learning will not end in the school or even in the university. Much of the knowledge learnt by the young will be obsolete some years after they complete their formal education. In some professions, like Information Technology, obsolescence occurs even faster. The task of education must therefore be to provide the young with the core knowledge and core skills, and the habits of learning, that enable them to learn continuously throughout their lives. We have to equip them for a future that we cannot really predict.*

## Improving the US education system

In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a pre-requisite. The countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

(President Barack Obama, 24 February 2009)

In the section on Improving education systems above, we saw that a number of drivers and strategies were needed to achieve educational reform, and one of these could be a crisis. Thus, the 2008 economic crisis spurred the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009), which introduced a number of interventions designed to improve

the economy. Among these was a large-scale commitment to raise educational performance, which required states to introduce four key educational reforms designed to improve student performance:

- making progress toward rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
- establishing pre-Kindergarten-to-college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement;
- making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need;
- providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest performing schools.

(US Department of Education, 2009a)

Another legislative initiative was The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act of 2007, or America COMPETES Act. The main objective of the Act was, 'To invest in innovation through research and development, and to improve the competitiveness of the United States' (US Congress, 2007). To help achieve this objective there was an increased emphasis on science and maths, which are essential building blocks for technological development and economic growth. As Hanushek, Peterson and Woessmann (2010: 4) stressed, 'Maintaining our innovative edge in the world depends importantly on developing a highly qualified cadre of scientists and engineers. To realize that objective requires a system of schooling that produces students with advanced math and science skills.'

Another element recommended to drive education reform is the use of data-gathering of performance and international benchmarking. The value of science and maths has been long understood but the hard evidence from international benchmarking of education performance now provides the figures. Hanushek and Woessmann (2010: 40) correlated education policy with the long-term growth of OECD countries and concluded that, 'Direct measures of educational outcomes, in terms of cognitive skills on international achievement tests, emerge as the one strong policy factor underlying growth differences across OECD countries.' They suggested that if OECD countries increase their Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores by 25 points (one-quarter standard deviation), that would increase OECD gross domestic product by \$90–123 trillion dollars.

\$90–123 trillion dollars is a colossal sum and not surprisingly makes governments sit up, pay attention and take action. The need to take action is linked to the performance of US school students who, on average, do not compare favourably with those of other countries. Hanushek, Peterson and Woessmann (2010: 4) stated that, 'In short, the percentages of high-achieving math students in the United States – and most of its individual states – are shockingly below those of many of the world's leading industrialized nations. Results for many states are at the level of developing countries.'

Economic competition has driven educational changes, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 has enabled competitive challenge funds to be made

available to encourage reform of the educational system through *The Race to the Top: Promoting innovation, reform, and excellence in America's public schools* (US Department of Education, 2009b: 3). Four main areas were targeted: 'enhancing standards and assessments, improving the collection and use of data, increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution, and turning around struggling schools'.

The biggest economic crisis since the 1930s has resulted in a close examination and criticism of the educational system. One challenge is the large number of young people who do not sufficiently progress in their education and are sometimes called the 'drop-out nation' (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2011). Another challenge is a structural one, relating to the division of responsibilities between the national government and the individual states. However, there are other issues, and in a scathing attack on the US education system Tucker (2011: 36) almost shouted:

It is little wonder that our systems are full of negative and perverse incentives. No one ever thought about how all these layers of law, regulation, court decisions, textbook choices, professional development programmes and much, much more fit together and so it is little wonder that they do not. As we pointed out above, the texts do not align to the curriculum, which are not aligned to the assessments, which are not aligned to what teachers are taught in teachers colleges, which is unrelated to the curriculum frameworks which do not exist.

It is not only Tucker who is critical of the education system. Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) described how Britain owned the 19th century, America the 20th century and China will own the 21st century. They maintained that many of the blue and white-collar jobs lost during the downturn are unlikely to return, and they challenged the United States to reassert its strengths and recover some of its declining status. Included in their recipe for renewed economic success was the transformation of school education, with an emphasis on science and maths, and, 'Maintaining the American dream will require learning, working, producing, relearning and innovating twice as hard, twice as fast, twice as often and twice as much'.

## Improving the UK's education system: the race to the top

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During the 1980s and 1990s the UK government provided little support to manufacturing industry and it declined significantly during this period. Sainsbury (2007) noted that in 1970 manufacturing accounted for 32 per cent of UK output, but by 2003 this had fallen to 16 per cent, and as a result the number of people employed in this area fell. Much of the reasoning for this failure to support manufacturing was the belief that the nation was heading for the sunnier uplands of a knowledge economy where services, inventions and innovation would provide better financial revenues (Drucker, 1993). However, there has been a reawakening to the value and importance of having a mixed economy, of which manufacturing and associated areas are a significant and balanced part.

In order to stimulate and encourage growth in technology and manufacturing, more scientists and engineers were required, and these would need to be provided



through education and training. This was recognized by the Roberts Review (2002: 1), which stated:

Continuous innovation is key to the future survival and growth of businesses operating in what are increasingly competitive global markets. Although not all innovation is based on scientific R&D, the need for human ingenuity in making discoveries and creating new products, services or processes means that the success of R&D is critically dependent upon the availability and talent of scientists and engineers.

The Roberts Review also noted a number of problems, including: shortages of physical sciences teachers and lecturers; poor teaching environments; the need for courses to inspire pupils, especially girls; and more suitable careers advice. As a result the report made a number of recommendations, including higher investment in science teacher education and the greater provision of laboratories and resources at all levels of education.

This momentum in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) was built upon by the Sainsbury (2007: 3) report, *The Race to the Top*. The report observed that, 'The best way for the UK to compete, in an era of globalisation, is to move into high-value goods, services and industries. An effective science and innovation system is vital to achieve this objective.' The report advised that advanced countries should not compete on low wages, but should offer premium-priced goods and services. However, it acknowledged that the UK would not be alone in aiming for the high-value end of the market; other countries, including India and China, were also aiming in this direction and Sainsbury (2007: 8) commented, 'We can be one of the winners in "the race to the top", but only if we run fast.'

In a similar manner the European Union has recognized the economic importance of education and training and enshrined this within the Lisbon Declaration, which stated that by 2010 the EU will be 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. This was not achieved and a new vision was proposed:

Education and training have a fundamental role to play in achieving the 'Europe 2020' objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, notably by equipping citizens with the skills and competences which the European economy and European society need in order to remain competitive and innovative, but also by helping promote social cohesion and inclusion.

(Council of the European Union 2011: 1)

## Schooling for work

We are living through a period of extraordinary change. The stunning rise of the middle-income countries, led by China, India, and Brazil, has intensified the desire of many nations to increase their competitiveness by building more highly skilled workforces. Technological advances are changing job profiles and skills while offering possibilities for accelerated learning. Persistently high levels of unemployment, especially among youth, have highlighted the failure of education systems to prepare young people with the right skills for the job market and have fuelled calls for greater opportunity and accountability.

(World Bank, 2011b: v)



## The social benefits of education

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We have seen above that education is now considered to be the main component underpinning economic achievement; however, education does not and should not have a purely economic and vocational focus. Indeed, one of the challenges for education is to provide evidence that it is contributing to society; however, this is not an easy thing to demonstrate because of:

- the cumulative and interactive impacts of lifewide [it occurs in multiple contexts] and lifelong learning [from before birth to grave];
- the potential impacts of informal learning, later interventions in adulthood, or even different types of formal education;
- and the impacts of different curricula (general, academic, vocational) and impacts of learning at different ages and stages.

(Schuller and Desjardins, 2007: 10)

There is little doubt that evaluating the impact of education is difficult; however, if the value of education is not demonstrated it becomes more difficult to argue in favour of it when there is competition for public expenditure in other areas. One of the strongest arguments is that it increases the potential for peaceful co-existence, as is illustrated in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's constitution signed in 1945 at the end of the Second World War which stated:

The Governments of the States Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare:

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;

That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

Peace needs to be constructed in the minds of people through education, and once it is achieved many other advantages to society and individuals can be achieved; for example, education would appear to have a positive causal influence on health (Grossman, 2006; OECD, 2010), and it can be a relatively low-cost method of reducing crime (Lochner and Moretti, 2004). A good education can also provide other benefits, and the OECD (2011: 193) stated:

Adults with higher levels of educational attainment are generally more likely than those with lower levels of attainment to exhibit greater satisfaction with life, stronger civic engagement (ie vote, volunteer, express political interest and show interpersonal trust) and better perceived health.

## Equality of educational opportunity

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Reforming an education system is one thing; making sure that there is a positive effect for all pupils is yet another. In 1966 Coleman et al (1966: iii) conducted an investigation on behalf of the President and Congress into the 'lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, colour, religion or national origin'. Since then, and in spite of Project Headstart and other subsequent initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, there still remain inequalities and imbalances in the education system.

This inequality is illustrated by Tucker (2011: 25–26), who stated:

In many states, groups of citizens have been allowed to gather together to form their own education taxing districts... In such a system, the children of the wealthiest families get the best teachers and the best of all the other available education resources, and the families with the least money get the worst teachers and the worst of everything else as well.

To ensure that the United States is able to compete globally requires a high level of education across the workforce, yet this would not appear to be happening quickly or widely enough. The evidence suggests that successful reform needs to be inclusive to ensure that all children benefit from high-quality instruction. However, as Barber and Mourshed (2007: 34) stated: 'The system needs to ensure that every child, rather than just some children, has access to excellent instruction.'

It isn't just in the United States that there are inequalities of educational opportunity; they are to be found in most countries and, contrary to ideals of social justice, 'Learning levels that have been measured in many developing countries are alarmingly low, especially among disadvantaged populations' (World Bank, 2011b: 3).

While education is predominantly beneficial it can also create challenges that because of its complexity may tend to be obscured. To describe the multi-level impacts of education Schuller and Desjardins (2007: 10) identified three models of educational impact: absolute, relative and cumulative – ARC. The absolute model describes the benefits, or at least neutral effects, of education, although self-confidence may be damaged for some individuals. The relative model is a zero-sum game in which there are winners and losers as a result of educational competition. And, thirdly, the cumulative model suggests that the average educational level of a peer group or surrounding group affects the outcomes.

One solution would be to adopt the 'veil of ignorance' advocated by Rawls (1972), in which people rationally make decisions without the benefit of knowing who they will favour to help produce a fair society. In reality, education is not the only factor operating in society and over the years there have been many interventions that have attempted to resolve inequalities. As Bernstein (1970: 344) stated, 'Education cannot compensate for society.'

The challenges to create a more equal society are immense, as are those in education. But there is an economic argument that may add firepower to the social justice argument. McKinsey (2009: 5–6) put the argument in stark figures, 'If the gap between black and Latino student performance and white student performance had been similarly narrowed, GDP in 2008 would have been between \$310 billion and \$525 billion higher, or 2 to 4 percent of GDP.'

## Conclusion

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In this chapter we have seen how global competition has spurred many countries to reform their education systems. This often requires a crisis to precipitate action, and the economic crash beginning in 2008 provided a significant incentive to address limitations. Also, there has been an increase in international benchmark measures of educational performance – such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy) – that rank countries and encourage efforts to rise up the league tables. Other measures of in-country data collection on student performance provide further drivers for the introduction of change. As Porter (1990: 628) stated, ‘Education and training constitute perhaps the single greatest long-term leverage point available to all levels of government in upgrading industry.’

## Questions for reflection

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- Should education be included within human resource development?
- What are your thoughts about HRD professionals using people as resources purely for the benefit of the organization?
- How are countries going to succeed when all countries seem intent on investing in education?

## Further information sources

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International Standard Classification of Education: [http://www.uis.unesco.org/](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx)

[Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx)

OECD: Education at a Glance: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/2/48631582.pdf>

Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality:

<http://www.sacmeq.org/>

PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study: <http://www.pirls.org/>

PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment: [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)

UNESCO: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

National Assessment of Educational Progress: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

UNICEF: [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk)

SABER: Systematic Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results:

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – International

Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement: <http://www.iea.nl/>

Eurydice descriptions of national systems of education and training:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041\\_UKEngland\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041_UKEngland_EN.pdf);

<http://www.infonet-ae.eu/en/adult-education-in-estonia-1105>

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## 07

# UK vocational education and training

**JOHN P WILSON**

*We are living through a period of extraordinary change. The stunning rise of the middle-income countries, led by China, India, and Brazil, has intensified the desire of many nations to increase their competitiveness by building more highly skilled workforces. Technological advances are changing job profiles and skills while offering possibilities for accelerated learning. Persistently high levels of unemployment, especially among youth, have highlighted the failure of education systems to prepare young people with the right skills for the job market and have fuelled calls for greater opportunity and accountability. (WORLD BANK, 2011: V)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- be familiar with some of the main historical factors that influenced UK vocational education and training;
- understand the roles and responsibilities of the main agencies;
- understand the differing requirements and demands of employers, trades unions and government;
- recognize two routes to accreditation through national occupational standards.

## Introduction

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The topography of UK vocational education and training consists of a complex range of agencies and initiatives that, in spite of some rationalization, appear to be diversifying as the various countries of the UK develop their own systems. However, few countries design their vocational education and training systems from scratch, and one of the challenges the UK faces is that it has continually grafted onto and attempted to reshape a system that has developed, with varying degrees of success, over the past centuries. And although these relatively frequent changes often leave even seasoned observers somewhat confused, it is important to have an understanding of the agencies and initiatives in order to navigate this complex landscape. Therefore, this chapter will begin with a brief history of UK vocational education and training (VET) and then consider the current state of VET in the face of global forces. It will then provide an overview of some of the main roles and operations of the agencies and initiatives.

## A brief history of UK vocational education and training

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Vocational education and training within the UK have a long history that goes back to very early times when people instinctively learned from each other without this being located within a formalized system. Gradually education and training became more established and in Medieval times guilds of merchants, landowners and skilled tradesmen were established to protect and represent their interests, and provide benevolent works within their communities. As time progressed, the guilds became more and more specialized in specific occupations, such as the Cutlers' Company, with the master transferring his skills to indentured apprentices. In addition, the guilds were the first to systematically organize and manage the roles and relationships between employer and employee.

Slowly, but increasingly, the state became more and more involved with the labour market and the Statute of Artificers 1406 (an artificer was a person who made artefacts) declared that, 'every man or woman of what state or condition that he be, shall be free to set their son or daughter to take learning at any school that pleaseth them within the realm' (De Montmorency, 1902: 28–29). Later the Statute of Artificers 1563 legislated that young people were 'to be enstructed or taught in any of the Artes Occupacions Craftes or Misteries which they or any of them [the masters] doo use or exercise' (De Montmorency, 1902: 71). This Statute provided legislation that made it illegal to practise or learn a trade outside the guilds' systems, and it wasn't until the Apprentices Act 1814 that this restrictive practice was partially repealed and thus wider employment opportunities were opened up.

With no state provision of education, many voluntary organizations and societies emerged in the 1700s and 1800s, driven by curiosity and a desire for self-improvement. Among those that filled the vacuum were the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, mechanics institutes (Tylecote, 1957) and library societies. This thirst for knowledge encouraged numerous other societies, including the British Association

for the Advancement of Science (1831), now the British Science Association, and the Royal Society of Arts for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce (1754). Up until this time many industrial practices had not codified their knowledge and these societies enabled the tacit knowledge held by individuals to become explicit and be communicated to other individuals and groups.

During the 1800s, as different regions of the UK developed specific industries based upon local resources and skills, some industries voluntarily responded by providing specific education and training; examples included a mining school in Wigan, an agricultural college in Cirencester, a shoe school in Northampton, spinning schools in Stornaway, and straw plaiting schools in Hertfordshire (Wilson, 2011). In addition, the armed forces provided education and training both for orphans and children (at the Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea, for example) and for service personnel at naval dockyards and barracks such as Greenwich, Chatham and Portsmouth (McClellan, 1999). Moreover, the Council of Military Education (1860) specified the need for soldiers to be able to read and write and for these subjects to be included in regular military instruction.

A number of Factory Acts were progressively introduced to regulate working conditions and employment, including that of children in mills, factories and agriculture. The first of these was the Factory Health and Morals Act 1802 relating to apprentices. In addition, the Factory Act of 1845 specified that all children under the age of 13 employed in mills should attend school for three hours per day. Where the Act was enforced these children then alternated between factory and school and were known as 'half-time children'. To minimize the disruption and time lost travelling to and from school, many mill owners built their own factory schools where education sometimes focused on the skills required in the mill as well as the 3Rs of reading, writing and 'rithmetic'.

The Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce supported the Great Exhibition of 1851, which displayed products from Britain and other countries and was a forerunner of the World Fairs. At the Exhibition, British products received excellence awards in nearly all the 100 different display areas; however, at the 1867 Paris Exhibition, Britain was only successful in 10 of the 90 areas. The impact of this was to cause the 1867 Schools Inquiry Commission to examine the poor progress in manufacturing, and Lyon Playfair, a juror in Paris, wrote, 'The one cause of this inferiority upon which there was most unanimity is that France, Prussia, Austria, Belgium, and Switzerland possess good systems of industrial education for the masters and managers of factories and workshops and that England possess [sic] none' (Abbott, 1933: 37).

In 1839, the Committee of the Privy Council on Education was established to provide a small amount of funding for the building of elementary schools. Many schools in the mid-1800s taught the elementary subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic and also included vocational subjects such as housekeeping and laundries for the girls and cottage gardening and animal husbandry for the boys. In addition, Schools of Industry based on the experience of M de Fellenberg at Hofwyl, Switzerland, were encouraged by the Committee of Council during the 1830s and 1840s. The workshops for the boys and the older pupil teachers were not intended to train them in a specific trade or craft but in 'industrious application': 'Thus a labourer who could repair his cottage, cultivate his garden with skill, who could repair his

shoes and clothes, would be able to support his family in greater comfort; and if he could execute any rough carpenter's or smith's work, he would be more valuable to his employer, and would secure better wages' (Committee of Council Minutes, 1840: 80). Later, the 1880 Code of Regulations allowed school managers to extend the curriculum for older children to include mechanics, animal physiology, physical geography, botany and domestic economy.

On the whole, schools tended to emphasize the elementary subjects because of the Education Department's policy of 'payment by results', which involved testing pupils' knowledge in those subjects and providing grants dependent on the pupils' success. One consequence of this narrow focus was that the Department of Practical Art was established in 1852 under the Department of the Privy Council for Trade to provide skilled artisans to support industry and commerce. The Department for Practical Art became the Science and Art Department in 1853 and, until its full merger with the Education Department in 1899, provided encouragement and financial assistance to encourage the teaching of art and design related to manufacturing, and the teaching of science, technology and other practical subjects. Indeed, responsibility for vocational areas has been merged and demerged with school education throughout the last century and is currently led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

During the First World War, the Ministry of Munitions established Instructional Factories to provide specialized training courses for munitions workers, many of whom had received their preliminary training in technical schools. After the war, these Government Instruction Centres assumed responsibility for the training of people disabled in the war and were later renamed Government Training Centres.

The relatively weak economic performance in the UK following the Second World War resulted in greater intervention by the government in the form of policies and agencies. An increasing emphasis was given to a range of initiatives from the late 1950s onwards and, sometimes, a clear progression of agencies can be seen to the present day, such as the Industrial Training Council (1958–1964), Industrial Training Boards (1964–c1982), Industry Training Organizations (1984–1998), National Training Organizations (1998–2002) and Sector Skills Councils (2002–).

The Industrial Training Act 1964 marked an increase in state intervention through the introduction of a levy designed to encourage employers to invest in training. However, the subsequent Employment and Training Act 1973 allowed some larger employers to disengage from this process, and this led to a reversal from overt compulsion to a system that is predominantly *laissez-faire*, allowing employers to train their employees as they feel appropriate.

## The UK vocational education and training system

Vocational education and training is described by Cedefop (2008: 202) as, 'Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market'. In the UK the government operates a *laissez-faire* VET system in which employers are largely left alone to decide what training to provide to their employees.

This has resulted in a very mixed picture, with some organizations demonstrating exemplary practice and others providing little in the form of education and training.

In England, The *National Employers Skills Survey* for 2009 (UKCES, 2010b) observed that provision of training was very variable: 68 per cent of employers had provided training or development during the previous year, which meant that a significant 32 per cent had failed to develop their employees. Organizations with 25 or more employees were more likely than smaller organizations to provide training and development. Also, training was most likely to be provided in public sector organizations such as education, health and social work, public administration and defence, although lower levels were provided in agriculture and manufacturing. Another factor was that managers receive more training than any other occupational group. Overall, 109 million days of training were provided in England, which equates to an average of 4.7 days per worker per year, and in total £39.2 bn was spent on training. Equivalent skills surveys were conducted in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and, from 2011, all these were superseded by the UK *Employers Skills Survey*.

The annual *Learning and Talent Development* survey conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2010) provides an overview of organizational training and development. The survey of 724 organizations reported that the most effective learning and talent development practices were considered to be in-house development programmes (56 per cent) and coaching by line managers (51 per cent). E-learning had increased and the main skills gaps were business skills/acumen and commercial awareness, and management/leadership skills.

A range of surveys tend to place the UK below a number of developed nations regarding average labour productivity. Comparing average output per worker hour in 2002, the UK was lagging behind the United States by 33 per cent, France by 23 per cent and Germany by 10 per cent (Mason et al, 2008). Disentangling the causes of these differing productivity levels is problematic but, in general, they are related to higher levels of physical capital intensity – that is, the investment made in equipment etc – and higher skills, with the former having a significantly higher impact than skill levels (Mason et al, 2008).

There would appear to be evidence both of good practice and of a failure among some employers and sectors to provide adequate levels of education and training. In a review of UK VET, Page and Hillage (2006: 3) observed that some sectors ‘are locked in a cycle of low-skills, low cost and low-quality products’. This market failure is neither good for the sector nor for the overall economic well-being of the home nations.

Recognizing these VET problems, the Labour government commissioned the Leitch Report (2006: 2), which noted that:

- One-third of adults did not possess a basic school-leaving qualification or equivalent.
- Almost half (17 million) of adults have problems with numbers.
- Around 5 million (one-seventh) are not functionally literate.
- The UK has ‘neither the quantity nor the quality of necessary vocational skills’.

The consequence of all the limitations described above is that, ‘Without increased skills, we would condemn ourselves to a lingering decline in competitiveness, diminishing economic growth and a bleaker future for all’ (Leitch, 2006: 1). This is not an

encouraging prospect, so what is to be done? Leitch recommended a significant increase in qualification targets with the intention of achieving a world-class skills base by 2020, and to achieve this he proposed:

- Shared responsibility among employers, individuals and the government. Employers and individuals should focus on where they receive the best returns on their investment, and the government should address areas of market failure.
- A focus on economically valuable skills that are portable and deliver real returns for employers, government and individuals.
- A demand-led skills system that responds to individual and organizational needs rather than being centrally planned.
- An adaptive and responsive system that responds to future market needs because it is not possible to accurately predict future needs.
- Building on existing structures rather than constantly changing structures and mechanisms.

Historically, the control and supervision of UK education and training was largely centralized in London, and even the Scottish Office was located there in the 19th century; however, in recent years, devolution and the increased autonomy of the individual UK countries has led them to take greater responsibility for their own systems of vocational education and training: England through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Northern Ireland through the Department for Employment and Learning; Scotland through the Scottish Executive and Skills Development Scotland; and Wales through the Department for Education and Skills.

Across the four nations, numerous agencies and initiatives exist, and for the lay person this can be a complex maze to understand and navigate. This is further complicated by the fact that many of these agencies and initiatives change names and responsibilities on a regular basis. Below, we present a few of the main elements.

### ***UK Commission for Employment and Skills***

Strategic leadership for skills and employment areas is provided to the four UK nations by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The Commission is a social partnership with commissioners drawn from devolved organizations, further and higher education, large and small employers, trade unions and the voluntary sector. Its mission is, 'to raise skill levels to help drive enterprise, create more and better jobs and economic growth' (UKCES, 2011a). To help achieve this mission it provides labour market intelligence, advises on skills policies, and champions the benefits of skills development. The Commission's objectives (UKCES, 2011b) are:

- to make and win the economic argument for greater investment in skills;
- to enhance the value and accessibility of vocational training, especially apprenticeships;
- to galvanize industries and sectors to improve the skills and productivity of their workforces;
- to work with sectors to ensure the creation of more and better jobs, maximizing opportunities for unemployed people.



## Sector skills councils

Sector skills councils are independent organizations that have been created by employers in employment sectors that have economic or strategic importance, and in total these represent 90 per cent of the UK workforce. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills works in partnership with the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, which consists of 21 councils:

*Asset Skills*: property, housing, cleaning services, parking and facilities management.

*Cogent*: bioscience, chemical, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries.

*Construction Skills*: construction.

*Creative and Cultural Skills*: craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, visual and performing arts.

*e-skills UK*: information technology and telecommunications.

*Energy and Utility Skills*: electricity, gas, waste management and water industries.

*Financial Skills Partnership*: financial services, finance and accounting sectors.

*Improve*: food and drink manufacturing and processing.

*Institute of the Motor Industry*: the retail motor industry.

*Lantra*: environmental and land-based industries.

*People 1st/Go Skills*: hospitality, leisure, passenger transport, travel and tourism.

*Proskills UK*: process and manufacturing industry.

*SEMTA*: science, engineering and manufacturing technologies (including composites).

*Skills for Care and Development*: early years, children and young people's services, and social work and social care for adults and children.

*Skills for Health*: the health sector across the UK.

*Skills for Justice*: community safety; courts, tribunals and prosecution; custodial care; fire and rescue; forensic science; law enforcement; legal services; offender management and support; policing; victim, survivor and witness support; youth justice; and the children's workforce.

*Skills for Logistics*: freight logistics industry and wholesale.

*Skills Active*: active leisure, learning and well-being.

*Skillset*: broadcast, film, video, interactive media, photo imaging, publishing and advertising, fashion and textiles.

*Skills mart Retail*: retail.

*Summit Skills*: building services, engineering.

## National Apprenticeship Service

In the 1960s there were 250,000 apprentices, but by the early 1990s this figure had collapsed to 50,000 due to economic recessions, declining manufacturing, young people staying in education longer, and the fact that many apprenticeships were often about time-serving (a traditional apprenticeship was normally five years) and not always about the quality of learning. This market failure encouraged government intervention with the introduction of Modern Apprenticeships



and the National Apprenticeship Service, which was launched in 2009. The NAS is designed to support the whole range of activities and stakeholders involved with apprenticeships, and has led to a significant increase in apprenticeships – 180,000 in 2010.

### **Investors in People**

Investors in People UK was established in 1990 and published its standard in 1991. The standard was designed to embed good learning practices within organizations and enable them to display the IiP award, thus encouraging further positive behaviour towards learning (Figure 7.1). The current standard is an outcome-based framework that describes best practice; organizations that are successfully assessed against the framework can be awarded bronze, silver or gold status. In 2010 responsibility for Investors in People passed to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

### **Awarding organizations**

An awarding organization is a body that provides awards to people who successfully complete a course of study and/or examinations. Awarding organizations include: the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, City and Guilds, Edexcel, Education Development International (EDI) and OCR (Oxford Cambridge & RSA Examinations). Awarding organizations are regulated by qualifications authorities; for example, Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.

### **Qualifications and curriculum authorities**

Education and training qualification systems need to be carefully regulated and therefore there needs to be some form of oversight and control. This is undertaken in England by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), in Northern Ireland by the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), in Scotland by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and in Wales by the Department for Education and Skills.

The CCEA, alone among the national authorities, combines the roles of regulating the quality and standard of the examinations and qualifications offered by awarding bodies, and of awarding qualifications such as entry level qualifications, GCSEs and A-levels.

### **Qualifications frameworks**

In the past, the qualifications presented by institutions and organizations to successful candidates were largely independent, and it was often difficult for employers, educational institutions and the certificate holders to clearly assess and compare their respective merits. Therefore, to assist people in understanding the qualifications more fully, enable greater portability of qualifications and partial qualifications, and increase labour market mobility, a qualifications framework was developed. Other

**FIGURE 7.1** The Investors in People Framework: A summary of its contents

| PLAN  |  |  |  | DO   |   |  |  | REVIEW  |   |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 01: BUSINESS STRATEGY   | 02: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  | 03: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY   | 04: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY   | 05: MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS   | 06: RECOGNITION & REWARD  | 07: INVOLVEMENT & EMPOWERMENT  | 08: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT   | 09: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT   | 10: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT  |
| <b>THE STANDARD</b> TOP MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE SURE (AND THEIR PEOPLE SHOULD CONFIRM) THAT:   |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |   |   |
| <p>The organisation has a vision/purpose, strategy and plan</p> <p>People are involved in planning</p> <p>Representative groups (where appropriate) are consulted when developing the plan</p>  | <p>Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan</p> <p>Resources for learning and development are made available</p> <p>The impact will be evaluated</p>   | <p>People are encouraged to contribute ideas</p> <p>There is equality of opportunity for development and support</p>   | <p>Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people</p> <p>People know what effective managers should be doing</p>   | <p>Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop their people</p>  | <p>People believe they make a difference</p> <p>People believe their contribution is valued</p>   | <p>Ownership and responsibility are encouraged</p> <p>People are involved in decision-making</p>   | <p>People's learning and development needs are met</p>   | <p>Investment in learning can be quantified</p> <p>Impact can be demonstrated</p>   | <p>Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management</p>   |
| <b>YOUR CHOICE</b> TOP MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE SURE (AND THEIR PEOPLE SHOULD CONFIRM) THAT:  |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |   |   |
| <p>Clear core values relate to vision and strategy</p> <p>Key performance indicators are used to improve performance</p> <p>Social responsibility is taken into account in the strategy</p> <p>People and stakeholders are involved in strategy development</p> | <p>The learning and development strategy builds capability</p> <p>Plans take account of learning styles</p> <p>People help make decisions about their own learning</p> <p>Learning and development is innovative and flexible</p> <p>There is a culture of continuous learning</p> | <p>The recruitment process is fair, efficient and effective</p> <p>A diverse, talented workforce is created</p> <p>A work-life balance strategy meets the needs of its people</p> <p>Constructive feedback is valued</p> <p>The structure makes the most of people's talents</p> | <p>Leadership and management capabilities for now and the future are defined</p> <p>Managers are helped to acquire these capabilities</p> <p>Leadership and management strategy link to business strategy, taking account of external good practice</p> <p>Everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities</p> | <p>Managers are role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing</p> <p>Coaching is part of the culture</p> <p>People are helped to develop their careers</p> <p>There is a culture of openness and trust</p> | <p>Reward and recognition strategies link to business strategy and are externally benchmarked</p> <p>Representative groups are consulted (where appropriate)</p> <p>What motivates people is understood</p> <p>Success is celebrated</p> <p>Benefits strategy goes beyond legal requirements</p> <p>Colleagues' achievements are recognised</p> | <p>Effective consultation and involvement is part of the culture</p> <p>People are supported and trusted to make decisions</p> <p>Knowledge and information are shared</p> <p>People are committed to success</p> <p>There is a culture of continuous improvement</p> <p>People can challenge the way things work</p> <p>There is a sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation</p> | <p>Learning and development resources are used effectively</p> <p>Learning is an everyday activity</p> <p>Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used</p> <p>People are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential</p> <p>All learning is valued and celebrated and is an everyday activity</p> <p>Mentoring is used</p> <p>Personal development is supported</p> | <p>The contribution of people strategies is measured and evaluated</p> <p>Impact on key performance indicators can be described</p> <p>Performance improves as a result</p> <p>Career prospects improve</p> <p>Flexible and effective approaches to measuring return on investment are used</p> <p>Return on investment in people is reported to stakeholders</p> | <p>Self review and information from external review are used</p> <p>Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's views on how they are managed</p> <p>Internal and external benchmarking are used</p> <p>People's views on how they are managed improves</p> <p>People believe it's a great place to work</p> |

advantages of the frameworks included recognition of different types of learning, whether in formal educational settings, work or the community. The frameworks also help people understand the courses that provide qualifications, provide progression routes that can be mapped to help plan learning, and increase the potential for credits gained on courses to be transferred between courses, which reduces the need to repeat areas of study.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales there are three frameworks operating:

- *National Qualifications Framework*: this describes the level at which a qualification is recognized and covers entry level and levels 1–8.
- *Qualifications and Credit Framework*: this is concerned with vocational or work-related qualifications and covers entry level and levels 1–8.
- *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*: this describes higher education qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, degrees, masters and doctorates. These qualifications are to be found in levels 4–8, but higher doctorates and honorary degrees are excluded from the framework.

In Scotland, the equivalents are the Scottish Qualifications Authority Qualifications, Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions, and Scottish Vocational Qualifications. Figure 7.2 illustrates the comparative qualifications for England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which are designed to articulate with the European Qualifications Framework (see Chapter 8: European vocational education and training).

## National Occupational Standards for learning and development

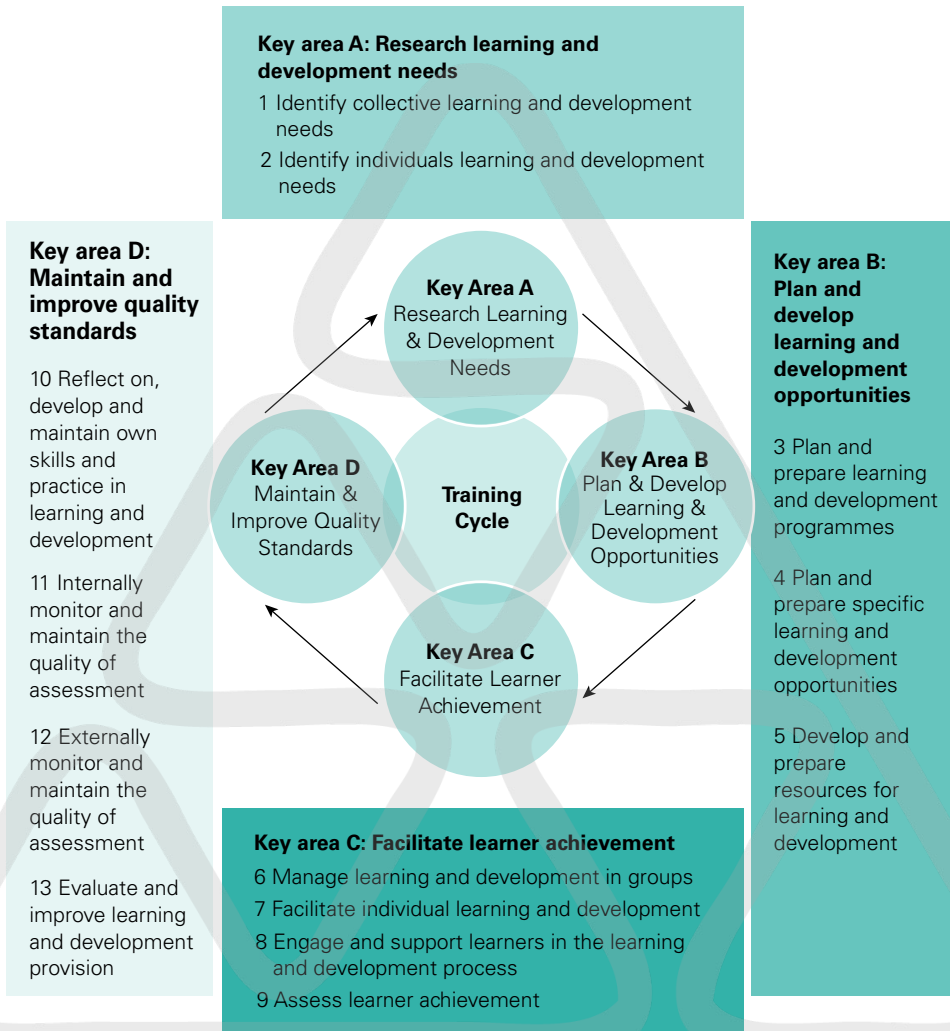
In 1984 a Trainer Task Inventory was developed by Morgan and Costello that identified the range of activities conducted by trainers. This then influenced the development of competence-based national occupational standards developed by the Training and Development Lead Body (1995) and subsequently by the Employment National Training Organisation (2000). More recently, the standards were renewed by Lifelong Learning UK (2010), and responsibility for the standards now rests with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) were identified through a process of research involving subject-matter experts, consultation and a form of job analysis called functional job analysis that was originally developed by Fine (1988). The original four-stage training cycle of identification of training needs, design, delivery and evaluation of training has evolved to become more of a learning cycle, although this should be distinguished from Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. The cycle (Figure 7.3) forms the basis of the NOS for Learning and Development and consists of:

- A** Research learning and development needs.
- B** Plan and develop learning and development opportunities.
- C** Facilitate learner achievement.
- D** Maintain and improve quality standards.

**FIGURE 7.2** Qualifications can cross boundaries (with acknowledgement to Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales – CQFW)

| Main stages of education/employment  | Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales<br>www.cqfw.net   | National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland<br>www.nfq.ie | The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework<br>www.scfq.org.uk  | Qualifications and Credit Framework/<br>National Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland<br>www.ofqual.gov.uk<br>www.ccea.org.uk  | Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland<br>www.qaa.ac.uk<br>assuringstandardsandquality/qualifications   |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
|  | LEVEL   | LEVEL  | LEVEL  | LEVEL   | LEVEL   |
| Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment                                 | 8 Doctoral Degrees  | 10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate                           | 12 Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees   | 8 Vocational Qualifications Level 8   | 8 Doctoral Degrees  |
|  | 7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates                                     | 9 Master's Degree, Post-graduate Diploma                       | 11 SVQ Level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates | 7 Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7   | 7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates   |
| Higher education<br>Advanced skills training   | 6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates                              | 8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma                      | 10 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates                                    | 6 Vocational Qualifications Level 6   | 6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates  |
| Entry to professional graduate employment  | 5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)  | 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree                                     | 9 Bachelor's/Ordinary Degrees, Professional Development Awards, SVQ Level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates                            | 5 NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Vocational Qualifications Level 5  | 5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)  |
|  | 4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), NVQ Level 4, Essential Skills Wales (ESW), Wider Key Skills (WKS), Higher Apprenticeship Framework | 6 Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate                     | 8 Professional Development Awards, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)  | 4 Vocational Qualifications Level 4, Higher National Certificates (HNC)   | 4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)   |
| Specialised education and training   | 3 NVQ Level 3, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced, Apprenticeships Framework                               | 5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate                     | 6 Highers, SVQ Level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates                                      | 3 NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas (England)   | <p>The table gives an indication of how you can compare qualifications across national boundaries. Examples of major qualifications at each level are provided. For more detail of the qualifications in another country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column.</p> <p>This leaflet is designed to give some information to help you begin this process, for example, by telling you what your qualification, or qualifications you are interested in studying, are broadly comparable to in other countries.</p> <p><b>Qualifications can cross boundaries</b><br/>- a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland, July 2011</p> |
| Qualified/Skilled worker<br>Entry to higher education<br>Completion of secondary education     | 2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*-C, ESW, WKS, Foundation Apprenticeship Framework                   | 4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate                     | 5 Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ Level 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates   | 2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at grade A*-C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas (England), functional skills Level 2 (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)    |   |
| Progression to skilled employment.<br>Continuation of secondary education.                     | 1 NVQ Level 1, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation  | 3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate                      | 4 Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ Level 1, National Progression Awards, National Certificates  | 1 NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas (England), functional skills Level 1 (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI) |   |
| Secondary education. Initial entry into employment or further education                        | Entry Level   | 2 Level 2 Certificate  | 3 Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades, National Progression Awards, National Certificates   | Entry Level Certificates (sub levels 1-3), ESOL skills for life, functional skills Entry Level (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)   |   |
| Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training | Entry Level   | 1 Level 1 Certificate  | 2 Access 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates   |   |   |
|  | Entry Level   |  | 1 Access 1   |   |   |

**FIGURE 7.3** National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development

**SOURCE:** with acknowledgement to Learning and Skills Improvement Service, [www.lsis.org.uk](http://www.lsis.org.uk).

## National Occupational Standards for learning and development (Lifelong Learning UK, 2010)

### Key Area A: Research learning and development needs

- *Standard 1: Identify collective learning and development needs*  
This standard is about carrying out a training and learning needs analysis for teams, groups, departments or organizations.

- *Standard 2: Identify individuals' learning and development needs*  
This standard is about carrying out a training and learning needs analysis for individual learners.

## Key Area B: Plan and develop learning and development opportunities

- *Standard 3: Plan and prepare learning and development programmes*  
This standard is about planning and preparing learning and development programmes to meet identified needs and requirements. It applies to planning for both groups and individuals. 'Programme' refers to any planned sequence of learning opportunities that lead to agreed outcomes. Examples might include a course, a programme of learning in the workplace or an individual coaching programme.
- *Standard 4: Plan and prepare specific learning and development opportunities*  
This standard is about planning and preparing specific/individual learning and development opportunities, for example formal training sessions or informal experiences such as periods in the workplace. It applies to planning for individuals as well as planning for groups.
- *Standard 5: Develop and prepare resources for learning and development*  
This standard is about preparing resources to support learning and development. It covers developing resources 'from scratch' as well as adapting and preparing existing resources to meet the needs of learners. It also covers the preparation of resources, including the learning environment, learning materials and equipment used to support learning.

## Key Area C: Facilitate learner achievement

- *Standard 6: Manage learning and development in groups*  
This standard is about using a range of methods to enable group members to learn and develop in a safe and supportive learning environment.
- *Standard 7: Facilitate individual learning and development*  
This standard is about using a range of methods to enable individuals to acquire or improve skills and knowledge and practise their application in context. It also covers providing feedback to learners and encouraging them to reflect on and improve what they do. This standard could be achieved as part of a coaching and/or mentoring relationship.
- *Standard 8: Engage and support learners in the learning and development process*  
This standard is about supporting learners through the learning process by, for example, providing them with information and advice, helping them overcome barriers, helping them access the learning and experience they need, monitoring progress against expected standards and providing constructive feedback.



- *Standard 9: Assess learner achievement*  
This standard is about assessing learning and development against agreed criteria. It covers a range of different assessments including competence, knowledge and understanding, and skills.

### Key Area D: Maintain and improve quality standards

- *Standard 10: Reflect on, develop and maintain own skills and practice in learning and development*  
This standard is about reflecting on current practice, identifying own learning and development needs and taking part in continuing professional development.
- *Standard 11: Internally monitor and maintain the quality of assessment*  
This standard is about monitoring assessment processes and decisions within an organization, and helping to maintain and improve the quality of assessment.
- *Standard 12: Externally monitor and maintain the quality of assessment*  
This standard is about monitoring assessment processes and decisions from outside an organization, and helping to maintain and improve relevant quality assurance systems.
- *Standard 13: Evaluate and improve learning and development provision*  
This standard is about evaluating learning and development provision and planning/implementing quality improvements.

## National Occupational Standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in lifelong learning

National occupational standards (NOS) have also been developed for teachers, trainers and tutors in lifelong learning (Lifelong Learning UK, 2006). The NOS represent a helpful description of the roles of teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in further education, higher education, work-based learning and other arenas. In particular, they provide a detailed checklist to enable the professional development of people working in these areas and support their accreditation and qualification. The professional standards address six main domains:

Domain A: Professional values and practice.

Domain B: Learning and teaching.

Domain C: Specialist learning and teaching.

Domain D: Planning for learning.

Domain E: Assessment for learning.

Domain F: Access and progression.

Within each of the domains there are descriptions of professional values, professional knowledge and understanding, and professional practice. Domain A, Professional values and practice, underpins all the other domains and is described in Table 7.1.



**TABLE 7.1** National Occupational Standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in lifelong learning

| <b>PROFESSIONAL VALUES</b>   |
|--|
| <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector value:</b>   |
| AS 1 All learners, their progress and development, their learning goals and aspirations and the experience they bring to their learning.                 |
| AS 2 Learning, its potential to benefit people emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically, and its contribution to community sustainability. |
| AS 3 Equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to learners, the workforce, and the community.  |
| AS 4 Reflection and evaluation of their own practice and their continuing professional development as teachers.  |
| AS 5 Collaboration with other individuals, groups and/or organizations with a legitimate interest in the progress and development of learners.           |
| <b>They are committed to:</b>  |
| AS 6 The application of agreed codes of practice and the maintenance of a safe environment.  |
| AS 7 Improving the quality of their practice.  |

| <b>Professional knowledge and understanding</b>  | <b>Professional practice</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector know and understand:</b>   | <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector:</b>   |
| AK 1.1 What motivates learners to learn and the importance of learners' experience and aspirations.  | AP 1.1 Encourage the development and progression of all learners through recognizing, valuing and responding to individual motivation, experience and aspirations. |
| AK 2.1 Ways in which learning has the potential to change lives.   | AP 2.1 Use opportunities to highlight the potential for learning to positively transform lives and contribute to effective citizenship.                            |
| AK 2.2 Ways in which learning promotes the emotional, intellectual, social and economic well-being of individuals and the population as a whole. | AP 2.2 Encourage learners to recognize and reflect on ways in which learning can empower them as individuals and make a difference in their communities.           |

**TABLE 7.1** *continued*

| Professional knowledge and understanding   | Professional practice   |
|--|---|
| <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector know and understand:</b>   | <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector:</b>  |
| AK 3.1 Issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.  | AP 3.1 Apply principles to evaluate and develop own practice in promoting equality and inclusive learning and engaging with diversity.  |
| AK 4.1 Principles, frameworks and theories which underpin good practice in learning and teaching.                  | AP 4.1 Use relevant theories of learning to support the development of practice in learning and teaching.   |
| AK 4.2 The impact of own practice on individuals and their learning.   | AP 4.2 Reflect on and demonstrate commitment to improvement of own personal and teaching skills through regular evaluation and use of feedback.   |
| AK 4.3 Ways to reflect, evaluate and use research to develop own practice, and to share good practice with others. | AP 4.3 Share good practice with others and engage in continuing professional development through reflection, evaluation and the appropriate use of research.  |
| AK 5.1 Ways to communicate and collaborate with colleagues and/or others to enhance learners' experience.          | AP 5.1 Communicate and collaborate with colleagues and/or others, within and outside the organization, to enhance learners' experience.   |
| AK 5.2 The need for confidentiality, respect and trust in communicating with others about learners.                | AP 5.2 Communicate information and feedback about learners to others with a legitimate interest, appropriately and in a manner which encourages trust between those communicating and respects confidentiality where necessary.               |
| AK 6.1 Relevant statutory requirements and codes of practice.  | AP 6.1 Conform to statutory requirements and apply codes of practice.   |
| AK 6.2 Ways to apply relevant statutory requirements and the underpinning principles.                              | AP 6.2 Demonstrate good practice through maintaining a learning environment which conforms to statutory requirements and promotes equality, including appropriate consideration of the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults. |

**TABLE 7.1** *continued*

| Professional knowledge and understanding                                       | Professional practice  |
|--|--|
| <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector know and understand:</b>           | <b>Teachers in the lifelong learning sector:</b>                               |
| AK 7.1 Organizational systems and processes for recording learner information. | AP 7.1 Keep accurate records which contribute to organizational procedures.    |
| AK 7.2 Own role in the quality cycle.  | AP 7.2 Evaluate own contribution to the organization's quality cycle.          |
| AK 7.3 Ways to implement improvements based on feedback received.              | AP 7.3 Use feedback to develop own practice within the organization's systems. |

## HRD roles

We have seen above the different competency areas for those involved in learning and development. Another set of descriptors emerged from the research conducted on behalf of the American Society for Training and Development by McLagan and Suhadolnik (1989), who identified 35 areas of competence for those involved with HRD:

### Technical competencies

- 1 Adult learning understanding.\*
- 2 Career development theories and techniques understanding.
- 3 Competency identification skill.\*
- 4 Computer competence.
- 5 Electronic systems skill.
- 6 Facilities skill.
- 7 Objectives' preparation skill.\*
- 8 Performance observation skill.
- 9 Subject matter understanding.
- 10 Training and development theories and techniques understanding.
- 11 Research skill.

### Business competencies

- 12 Business understanding.\*
- 13 Cost–benefit analysis skill.

- 14 Delegation skill.
- 15 Industry understanding.
- 16 Organizational behaviour understanding.\*
- 17 Organizational development theories and techniques understanding.
- 18 Organization understanding.
- 19 Project management skill.
- 20 Records management skill.

### Interpersonal competencies

- 21 Coaching skill.
- 22 Feedback skill.\*
- 23 Group process skill.
- 24 Negotiation skill.
- 25 Presentation skill.\*
- 26 Questioning skill.\*
- 27 Relationship building skill.\*
- 28 Writing skill.\*

### Intellectual competencies

- 29 Data reduction skill.
- 30 Information search skill.\*
- 31 Intellectual versatility.\*
- 32 Model building skill.
- 33 Observing skill.\*
- 34 Self-knowledge.
- 35 Visioning skill.

\* Core competency.

## Conclusion

It can be seen from this brief overview of the history and present situation of UK vocational education and training that many of the existing problems are in fact perennial ones. In essence, there is an ongoing requirement to address internal market failure and global competitive factors. One of the messages that is abundantly clear during the current financial crisis that many nations are facing is that there should be a much greater investment in skills training during the economically successful times, which then will help when times become more adverse.

## Questions for reflection

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- Why are vocational education and training systems so complicated?
- To what extent do the three descriptions of trainer roles and competences above accurately reflect what actually happens in real life?
- Should governments interfere in the education and training of people in private companies and other organizations?

## Further information sources

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Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales: <http://www.daqw.org.uk/>  
 ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organizational Performance (SKOPE):

<http://www.skope.ox.ac.uk/>

Register of Regulated Qualifications: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework:

[http://www.scqf.org.uk/The\\_per\\_cent20Framework/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/The_per_cent20Framework/)

The professional standards for teacher, tutors and trainers in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can be accessed from:

<http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20110214161207/http://www.lluk.org/standards-and-qualifications/standards/professional-standards/>

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## 08

# European vocational education and training

**MARTIN MULDER**

*At EU level, the Commission will work: to give a strong impetus to the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training involving all stakeholders. This should notably result in the implementation of lifelong learning principles including through flexible learning pathways between different education and training sectors and levels and by reinforcing the attractiveness of vocational education and training. (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010B: 18)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the relationship between HRD and vocational education and training;
- understand the fading boundaries between continuing vocational education and training, human resource development and lifelong learning;
- have insights into the European context of VET;
- be familiar with some of the main sources of information about VET.

## Introduction

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As stated by one of the founding fathers of human resource development (HRD) Leonard Nadler (1980), HRD includes education, which in turn includes vocational education. Although Nadler was speaking about corporate HRD, the scope of HRD



can be widened to national or even international levels. From that perspective HRD is the total process of development of the people of a certain nation or region. This can easily be seen in developing countries where a comprehensive policy is being followed to increase the qualification levels of the entire population. In many cases this includes not only universal primary and secondary education, but also technical–vocational education and training (TVET), higher education and, in countries with a large proportion of the population having a livelihood in agriculture, agricultural extension (see for instance Yamada and Matsuda, 2007). So there is a legitimate reason why vocational education is included in this book on HRD. But also from the perspective of corporate HRD it is good to include the theme of vocational education and training (VET), as there are many links between VET and the world of work, not only because VET takes care of ‘delivering’ qualified graduates for the labour market, but also because many advanced VET institutions function as regional knowledge centres that deliver consultancy and applied research services to support innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises.

## VET in Europe – CVT – HRD – LLL: fading boundaries

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When we speak about VET in Europe, we need not only to specify what is meant by VET but also to define what is meant by Europe. Of course, geographically speaking, it is quite clear what Europe as a continent is. But when related to VET, most experts refer to the policy developments within VET in the European Union, which excludes a number of countries; however, to make things more complicated some non-EU countries (such as Norway and Iceland) serve as observers in the VET policy development processes in the European Union. There are also special arrangements with candidate and pre-accession countries (such as some of the western Balkan states and neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa), for which the European Training Foundation provides help in the development of education, training and labour market systems (see Chapter 10).

Regarding VET, within the EU it is quite common to speak about initial VET (or IVT) and continuing VET (CVT). CVT is part of lifelong learning, and corporate HRD (often referred to as training and development in organizations) is part of that. CVT also embraces further post-compulsory training of individuals who are interested in taking a certain course or in following a programme of higher education (such as from an Open University), or getting a higher qualification for career development purposes.

Boundaries between VET, CVT, HRD and LLL are fading away. Parts of VET are taking place in workplaces (in apprenticeships, learning–working contracts, projects, internships, field attachments); staff from companies are contracted to teach in VET; staff from educational institutions are being stimulated to refresh their experience by doing internships in companies; private training providers get accreditation to teach parts of or complete VET programmes; and through accreditation of prior learning (APL) (Colardyn and Bjørnåvold, 2004) employees get assessments followed by tailor-made training programmes offered by VET

institutions. In terms of governance, representatives of local or regional industry frequently hold positions on boards or committees of VET institutions. In various countries it is also common for employers' and employee organizations to co-govern educational institutions, and they are (sometimes regulated by law) expected to articulate needs for educational programmes.

## European VET and national systems of education: wide diversity

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VET has a place in the national systems of education, although its place varies considerably. Lane (1990) described the origins of the labour market traditions in the UK, France and Germany, and stated that the VET system in the United Kingdom is union-driven; she contended that the French VET system is state-driven and that the German VET system is industry-driven. The German VET system is known as the Dual System, which means that there is a part that is delivered by vocational schools and a part that is under the control of companies. The regions (Länder) are responsible for the theoretical/school part of the Dual System, while the state is responsible for the in-company part, which is governed by the social partners.

The place of VET in the cultures of the EU Member States also varies widely. In northern European countries like Germany and Finland VET has a high reputation, whereas in southern European countries general education is regarded as more valuable, which is understandable as youth unemployment figures there currently exceed 25 per cent. When the economy is in the doldrums flexibility is needed, and taking a VET track may be perceived as a dead end if there are no jobs available. A general tendency in Europe, however, is to seek admission to university education. This opens most opportunities for a future career, and fits with the growth of high-skill jobs (Cedefop, 2010b).

There are differences too in the participation and trends in VET in different EU Member States, observing and accession countries. During the early 2000s, overall participation in VET at the upper secondary education level exceeded 60 per cent, but since then this participation has decreased to about 50 per cent (Cedefop, 2010a). The developments in participation in VET are mixed. Countries in which participation is increasing in both absolute and relative terms (compared with all students in secondary education) are Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden. Countries in which absolute participation is increasing but relative participation is decreasing are Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Turkey. Countries in which absolute and relative participation are decreasing are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Cedefop, 2010a: 38). There are no clear explanations of why this is happening. One factor may be that the statistics are gradually improving, as it is extremely difficult to arrive at reliable comparable data regarding VET participation in the EU and the candidate countries. But different economic circumstances can also have varying effects on participation in VET. When the economy is flourishing students can study whatever they like and still get

a job. When the economy is in recession, job applicants are selected more intensively on the specific match between their field of study and the specific job requirements. Furthermore, as stated, with high youth unemployment students are less interested in following vocational education programmes, as they may expect fewer work opportunities after following these courses. Such differences in economic conditions can exist not only at national but even at regional levels. A third reason may be related to the up-skilling of jobs. Since job growth is predominantly taking place in the high-skills segment of the labour market, students may be attracted more and more to higher education, and consequently to the general side of upper secondary education.

## CASE STUDY

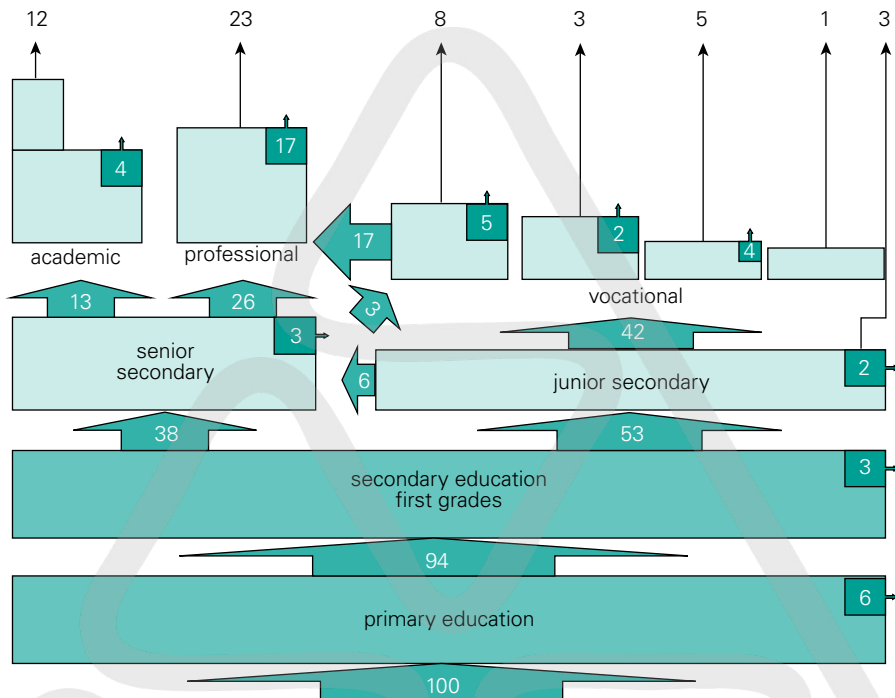
### In practice: Vocational education in the Netherlands

As stated, there is wide variation in vocational education in Europe, and there are countries with elaborate systems for this educational sector. An example may help to understand how different the situation is compared with countries like the United States, where comprehensive generic education is the predominant model and where vocational education in the high school exists for certain courses in vocational domains.

As an example, let us consider the vocational education system in the Netherlands (see 'Further information sources' at the end of the chapter for details of other European countries). The country has an elaborate system of vocational education, and participation in this educational sector is relatively high. To put the system of participation in vocational education and training in perspective, we should note that the Netherlands has a population of around 17 million inhabitants, and a labour market of around 7.5 million working persons. Elementary education consists of grade 1 to 8 (for pupils of 4 to 12 years of age). After that pupils go to a bridge period in secondary education where they are streamed according to their abilities in senior (havo-vwo) and junior secondary (vmbo) education (Figure 8.1). Junior secondary vocational education has tracks, one of which is vocationally oriented. It resembles the US high school in the sense that students can take vocational courses within a rather general curriculum. After junior secondary education students can move on to vocational education (mbo), which offers a range of programmes, varying in terms of duration, difficulty and organization (such as the so-called vocational training trajectory, bol, and the vocational guidance trajectory, bbl; the former is school-based and the latter is delivered as in the Dual System). After students have completed the highest level of vocational education or after they have finished senior secondary education they can go on to professional education, which is part of higher education and used to be called higher vocational education (hbo). Vocational (mbo) and professional (hbo) education comprise, respectively, 42 per cent and 26 per cent of the total student population within the given age group (roughly between 16 and 21 years of age), which makes up two-thirds of all students. This massive participation in vocational and (non-academic) professional education is quite different from the pattern in countries around the world that do not have elaborate systems of vocational education.

In Dutch vocational education special attention is given to the so-called vocational column. This is the ladder of preparatory vocational education (vmbo), upper secondary vocational education (mbo), professional education (hbo, which is the practical side of higher education)

**FIGURE 8.1** The educational system in the Netherlands (student flow percentages in numbers)



**SOURCE:** Kupper, Laurentzen and Mulder, 2012.

and academic (or scientific) education (wo). The vertical stratification of the VET system causes barriers in the student flows, and this is considered to be inefficient. Special programmes are being developed to give opportunities to talented students who can do more than the regular programmes allow, and enable them to 'stream up' more easily. An example of this is the associate degree programme (a two-year programme at hbo level for mbo graduates who do not want to follow a complete four-year hbo programme).

Another special issue of vocational education in the Netherlands is the binary system of higher education, which is gradually fading away. Under this system universities are responsible for academic education and higher vocational education institutes for professional education. Universities offer academic bachelor, master and doctoral programmes, while the higher vocational education institutes offer professional bachelor programmes and some professional master programmes. Institutes of higher vocational education have appointed lecturers, who are responsible for innovation in higher vocational education programmes and doing applied research in so-called knowledge circles, which are groups of teachers working together in a given specialization. The applied research is aimed at the needs of regional organizations or small and medium-sized companies that are not involved in the more general or pure academic research of universities.

## VET development in the European Union: the institutional context

A lot of attention is paid to the development of vocational education in the European Union. The institutional context of this is quite complex. In essence there are Member States of the European Union, and because of the enlargement process there are accession countries and pre-accession countries. The European Union is formed on the basis of a large number of voluntary agreements and much regulation, referred to as the *acquis Européenne*, which is basically all legislation of the EU. The so-called European competences (areas of legal responsibility) are distributed over various institutions, such as:

- The European Parliament, which is democratically elected by the EU citizens, and whose competence is to approve Union regulations, for instance regarding lifelong learning and the European Qualifications Framework.
- The European Commission, which acts as a series of large ministries with appointed experts, with the competence of preparing EU regulations and agreements.
- The European Council, which is the standing forum for heads of governments, along with regular meetings of heads of ministries in the different fields of government such as education and social affairs.
- The Committee of the Regions, which represents regions within and between countries and cities. This Committee has the right to advise on proposals that are being submitted to the Parliament. The importance of this Committee becomes plain when we realize that certain regions have specific interests that cannot always be brought to the fore by country representatives, who have to take the different interests within their countries into account. Also, due to their size, certain regions want to have a degree of influence in EU policy making; for instance, the German region of Bavaria alone would rank number 10 on the list of EU countries by number of inhabitants. This region has its own permanent representation in Brussels, in fact next to the Parliament buildings; it is also working on vocational education issues.

To fully understand the essence of the decision-making process of the European Union, and its effect on vocational education, it is necessary to know that the EU is built on a social model of governance. National bodies of employer and employee organizations are represented at the EU level. There are European confederations of employers' organizations and associations of unions as well as European umbrella associations of national professional associations. The European employers' and employee organizations meet regularly with EU institutions, thus constituting the European social dialogue, which is organized by sector (Winterton, 2000). This system of mutual deliberation is referred to as the sectoral social dialogue, and is supported by the European Commission. The respective parties also contribute to the development of agendas and dossiers concerning vocational education. Sectors have also created their own negotiation and cooperative forums. This typically happens in sectors with important international scope, such as languages, sports or logistics. An example of this is the fisheries sector. This is a difficult field in which to reach consensus, as the

fisheries sector faces major challenges because of the highly conflicting nature of fishing territories, quotas, over-fishing, unsustainability and the pressure of down-sizing the industry. Nevertheless, the sector works on the development of a common fisheries education and employment policy and practice, and the social partners have created Refope, the European Network for Fisheries Training and Employment.

Vocational education at the level of the EU has attracted attention for a long time, but became even more important after the Lisbon and Copenhagen declarations. The Lisbon declaration proclaimed the collective intentions of the European Union to become a leading sustainable knowledge economy that could withstand international competition and would create one labour and education space. In contrast to the regulations on the Eurozone and agriculture, there is no binding European legislation in the field of education. Policy development is based on voluntary actions such as comparisons, study visits, exchanges, case studies, benchmarks and reference models.

The 2002 Copenhagen declaration sparked enhanced cooperation in the field of vocational education and training in the EU Member States. This declaration stated that the role of vocational education and training was pivotal in reaching the Lisbon goals. A reference knowledge economy could not be realized without a strong education sector, and a competitive economy and a common labour space could not function without a well-trained labour force. Periodical reviews have been made on the progress of participating countries in vocational education and training and are published as the Maastricht, Helsinki, Bordeaux and Bruges communiqués. Again, open methods of coordination are being used to make progress on themes like vocational education and training quality, the Europass, the European qualification framework, the European credit transfer system for vocational education and training, career guidance, European student and teacher mobility, and teacher education for vocational education. In addition to these, various programmes have been developed and continued to enhance cooperation, such as the Leonardo da Vinci programme (vocational education and training), the Grundvig programme (adult education), the Erasmus programme (European university student mobility) and the Tempus programme (modernization of higher education and cooperation with countries surrounding the EU).

European cooperation takes different forms, as in the many Leonardo da Vinci projects (Mulder, 2006). The projects typically consist of projects of partner institutions in several EU Member States in specific fields, such as technology, healthcare and sustainable agriculture. From a political point of view, development of the vocational education agenda at the Union level depends upon the presidencies of the EU. Different presidencies have brought different themes to the fore, and these are aligned with the agenda of the Directorate for Vocational Education and Training of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. Programmes of activities, reviews and proposals are generated by vocational education and training staff of Member State ministries, supported by agencies like Cedefop (the European Agency for the Development of Vocational Training, based in Thessaloniki, Greece), which has prepared various reports on the state of vocational education and training within the EU. Cedefop maintains a network of experts in the EU Member States who report details of vocational education and training in their countries, using a common format. The work of this network, called Refernet, is accessible online via the general website of Cedefop (see Further information sources).



## EU vocational education and training policy instruments

Cedefop has listed the common European instruments, principles and guidelines for the development of vocational education and training at the EU level. These instruments are summarized in a slightly reworked version below (after Cedefop, 2010a). Elaborate dossiers on each component are available and accessible via the website of Cedefop.

### The European qualifications framework (EQF) (as agreed by the Council of the EU, 2008a)

A European reference framework consisting of eight levels of qualifications, specifying knowledge, skills and competence (see Figure 8.2). Competence is seen as the ability to apply knowledge and skills. The emphasis regarding competence is on professional autonomy, self-management and the ability to handle unpredictable situations, ranging from those where there is no scope for independent initiative (such as carrying out specific tasks under the direct supervision of a superior) to full autonomy and authority (while contributing to the advancement of a body of knowledge through research and development). The EQF is meant to support lifelong learning (for example, by advancing educational levels) and student and labour mobility (as educational institutions and employers in other countries to which the candidates want to move have a better understanding of the qualification level of the candidates). This implies that receiving educational institutions and prospective employers trust the EQF and referred levels. This trust may not be unconditional.

### The European credit system for VET (ECVET) (as agreed by the Council of the EU, 2009a)

The European credit system for vocational education and training is analogous to the Bologna process, which proposed a credit system for higher education, specifying credits as study-load packages of 28 hours with minimum numbers of credits for bachelor, master and PhD studies. As the credit system in higher education, ECVET helps to make vocational education and training programmes comparable. ECVET can also be used to validate courses taken in exchange programmes, so that these courses can be taken into account to fulfil the requirements for receiving a vocational qualification.

### European quality assurance framework for VET (EQAVET) (as agreed by the Council of the EU, 2009b)

The European quality assurance framework for vocational education and training is designed to enhance continuous quality development of the vocational education and training systems of EU Member States, and supports the implementation of quality management practices in all aspects of education.

### Europass (as agreed by the Council of the EU, 2004a)

The Europass is a series of documents: the Europass CV, the language passport, Europass mobility, diploma supplement and certificate supplement. These documents are meant to facilitate labour



**FIGURE 8.2** Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.

|             |  | KNOWLEDGE   | SKILLS  | COMPETENCE  |
|-------------|--|---|---|---|
|             |  | In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.  | In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments). | In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.   |
| LEVEL 1     | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 1</u> are | → basic general knowledge   | → basic skills required to carry out simple tasks   | → work or study under direct supervision in a structured context  |
| LEVEL 2     | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 2</u> are | → basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study   | → basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools  | → work or study under supervision with some autonomy  |
| LEVEL 3     | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 3</u> are | → knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study   | → a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information   | → take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study<br>→ adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems  |
| LEVEL 4     | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 4</u> are | → factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study   | → a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study   | → exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change<br>→ supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities |
| LEVEL 5*    | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 5</u> are | → comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge  | → a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills to develop creative solution to abstract problem  | → exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change<br>→ review and develop performance of self and others  |
| LEVEL 6**   | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 6</u> are | → advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles   | → advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problem in a specialised field of work or study  | → manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts<br>→ take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups                           |
| LEVEL 7***  | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 7</u> are | → highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research<br>→ critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields | → specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields   | → manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches<br>→ take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams             |
| LEVEL 8**** | The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 8</u> are | → knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields   | → the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend  | → demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research                                     |

SOURCE: European Commission ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/general/eqf/leaflet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/general/eqf/leaflet_en.pdf), 19 August 2011)

and geographical mobility. The assumption is that employers will find the standard format of the documents more easy to understand.

### Guidance and counselling (as agreed by the Council of the EU, 2004b and 2008b)

Guidance and counselling are meant for lifelong career development. They comprise: career development skills, access to career and counselling services, quality of guidance and counselling, and cooperation of policy bodies.

### Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (as agreed by the Council of the EU 2004c)

People acquire knowledge and skills (or competence in general) in various settings, not exclusively in formal educational programmes, but for instance in voluntary work or just while working in a paid job. In many cases this non-formal or informal way of learning leads to competence levels that are equivalent to or exceed certain qualifications. Principles and methods for identification and validation of these competencies are developed to determine their equivalence with formal qualifications. If certain competencies are equivalent to certain qualification levels, persons holding these competencies can be granted a formal qualification, which in certain cases may go along with an agreement to enrol in a part of an educational programme to tackle existing weaknesses. Assessments are popular methods to determine competence levels.

There are more EU policy development dossiers that have not yet been mentioned, such as teacher training for vocational training (Volmari, Helakorpi and Frimodt, 2009), and new apprenticeship systems and skills forecasting (European Commission, 2010a). There are advances in examination, testing and competence measurement methodology (such as those reported in a 2011 conference on modelling and measurement of competencies in higher education, organized by the Humboldt University in Berlin), which may become interesting for international comparative research in vocational education and training. However, compared with the studies for certain subject matter fields carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), research into comparative vocational education and training is difficult because of the wide variations within the sector. Comparative studies can be undertaken in specific fields in VET, such as engineering, accountancy, or nursing (as done by Achtenhagen, Baethge and Arends, 2006), but it will be extremely difficult to compare the general quality of VET systems in different countries.

### European VET theory and research

The history of VET theory and research is quite short compared with those in physics, medicine or agriculture. In general, it is not regarded as a basic discipline in itself but as an interdisciplinary field of science. Questions within vocational education and training are being studied from the perspective of a large series of disciplines,

including economics, psychology and sociology; and a very wide set of theories or theoretical notions are applied in or are applicable to VET. In the EU VET in general is not regarded as an academic field of study in which students can specialize. More commonly, students study a certain programme, and in this they take courses that are relevant for VET and may do a project in the context of VET, but this is done mostly in the framework of programmes in the fields mentioned above, or in courses on education and learning sciences or pedagogical sciences.

Internationally there is no overarching term that covers the body of knowledge that is relevant for VET. 'Laboragogy' could serve that purpose, which is a neologism composed of the elements *labor* (Latin: work) and *agogy* (Greek: leading, guiding, stimulating), as in pedagogy (the science of supporting the learning of children and adolescents; teaching methods) and andragogy (the science of supporting the learning of adults; Knowles, 1984). Laboragogy would be the interdisciplinary science to optimize vocational education and training, and would incorporate various contributions from different fields of knowledge.

Examples of relevant fields are occupational theories (with job analysis and synthesis as important elements); learning psychology (with transfer theories, activity theory, expansion theory); theories about authentic learning, self-directed learning, situated cognition, experiential learning, powerful learning arrangements and cognitive load; as well as competence theories; flexibility and mobility theories; instructional design theories; organizational theories, such as those considering the organization of work and theories about roles; professional development theories; theories about communities of practice; theories about cognitive apprenticeships and knowledge management; theories about implicit knowledge and cooperative knowledge construction; theories about knowledge transaction, negotiated meaning and regional learning; personal professional theories; reflection theories; and theories about organizational learning.

Although the VET research field is young, a considerable amount of research has been conducted and published. Germany is one of the countries within the European Union in which vocational education research has a prominent position. This is related to the field of vocational education pedagogy, which is being taught at bachelor and master level at various universities in the Federal Republic of Germany. The field is divided into two complementary parts: vocational pedagogy (*Berufspädagogik*) and the pedagogy of economics (*Wirtschaftspädagogik*). In other countries too there are groups of VET researchers whose work is brought together in handbooks and journals and presented at European conferences.

## Handbooks

From Germany two interesting handbooks have been produced, the *Handbuch Berufsbildungsforschung*, largely written by German authors (Rauner, 2005), and the *Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Research* (Rauner and Maclean, 2008), with a wider international authorship.

The first handbook goes into:

- the genesis of vocational education research;
- the relationship between vocational education politics, planning and practice;

- fields of vocational education research, such as job, sector and forecasting research, research into vocational areas (such as metal technology, electrical technology, construction, chemistry, economy and administration, food and nutrition, healthcare and education), the vocational education system, vocational planning and development, vocational labour and competence development, pedagogical content knowledge of vocational education, evaluation and quality assurance, and labour and technology;
- case studies in vocational education research;
- research methods, such as methodological issues and methods.

These themes show that the content of this handbook is quite broad. The instructional development perspective (or the perspective from the learning sciences) and the competence measurement perspective, however, are not very intensively represented in this handbook, which is understandable since research in these fields only became popular in recent years, but also because the research in these fields is being conducted in other research traditions and published in journals that are not necessarily popular amongst vocational education researchers.

The *Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Research* (Rauner and Maclean, 2008) covers:

- the genesis of TVET research;
- TVET research in relation to TVET policy development, planning and practice;
- areas of TVET research such as the development of jobs, research into vocational fields, research into TVET systems (such as comparative TVET research, research on the history of TVET research, case studies on national and international reporting on TVET, development and evaluation of courses in TVET, research on pre-vocational education, research on vocational colleges), research on the planning and development of TVET, cost–benefit and financing research, work-related competence development, research on the shaping of teaching and learning in TVET and on shaping work and technology;
- case studies in TVET research;
- research methodology issues.

The similarity of both handbooks is striking. The structure of the books is basically identical and consists of five broad parts: 1) the history of VET research; 2) the tensions between research, policy, planning and practice; 3) areas of research; 4) case studies of research; and 5) research methods. Part 3 is somewhat strange in this series of themes: it is as if Parts 1, 2, 4 and 5 do not address areas of research, but of course they do. The history of VET research, the tensions between research, policy, planning and practice, the case studies and research methods, all address areas or themes of vocational education research.

In the *Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Research* there are remarkable placements of subparts, such as the sub-section on historical research on technical and vocational education. Of course it differs from the descriptions of the genesis of TVET research, but on the other hand, the research into the history of TVET research is related to the research into the history of TVET itself. TVET development and TVET research influence one another. It is also surprising that the

part on evaluation, quality development and quality assurance is placed in the methodology section, whereas in the German handbook these topics are placed under the areas of vocational education research.

The big difference between the books obviously is that the German book is placed in the German tradition of vocational education, whereas Rauner and Maclean address many issues from various national traditions. This leads to problems already mentioned regarding international comparative vocational education research (Lauterbach, 2005). The major issue here is the comparability of vocational education systems and practices. For example: is vocational education the right phrase in the Anglo-American education tradition to represent the German *berufliche Bildung*? On a global scale, many different systems and practices are being represented by the term vocational education. Furthermore, vocational education and vocational training can be understood as the education process in vocational schools or colleges (education) and practice (training), as in internships for example, or even during employment, as was discussed at the beginning of the chapter. It makes international comparisons of vocational education research extremely difficult. This is also shown by the use of 'technical vocational education and training' (TVET) in the title of the international handbook. TVET is the term used by UNESCO-UNEVOC, the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, of which the German government is a major funder. TVET is a widely accepted term for vocational education and training in many countries outside Europe.

Despite these minor criticisms, it should be said that both handbooks have contributed much to the understanding of the field of vocational education research.

Another handbook published in the field of workplace learning (Malloch et al, 2011) is also significant for vocational education and training. The structure of this handbook is simple: the first part goes into theory, the second into research and practice, and the third into issues and future prospects. Thus this handbook is not purely a research book, although it is heavily based on research. It also contains a series of chapters on workplace learning theories. In his interesting contribution, Hager (2011) distinguishes three groups of theories in the field of workplace learning: 1) theories that emerged from psychology; 2) socio-cultural theories; and 3) post-modern theories. Other contributions are, for instance, from: Illeris (2011), who describes his insights into learning in society and learning in working life, and learning as competence development; Fuller and Unwin (2011), who go into the organizational context of workplace learning; Billett (2011), on his notions of subjectivity, the self and personal agency; and Engeström (2011), on his activity theory in the context of learning at work. Since an essential part of practically all vocational education is workplace learning, the theoretical notions of these authors are important for understanding, developing and supporting learning processes in workplaces. How to relate this to the theoretical part of vocational education programmes is another issue, and not the topic of the handbook.

The contributions in the part on research and practice are quite diverse. Eraut (2011) for instance describes the relationship between learning research and enhancing learning, which is quite fundamental but at the same time very practical. Based on his research he distinguished a series of learning modalities that can be used to support learning in organizations. Next to this Marsick, Watkins and O'Connor (2011) give a review of the workplace learning research in the United States; Solomon and



Boud (2011) do the same for Australia, and Gruber and Harteis (2011) for Europe. Space does not allow us to elaborate on this, but other contributions go into succession planning, competency-based learning, the knowledge economy and virtual workplace learning, to name but a few of the topics covered.

The last part of the handbook also presents a series of chapters touching upon the development of vocational practice, workplace learning and higher education, corporate universities, partnership between education and public and private organizations, technology, location and job structures, and ethics. A synthesis of these contributions would further strengthen the message of the importance of workplace learning theory and research for workplace learning practice, both in organizations and in schools. For vocational education the value added by the contributions is evident: vocational education has to prepare young people for a labour market of the (near) future and for lifelong learning. Labour market entrants will have to deal with changes in the workplace, organization, knowledge, technology and many other areas. They have to work and live in a society that is characterized by complexity, uncertainty and abuse of integrity. So issues of ethics, knowledge management, learning in the knowledge economy and technology must all be taken into account in developing quality vocational education trajectories.

### **Thematic books**

Apart from these handbooks, there are a number of thematic books, for instance on new apprenticeships. Rauner and Smith (2010) edited a volume that describes workplace learning, vertical mobility from vocational to higher education, the administration of dual systems of vocational education, the social foundation of apprenticeships systems, professional development of trainers, the facilitation of motivation and competence development, coaching and collaborative work-based learning, cost–benefit analysis, the quality of apprenticeships and case studies from various countries. The book stems from the work of the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship (INA) and speaks about the rediscovery of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship has indeed seen a revival in many countries, although the problems related to it are manifold. If there are no legal obligations, employers go along with the economy as far as their commitment to VET is concerned. When the economy is buoyant they tend to be very interested in recruiting and investing in graduates from VET, but when the economy is weak and organizations are starting to reorganize or to downsize, employers have to focus on core business issues, leaving little space for interns, apprentices and VET graduates. Nevertheless, research in the field of apprenticeships is important as it can shed light on the (potential) effectiveness of the system, and on facilitating and impeding factors.

There is also a growing interest in comparing VET in European countries with those in other regions. The OECD has a strong reputation for comparing general education systems. But only recently has research started to compare VET in China with that in other countries, which is understandable given the size of the population of China, its rapid economic development, and global demand for natural resources and consumer goods. Guo and Lamb (2010) published a book in which China's TVET system is compared with those of other countries. It goes into the education and training system in China so that readers can understand the background of TVET

in that country. Next the authors go into the issue of international comparisons of education, and treat the problems of comparison models and indicators. They review indicator research in China and select the indicators with which they perform their comparison. Then they present comparisons on socio-economic levels, resources and initial and continuing participation in TVET, and describe the work-based education and training situation in Yunnan (with over 40 million inhabitants). With this book we clearly go beyond the literature that originates in Europe, but it is very interesting from a EU–Asia comparative perspective.

## Research networks, journals and conferences on VET

The VET research community has become quite active in recent decades. In the 1970s and 1980s VET researchers still operated at national and regional levels, but since the (further) development of institutions and networks this has dramatically changed.

At national level there are different institutions and networks, such as the German Section Berufs-und Wirtschaftspädagogik (BWP) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaften (DGfE). In the British Educational Research Association there is the Special Interest Group for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, and The Netherlands Educational Research Association (VOR) has a division on Vocational Education, Corporate Training and Adult Education (BBV). Other educational research associations in Europe may have comparable units in their educational research associations.

At the EU level there is the Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET) of the European Educational Research Association (EERA) and the Special Interest Group for Learning and Professional Development of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI). The WIFO gateway to research on education in Europe maintains a Directory of Professional Contacts in the field of vocational education research.

Regarding journals on VET research, there are the *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, which has quite a long history, the new journals *Vocations and Learning*, which is the only VET research journal which is included in the Social Science Citation Index and *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training*. Other journals which do not have the words vocational education and training in the titles, but which publish research in this field are the *European Journal of Training and Development* (formerly the *Journal of European Industrial Training*), the *Journal of Workplace Learning* and the *International Journal of Training and Development*. The *European Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, which was a thriving multi-lingual journal on VET research and policy making published by Cedefop, has been discontinued because of budget cuts and reprioritization of Cedefop. This was perceived as a serious loss for the vocational education and training policy and research community and for Cedefop itself.

The journals mentioned vary in terms of their European scope. In fact all journals accept and publish research about VET in non-EU countries and research from other countries that is relevant for the EU context. Furthermore, apart from the general journals that address VET issues, there are specialized journals addressing certain content domains, including the *Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* and many others.



Conferences include those of the JVET, which is especially related to the journal *VETNET*, which has its strong research strand within the EERA and EARLI.

Many VET researchers (and practitioners) also meet in European VET projects funded by the European Union, such as the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which alone has over 1,300 projects running at present (<http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/extendedsearch.htm>, accessed 19 September 2011). On top of that there are the national projects funded by the EU Member States themselves, carried out by the smaller and larger centres of vocational education research in universities and institutes.

## Conclusion

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VET can rejoice at having received much policy and research attention. The VET-development agenda has clearly gained priority at the EU level during the last 10 years. Together with the development and enlargement of the EU, and the policy of establishing a recognized knowledge economy, VET has been put in a position where it can actively support the achievement of this goal. The successive presidencies of the EU have put a number of vital issues on the VET policy agenda, and the various policy reports show that much has been achieved during the last decade.

VET research has also grown and the research projects, conferences and journals are vibrant communities in which practices, approaches and findings are exchanged. As in the European VET policy development arena, colleagues in the VET research are in a collective learning process.

Despite attempts to thematically structure VET research, it is still to a large extent fragmented. There is little convergence of theories and mini-theories; there is little consensus about definitions; there is little operationalization of concepts in the direction of practice; research results are not being carried through into practical applications; and there is a major division between the objectivity and relevance of VET research.

Until now no literature has addressed the main components of VET in a comprehensive way; these include the VET system, VET administration, VET policy, management and organization of VET schools and training sites, VET curriculum development, learning and instruction in VET contexts, VET media and testing, and VET teacher education and professional development.

Given the information available on vocational teacher education, this field needs much more attention. Careers are now much more elaborate than older patterns suggest; employment in education can also be an intermediary step in a lifetime career (rather than a lifetime commitment); the external orientation of teachers has become more important (thinking outside-in); and student populations and their career ambitions are getting more diverse. The way in which demotivated youth can be reached and drop-out rates reduced is another issue. Research should also be conducted into the attractiveness and competitiveness of the job environments and other labour conditions of VET teachers and trainers.

There is also much need for more competence assessment research (although the first attempts to address this are promising), research into the relationship between

entrepreneurship and education (where again there has been a promising start), innovation education (not to be confused with the innovation of education), and the relationships between the corporate, national and individual perspectives on VET. More research is also needed into VET teacher education and development, which could benefit greatly from the vast amount of research into general teacher education and development.

## Questions for reflection

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- Compare and contrast human resource development (HRD) and vocational education and training (VET).
- Discuss the extent to which the European Union might converge the vocational education and training systems of the member countries.
- Vocational education is often undervalued in national policies – why might this be the case?

## Further information sources

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For education systems, descriptions in EU Member States Eurydice can be consulted at [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php)

For elaborate vocational education and training systems, the country reports of Cedefop can be consulted at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx>

Apprenticeship/workplace learning in the framework of vocational education: [http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/ersep/imi45\\_uk/00030039.asp](http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/ersep/imi45_uk/00030039.asp)

Bordeaux Communiqué (on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, Communiqué of the European Ministers for vocational education and training, the European social partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process): [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/bordeaux\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/bordeaux_en.pdf)

Bruges Communiqué (on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011–2020, Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011–2020): [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

Copenhagen Declaration (Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training): [http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125_en.pdf)

Erasmus-Mundus, a programme to enhance quality in higher education and mobility: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm)

Europass; there are national centres in the EU for this; see for example,

<http://www.uknec.org.uk/default.aspx>

Grundtvig, programme on practical learning for adults: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmeme/doc86\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmeme/doc86_en.htm)

Guidance and counselling: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/guidance-and-counselling-for-learning-career-and-employment.aspx>

Helsinki Communiqué (on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training – Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social partners and the European Commission, convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process): [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/helsinkicom\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/helsinkicom_en.pdf)

Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc52\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc52_en.htm)

Maastricht Communiqué (on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET) (Review of the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002) – 14 December 2004):

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/ip/docs/maastricht\\_com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/ip/docs/maastricht_com_en.pdf)

Skills needs: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/forecasting-skill-demand-and-supply/index.aspx>

Teacher training network: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/training-of-trainers-network-ttnet/index.aspx>

Tempus, programme on modernizing higher education in EU neighbour-countries: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc70\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc70_en.htm)

## Research associations

British Educational Research Association (BERA), Special Interest Group post-compulsory education and lifelong learning:

<http://www.bera.ac.uk/post-compulsory-and-lifelong-learning/>

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaften (DGfE), Sektion Berufs- und Wirtschaftspädagogik (BWP): <http://www.bwp-dgfe.de/>

Netherlands Educational Research Association (VOR) division Vocational Education, Corporate Training and Adult Education (BBV):

<http://www.vorsite.nl/nl/divisies-en-themagroepen/bbv.html>

European Educational Research Association (EERA), Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET): <http://www.eera.de/networks/network2/>

European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI), Special Interest Group Learning and Professional Development:

[http://www.earli.org/special\\_interest\\_groups/learning\\_professional](http://www.earli.org/special_interest_groups/learning_professional)

## Database of VET professionals

WIFO Gateway, Directory of Professional Contacts: <http://www.b.shuttle.de/wifo/>

## Journals

*Journal of Vocational Education and Training:*

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13636820.asp>

*Vocations and Learning:*

<http://www.springer.com/education+percent26+language/journal/12186>

*Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training:*

<http://www.sensepublishers.com/articles.php?tPath=3andocsid=1a7>

*Journal of European Industrial Training:*

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0309-0590>

*Journal of Workplace Learning:*

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=jwl>

*International Journal of Training and Development:*

<http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1360-3736>

Cedefop (Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle),  
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training:

(<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/aboutcedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx>)

APL – Accreditation of prior learning

CVT – Continuing vocational training:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/events/6123.aspx>

ECVET – European credit system for VET:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc50\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc50_en.htm)

EQAVET – European quality assurance framework for VET:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134_en.htm)

EQF – European qualification framework:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm)

IVT – Initial vocational education and training

Leonardo da Vinci programme:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmes/doc82\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmes/doc82_en.htm)

LLL – Lifelong learning:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmes/doc78\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programmes/doc78_en.htm)

TVET: Technical-vocational education and training

VET: Vocational education and training

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## 09

# National human resource development strategies: comparing Brazil, Russia, India and China

**ALEXANDRE ARDICHVILI, ELENA K ZAVYALOVA and VERA N MININA**

*By 2050, the combined economies of four BRICs will be larger than that of the G7 (seven largest developed economies).*

(GOLDMAN SACHS)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain the concepts of national human resource development (NHRD) and NHRD strategy;
- describe the NHRD efforts of the four fastest-developing economies of the world: Brazil, Russia, India and China;
- compare NHRD strategies in the four BRICs and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches adopted in these four countries.

## Introduction

National human resource development (NHRD) is sometimes equated with country-level manpower planning and human capital development. However, McLean (2004: 269) argues that 'NHRD goes beyond employment and preparation for employment issues to include health, culture, safety, community, and a host of other considerations that have not typically been perceived as manpower planning or human capital investment.' National or regional HRD was also described as encompassing 'education and training issues that are cast very widely to include basic education, industrial training, productivity and equity in labour forces and workplaces, creation of comparable labour market data, lifelong learning and management development' (Zanko and Ngui, 2003: 13).

Many countries of the world have developed national-level HRD programmes and strategies. Arguably, the economic success of Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea was largely due to their concerted efforts to create and pursue NHRD policies designed to support their countries' economic development strategies.

In this chapter, we will compare the NHRD strategies of four countries, commonly referred to as the BRICs: Brazil, Russia, India and China. The importance of studying these countries was pointed out by economists at Goldman Sachs, who predicted that by 2050 the combined GDP of the four BRICs will be larger than that of the G7 (the seven largest developed economies) (Goldman Sachs, 2010). Table 9.1 provides data in support of this projection.

**TABLE 9.1** Economic and demographic characteristics of BRICs and the United States (2009 data)

| Country       | Population (millions) | GDP (trillion \$)* | GDP/capita (\$)* | GDP annual growth rate (%) | Life expectancy at birth (country rank) |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Brazil        | 198                   | 2.01               | 10,100           | -0.2                       | 123                                     |
| Russia        | 141                   | 2.10               | 15,100           | -7.9                       | 163                                     |
| India         | 1,156                 | 3.57               | 3,100            | 7.6                        | 161                                     |
| China         | 1,338                 | 8.75               | 6,600            | 9.0                        | 108                                     |
| United States | 307                   | 14.14              | 46,000           | -2.6                       | 49                                      |

\* At purchasing power parity (PPP).

**SOURCE:** Central Intelligence Agency, 2010.

## National human resource development

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A country's progress in NHRD policies can be evaluated on two levels. First, macro indicators can be used. Second, a more in-depth analysis of specific policies can be conducted using the information obtained from government publications, analytic reports and academic articles.

One of the most frequently used macro indicators in NHRD research is the Human Development Index (HDI). It consists of three sub-indicators: health, education and the population's economic well-being. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth; education 'by mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and expected years of schooling for children of school going age'; and economic well-being by gross national income (GNI) per capita (Human Development Reports, 2010). In addition, we can compare measures of a society's innovativeness and efforts to promote its knowledge-based resources by using the Index of Knowledge Assessment, consisting of the Knowledge Economy Index (KEI) and Knowledge Index (KI) (World Bank, 2010), the index of innovation, economy and incentive regime and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Index (World Economic Forum, 2010).

A more specific analysis of NHRD policies could cover many systems, including healthcare and social security among others. However, in this chapter we focus on systems that contribute directly to the development of the human capital of a country: K–12 education, vocational and technical education (VET) and higher education. In addition, we will discuss the evidence of county-level planning and coordination among these three systems, and provide an assessment of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of each country's NHRD efforts.

### NHRD in Brazil

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In landmass, Brazil is the fifth largest country on Earth and the largest in Latin America. Brazil's population is about 200 million, making it the fifth largest country in the world. In purchasing power parity GDP, Brazil is among the world's 10 largest economies (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

In the 20th century Brazil experienced a series of destabilizing events, including a long period of military dictatorship, wild fluctuations of the rates of economic growth and rampant inflation. However, the reforms of the 1990s changed this situation. Since the beginning of the 21st century Brazil's economy has been characterized by a stable positive balance of trade, low rates of inflation, fast growth of key economic sectors, increased foreign direct investment and strong exports (Baer, 2008).

Table 9.2 shows that HDI has been growing steadily over the past 20 years and today Brazil is among those countries with high levels of human development. According to the World Bank's Knowledge Assessment Methodology, Brazil occupied 54th place among 145 countries in 2009 (World Bank, 2009).

**TABLE 9.2** Dynamics of HDI in BRICs, 1990–2010

| Year  | Country/HDI/Category (L – Low; M – Medium; H – High) |           |           |           |
|-------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|       | Brazil   | Russia    | India     | China     |
| 1990  | 0.730 (M)  | 0.862 (H) | 0.309 (L) | 0.566 (M) |
| 1995  | 0.809 (H)  | 0.769 (M) | 0.451 (L) | 0.650 (M) |
| 2000  | 0.757 (M)  | 0.781 (M) | 0.577 (M) | 0.722 (M) |
| 2005  | 0.800 (H)  | 0.802 (H) | 0.619 (M) | 0.777 (M) |
| 2010* | 0.699 (H)  | 0.719 (H) | 0.519 (M) | 0.663 (M) |

\* Since 2008 the methodology for calculating HDI has changed. Therefore, a direct comparison of scores for 2007 and earlier and for 2008 and later years would not be informative. We include HDIs for 2010 to show the general trend. For more information on the methodological changes refer to: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2010\\_EN\\_TechNotes\\_reprint.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2010_EN_TechNotes_reprint.pdf).

**SOURCE:** Human Development Reports for various years.

**TABLE 9.3** Indices of knowledge economy in the BRICs

| Country | Knowledge economy index (KEI) | Knowledge index (KI) | Economy incentive regime | Innovation | Education | Information and communication technology index (ICT) |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------|--|
| Brazil  | 5.66                          | 6.11                 | 4.31                     | 6.19       | 6.02      | 6.13   |
| Russia  | 5.55                          | 6.82                 | 1.76                     | 6.88       | 7.19      | 6.38   |
| India   | 3.09                          | 2.95                 | 3.50                     | 4.15       | 2.21      | 2.49   |
| China   | 4.47                          | 4.66                 | 3.90                     | 5.44       | 4.20      | 4.33   |

**SOURCE:** World Bank, 2009.

Brazil's government is emphasizing the need to transition from a traditional, agriculture and industry-based model of development to a knowledge-based economy (Drodge and Shiroma, 2004). A major emphasis in this transition is on the development of the educational system. In 1988, the right to education was guaranteed by the Constitution as one of the fundamental rights of Brazilian citizens. Article 206 of the Federal Constitution of Brazil guaranteed access to free education and provided for the parallel existence of state-owned and private educational institutions (Aurelio, 2006).

In 1995 the Ministry of Labour adopted the National Plan for Vocational Education (PLANFOR). The main focus of this plan was on creating a system of lifelong learning, in which increasing numbers of citizens would develop their employability by increasing their professional competence in high-demand areas, disposition to learn and entrepreneurial attitude. In 1998, a National Plan of Education and National Curriculum Guidelines were adopted by the Ministry of Education, along with guidelines for the reform of the VET system (Drodge and Shiroma, 2004).

The Federal government started to pay increased attention to problems of primary education and adult literacy in the 1990s. During these years, political pressure from unions and increasing demands from employers for qualified employees strengthened the government's political will to direct more than two-thirds of the education budget towards the development of primary education (Kosack, 2009). This trend continued in the early 2000s, when the government created a programme of support for primary and secondary education, called the Fund for Support of Development of Basic Education (FUNDEN). FUNDEN provided for active collaboration between the Federal government and educational institutions in all federal states, with a special emphasis on addressing the needs of rural and urban populations, families of different income levels and different races.

Since then, the levels of investment in education have been growing. For example, in 2005 the government was spending 4.5 per cent of GDP on education and since 2006 it has spent 5 per cent or more (Table 9.4).

**TABLE 9.4** Educational Expenditures in BRICs, 1980–2007

| Year | Country/educational expenditures (public spending on Education) (A): % of GDP/(B): % of government expenditure |      |        |      |       |      |       |      |
|------|--|------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
|      | Brazil   |      | Russia |      | India |      | China |      |
|      | (A)  | (B)  | (A)    | (B)  | (A)   | (B)  | (A)   | (B)  |
| 1980 | 3.5  | –    | –      | –    | 2.9   | 10.4 | 2.5   | 9.3  |
| 1985 | 3.6  | 19.1 | –      | –    | 3.2   | 9.0  | 2.5   | 12.2 |
| 1998 | 4.9  | 12.3 | –      | –    | 3.6   | 12.6 | 1.9   | –    |
| 2000 | 4.0  | 12.0 | 2.9    | 10.6 | 4.4   | 12.7 | –     | –    |
| 2005 | 4.5  | 14.5 | 3.8    | 11.8 | 3.2   | –    | –     | –    |
| 2007 | 5.2  | 16.1 | 4.1    | 11.8 | –     | –    | –     | –    |

SOURCE: World Bank, 2010.

An important contribution to combating the low levels of enrolment in primary and secondary education was made by the federal Bolsa Familia scheme. Under this programme, families with a monthly income of less than 90 reais per person receive 15 reais per child aged 5 to 15 years, provided that the children opt for regular attendance at school instead of working (*Economist*, 2010).

While primary and secondary education remain the main focus of the NHRD strategy, the Brazilian government is also making an effort to develop the higher education system. Between 2003 and 2006 five new federal universities were created (Aurelio, 2006). Existing federal universities receive substantial government subsidies aimed at expanding educational offerings (especially in the area of technology education), internationalizing higher education and increasing the universities' ability to attract top talent (Paula, 2009). Despite these efforts, the Brazilian public university system is not able to keep up with the demand for higher education, while private institutions are financially out of reach for the majority of the population and many of these private institutions are unable to provide high-quality education.

## Summary

Most human capital indicators for Brazil are in the high range. Significant progress has been made since the 1990s in strengthening the country's basic education and literacy levels, and some progress has also been made in developing VET and higher education. At the same time, illiteracy levels are still high, the VET and higher education systems are unable to cope with the demands of a knowledge-based economy, and high levels of poverty and racial discrimination create barriers for development.

## NHRD in Russia

In land mass, Russia is the largest country on Earth, and in purchasing power parity GDP, the eighth largest economy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Russia has the largest natural gas reserves in the world and the second largest reserves of oil. In recent years it has also become the world's largest oil producer.

Russia is one of the most interesting countries to consider in the context of NHRD, because there the levels of economic growth and human development have experienced wild fluctuations over the past 20 years. In 1990, when the first HDI report for Russia was produced, Russia was among the 25 countries with the highest levels of human development, with an HDI of 0.92 (Human Development Reports, 2010). After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the HDI started to decline and Russia joined the group of countries with a medium level of HD. Only 15 years later Russia managed to re-join the group of countries with high HD levels (Table 9.2). The pattern of economic development shows the same trend: an abrupt fall in the 1990s, followed by a rapid improvement between 2004 and 2007 and sharply negative results in 2008–09. The latest decline is related to Russia's dependency on world demand for oil and gas – its main sources of wealth. Sharp declines in energy prices during the global recession destabilized Russia's economy more than the economies of the other BRICs. Nevertheless, the Knowledge Economy indices and the Innovation Index are quite strong: according to these indices Russia is 60th out of 145 countries and ahead of all the other BRICs.

## NHRD in Russia

Russia has one of the highest levels of primary education enrolment in the world – almost 99 per cent. However, according to government statistics, there are more than 800,000 homeless children in the country. These children don't have any access to education and are not accounted for in calculations of school enrolments. In addition, there are wide regional differences in educational enrolment (UNDP, 2005).

The strategy for the country's long-term development, formulated in 2000, included an explicit emphasis on re-building its human capital (UNDP, 2005). High priority issues are:

- elimination of the existing disparities among regions and within the regions;
- monitoring the indicators of primary and secondary education, including the numbers of children currently not covered by the educational system and of children requiring special education services;
- development of strategies to eliminate cases of exclusion of children from the educational process;
- reforming the administration and financing of the educational system.

Another national-level priority project in Russia today is the project 'Education', which includes programmes aimed at the development of various professional groups of the population (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russia Federation, 2010).

### CASE STUDY

#### In practice: The Russian VET system

While all parts of the Russian education system were profoundly affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the impact was most dramatic in the area of vocational education and training. Up until 1991, under the centrally planned system, VET in Russia was provided by PUs (*Profuchilishche*, professional training colleges). PUs, owned and regulated by the state, had close ties with state-owned enterprises. This link provided guaranteed apprenticeships and job placements for students. However, after the breakup of the USSR, the VET system went into a precipitous decline. Since many state-owned factories were closed or privatized, PUs lost their sources of support, connection to the labour market and guaranteed job placement opportunities for graduates. Many of the PUs were closed, and those that remained were often preparing students for nonexistent jobs (Walker, 2006). In addition, while all parts of the Russian education system suffered a sharp decline in government allocation of funding in the early 1990s, the VET system was especially hard hit.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s this started to change. A combination of the Russian government's efforts and the support of international development agencies and projects, funded by the European Union, resulted in a modest resurgence of the VET system. Some of the notable changes included: a focus on more marketable skills (eg by reducing the number of professions for which PUs trained their students, from more than 1,200 in the late 1980s to fewer than 300 in the mid-1990s); partial transfer of authority to local education agencies (for example, regional authorities were allowed to develop at least 30 per cent of the PU curricula



to meet the demand of local markets); and a shift from an emphasis on training provision for the manufacturing sector to a focus on skills for the service industry (Walker, 2006). However, studies show that many PU graduates are unable to find employment in occupations they trained for and are forced to either continue their education through the higher education system or find employment in other areas at predictably lower salary levels. A major problem faced by the VET system in Russia is the perceived lack of prestige of many occupations traditionally associated with vocational-technical education tracks. Parents and students believe that VET is the educational choice of the last resort, an option for those who are academically challenged and unable to undertake university courses.

### Questions

- 1 How might the negative societal perception of VET be changed to attract high-quality students and faculty to this system?
- 2 What is your assessment of the major shake-up of the PU system since the collapse of the USSR? Is the disappearance of hundreds of PUs a negative trend or a step towards making the system more efficient?

### Summary

The data on NHRD in Russia present a mixed picture. On the one hand, the HDI and other indices are higher than in the other BRICs, and some progress is being made towards modernization of the educational system. On the other hand, the educational system remains underfunded and is predominantly based on the old model, focused on the development of human resources for natural resource extraction and the traditional manufacturing sectors of the economy.

### NHRD in India

Experts predict that by 2050 India's population will reach 1.8 billion people, surpassing that of China, and by 2012 close to 25 per cent of the world's labour force will be living in India (Rao and Varghese, 2009). India's economy is the fifth largest in the world based on its purchasing power parity GDP, but occupies only 164th place in per capita GDP rankings (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). India has a large traditional industry sector (including pharmaceuticals, textile and automotive industries) and fast-growing new high-technology sectors (including biotechnology, information technology and software development), and is a major provider of outsourcing services and technology transfer to other developing countries.

Since the mid-1980s India's HDI has been growing by about 1.3 per cent annually, and reached 0.612 in 2007 (Human Development Reports, 2010). This positions India as a country with a medium level of human development and behind the other BRICs (Table 9.2).

One of the reasons for the relatively modest levels of HDI is India's low rating on the education component of the index. The education system is not able to keep up with demand, and while the total number of educational institutions is large, high-quality college and university programmes are scarce.

The Indian government regards human capital as the country's main competitive advantage on the global market. This fact was underscored by the creation, in 1985, of the Ministry of HRD. The Ministry's efforts are focused on the following priority areas (Rao and Varghese, 2009):

- increasing investment in education;
- increasing the number of educational institutions;
- expansion of vocational and special education;
- focus on the quality of training programmes;
- increased access to education, supported by government subsidies.

Among the most important programmes that are currently being implemented is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Its main goal is 'learning for all'. The programme focuses on: broadening access to primary and secondary education; improving the quality of education, especially in the fields of linguistics, mathematics and technology; and reducing gender disparity in education. The programme is funded by the central government, with the support of some international organizations. The budget of the SSA programme for 2002–06 was equal to 0.3 per cent of the country's GDP (Dougherty and Herd, 2008).

The programme has resulted in impressive changes: from 2003 to 2006 the number of children not receiving education declined from 25 million to 9.6 million; enrolment in primary schools increased by 10 per cent annually, while the percentage of children dropping out of education has declined; the gender gap in education has narrowed: the index of gender equality in primary education reached 90 per cent, and at higher levels of education 83 per cent; access to education for people from lower social strata was raised, particularly by providing low-income families with free school supplies (World Bank, 2010).

Educational development strategies are supported by numerous other programmes and regulations. For example, the government-funded 'Mid-day meals' programme provides subsidized food in schools. Furthermore, in 2006 the government passed a law prohibiting children aged 14 years and younger from engaging in low-paid work instead of attending school (Dougherty and Herd, 2008).

In addition to investment in education, over the last decade the Indian government has made a significant effort to create a favourable climate for scientific and technological progress. In the year 2000, the government announced a programme for technological leadership in the new millennium. In addition, the new science and technology policy, adopted in 2003, aimed at increasing expenditures on R&D to 2 per cent of GDP. Despite these efforts, by measures of knowledge economy India occupies only the 109th place among 145 countries (World Bank, 2010).

In the area of VET, the Indian government has an especially ambitious vision, which is articulated in its National Skills Development Policy (Government of India, 2009). The policy aims to increase the number of individuals annually completing VET programmes from 3 million to 11 million in just five years. It is assumed that

by 2022 more than 500 million people will undergo some form of skills training and re-training. The Skills Development Policy is envisaged as part of the comprehensive economic and workforce education programme of the government, and emphasizes the development of a highly skilled, flexible workforce for the high-technology and service sectors of the economy. The policy also envisages the establishment of a framework for coordination among various federal ministries, state agencies and the private sector (Beddie, 2009).

## Summary

In recent years, India has made great advances in its economic development and NHRD. The Indian government is focusing on high-technology development and reforms in the educational system, with the aim of becoming a major global supplier of talent for high-technology sectors. However, there are also numerous barriers, among them the disparity in income and access to services and benefits between different regions of the country, remnants of the caste system and gender inequality in educational attainment and access to education.

## NHRD in China

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During the last three decades China has undergone fundamental socio-economic reforms, accompanied by strong economic growth rates. It is predicted that by 2020 China will become a member of the elite group of innovative economies including the United States, Japan, South Korea and Finland (Grishina, 2009). China, like India, is rich in human resources: in 2009 its population was 1.3 billion people. The annual population growth rate, although lower than India's, is positive: in 2004–09 it averaged 0.6 per cent. By purchasing power parity GDP China is the second largest economy in the world, while by GDP per capita it holds 128th place among 227 countries (World Bank, 2009).

The recent global recession has had no significant effect on the Chinese economy: the increase in unemployment was negligible, and the GDP growth rate was not only positive but also among the top five in the world (Table 9.1).

Over the last 30 years, the Chinese HDI has been growing annually at 1.37 per cent on average, reaching 0.772 in 2007 (Table 9.2). As a result, China ranks today among the countries with an average level of human development. In comparison with the other BRICs, China falls behind Russia and Brazil on this indicator, but is ahead of India.

China is planning to significantly strengthen its innovation and research potential by 2020. The slogan of the new policy is 'man [sic] is the root of everything' (Shilov, 2009). New social reforms are oriented towards the development of a harmonious society with high moral ideals and high degrees of creativity, and the development of human capital is central to this strategy (Yang and Wang, 2009).

China's traditional educational system has a long and rich history. It is believed that in the Middle Ages China held a leading position in the world in terms of educational development. However, since the 17th century the country has faced

a drastic decline in traditional education, culminating in a transition to a Western system of education in the 20th century. From the 1950s to the 1970s a Westernized vocational education system was successful in fulfilling the need for growing numbers of trained employees for the newly created state-owned industrial enterprises. But later on, when it became necessary to transition to a knowledge-based economy, this system proved unable to cope with the new demands.

The fast economic growth achieved since the 1980s resulted in increased investment in VET, but the quality of training provided by this system was generally low (Barabasch, Huang and Lawson, 2009). In 1996 the Chinese government passed the Vocational Education Law, aimed at establishing a comprehensive VET system. Among the provisions of this law were the establishment of occupational standards, creation of a certification system, and provision of incentives to companies to provide training to their employees and to collaborate with the VET institutions. However, the efforts to develop the VET system face serious obstacles. One of the barriers is that, unlike higher education, the Chinese VET system suffers from an image problem: while most Chinese parents are strongly committed to making necessary sacrifices to help their child(ren) acquire the best possible higher education, very few of them would consider VET a desirable choice. Therefore, despite the government's efforts to upgrade the VET system, it is not likely to attract the best pupils and instructors.

The Chinese government emphasizes the need for transition from an excessive focus on highly specialized vocational training to a professional education approach focused on preparing generalists capable of thinking independently and being innovative (Shilov, 2009). At the same time, the government is investing in the development of VET programmes in different regions of the country. It is based on the model '2+1' or '1+2', which means two years of learning at university and one year of experiential learning in a company; two years of learning in the western region and one year of learning in the eastern region, or two years learning in the city and one year of learning in a rural area (Blokхина and Zvantsova, 2009).

## CASE STUDY

### **In practice: Chinese higher education: the government regulation and evaluation system**

The emphasis on science and technology requires the development of a new educational system that is able to provide high-quality human resources with a strong background in maths, science and engineering. To achieve this goal, the Chinese government has adopted a set of regulations giving the higher education institutions more autonomy, while at the same time establishing special agencies for evaluating institutions' efficiency (Garifullina, 2006). According to these new regulations, all Chinese universities have to complete a quality assessment once every five years (Garifullina, 2006). This activity is controlled by the Ministry of Education of China, which maintains the database on the quality of higher education.

The system engaged in monitoring and assessing the quality of education in China includes both state and independent public agencies, which report to the Ministry of Education. Three

of these agencies are: the National Audit Committee, which provides the accreditation of new universities or programmes; the Higher Education Evaluation Center (HEEC), which conducts assessment of programmes of undergraduate higher education; and the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education – Development Center (CADGEC), which provides assessment of graduate-level programmes of higher education (Garifullina, 2006).

In addition, quality assurance agencies were established to help universities improve their internal audit processes of the quality of education. Regional educational authorities provide recommendations to local educational institutions about ways to prepare for assessment, but they are not directly involved in assessment procedures (Garifullina, 2006).

### Questions

- 1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of creating such an elaborate system of regulation and performance evaluation in higher education?
- 2 Why is the Chinese government putting a special emphasis on higher education at this stage?

The new strategy for NHRD development, formulated under the guidance of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and designed to be completed by 2020, includes the following priorities:

- development of a lifelong learning education system based on Chinese cultural values;
- expansion of vocational training, aimed at better matching of employee competences to business requirements;
- investment in intellectual capital, providing closer links between education, scientific and technical innovations and economic development as well as between educational, cultural and social progress.

(Blokhhina and Zvantsova, 2009: 79–81)

Since the mid-1980s the government has sought to create conditions for the development and enhancement of scientific and technological capacity. State Programme 863 was launched in 1986 to develop the scientific and technical capacity of the country as a basis for sustainable economic growth. It targeted such priority areas as bioengineering, space engineering, information technology, laser technology, automation, energy, new materials and ocean engineering (Grishina, 2009). In recent years the government has added such priority areas as networking, information security, software, advanced processor chips and intelligent information-processing systems.

In 2009 China ranked 81st out of 145 countries on the index of knowledge economy (World Bank, 2009). To improve the country's position, the government created a plan for medium and long-term science and technology development. According to the plan, by 2020 investment in R&D will reach 2.5 per cent of GDP, the contribution of science and technology to the economy will increase to 60 per cent, and dependence on external technology will be reduced to 30 per cent (Grishina, 2009: 90–93).

## Summary

The Chinese government is making a concerted effort to develop the country's human capital. Like India, China puts special emphasis on the development of human resources for the science and technology fields. The conditions for achieving the government's long-term goals are quite advantageous: the Chinese population has high levels of education, and reforms of the educational system have been in progress for more than two decades. However, a number of societal and structural problems, especially regional disparities in levels of economic development, could negatively affect the rates of growth.

## NHRD in BRICs: comparative analysis

The previous sections show that the BRICs share some important characteristics, including rapid economic growth over the last decade and implementation of government-level programmes aimed at strengthening parts of their human capital development systems. There are also significant differences among the BRICs, both in indices and in qualitative assessment of strategies.

While Russia's and Brazil's lead in HDI and KEI is evident from Table 9.5, a closer look at additional indicators provides a more nuanced picture of successes in the use and development of human capital (HC) (Table 9.6). Some of the notable differences are:

- Russia and China are leading in the number of patents.
- China and Brazil are leading in high-tech exports, but China is far ahead of all other BRICs on this indicator, while India is the leader in outsourcing and exports of high-tech services.
- India and China lead in the share of scientific publications throughout the world and the quantity of research institutions.

All four countries are making efforts to develop the same parts of the NHRD system and are making progress in some of these areas. Brazil and Russia spend larger shares of their education funds on primary and secondary education. In China and

**TABLE 9.5** Comparison of the BRICs according to three leading indicators

| Country Programmes/factors                | Brazil | Russia | India | China |
|---|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Existence of a coordinated NHRD programme |        |        | +     | +     |
| HDI                                       | 0.813  | 0.817  | 0.612 | 0.772 |
| KEI                                       | 5.66   | 5.55   | 3.09  | 4.47  |

**SOURCE:** World Bank, 2009; Human Development Reports, 2010.



**TABLE 9.6** Ratings of the BRICs according to various comparative indices

| Country Index (rank among all countries)   | Brazil | Russia | India | China |
|--|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Number of patents, 2007  | 58     | 41     | 57    | 54    |
| High-tech exports, 2006  | 39     | 69     | 54    | 9     |
| Number of engineers and scientists   | 57     | 34     | 3     | 52    |
| Number of research institutions  | 43     | 45     | 27    | 37    |
| Number of students in higher education institutions (as % of total number of students), 2006 | 76     | 16     | 98    | 81    |
| Accessibility of education, 2006   | 64     | 89     | 77    | 120   |
| Government prioritization of ICT   | 112    | 113    | 24    | 38    |

**SOURCE:** World Economic Forum (2009)

India funds are to a greater extent invested in secondary and higher education. China and India have comprehensive national programmes that encompass all three major elements of the system – primary and secondary education, VET and higher education – and there is evidence of coordination among these systems. Russia and Brazil have programmes in some of these areas, but we cannot conclude that there are coordinated NHRD efforts in these two countries.

The Chinese and Indian models of NHRD are close to what Ashton, Sung and Turnin (2000) describe as the ‘developmental state’ model, characterized by centralized government planning on multiple levels, encompassing multiple elements of the overall system, and targeted at the development of specific priority areas that are tied to larger economic policies. Such approaches were successfully implemented in the past by Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. Brazil and Russia seem to be following the ‘neo-market’ model, characterized by lower levels of government intervention and planning, with government programmes focusing on only some elements of the system and leaving the development of other elements to market forces.

## Conclusion

Discussion in this chapter suggests that BRICs can be divided into two groups: 1) Brazil and Russia; and 2) China and India. The first group has better starting



conditions and higher current levels of HC development. However, the governments of these two countries do not seem to have sufficient political will to make a concerted effort at creating coordinated country-level strategies for investment in HC development. The second group of countries has less advantageous starting conditions but is making a much more coordinated effort to develop HC. In addition, these countries demonstrate higher rates of economic growth and have made significant progress in their transition from traditional to knowledge-based economies. In summary, in terms of present human capital capacity, the BRICs can be arranged in this order (from high to low): Russia, Brazil, China and India. In terms of the actual use of the potential and opportunities for future HC growth, the BRICs can be re-arranged: China, India, Brazil and Russia (we place Russia behind Brazil because in addition to other barriers that are common to these countries, Russia is also facing a serious decline in the workforce pool). We assume that in the near future China and India will overtake the economies of Russia and Brazil on most indices, provided that they can maintain the momentum created by their current NHRD efforts.

## Questions for reflection

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- What impact might the emergence of the BRIC countries have on the policies of mature Western countries?
- What advice would you give to policy makers about education and training in the BRIC countries?
- All countries appear to be in an economic race. Is this beneficial to all members of their societies?

## Further information sources

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United Nations Development Programme: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

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## 10

# International development: policy learning as an approach to VET reform in transition and development countries

**SÖREN NIELSEN and MADLEN SERBAN**

*Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction. (JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the role of policy making;
- be familiar with the mission and role of the European Training Foundation;
- understand some of the educational challenges facing transition countries;
- be familiar with the development of a vocational education and training policy;
- understand the implications for foreign policy advisers in HRD.

## Introduction

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Globalization is a driver for change not only in economic relations but also for contemporary educational systems. The central issue of the dialectics of globalization and localization in education has been taken up with particular vigour by several authors and researchers (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Zajda, 2005; Rust, 2000). At the core of this debate is the interaction between local and global levels and the complex questions of policy borrowing and policy lending (Phillips, 2005).

This chapter will try to combine the new learning paradigm with structural reform of vocational education and training systems, with an emphasis on policy making in countries in transition or in states of development.

The focus is on policy ‘learning’. ‘Policy’ is about visions for development and the ways to achieve goals, and the policy-learning concept was developed to argue that systemic reforms of vocational education and training in development and transition countries (and indeed any major reform in any country) will only be successful and sustainable if policy development, formulation and implementation are firmly based on broad ownership and embeddedness in existing institutions. The concept of policy learning has been developed in the European Training Foundation (ETF) in a critical discussion with more traditional approaches to policy transfer and policy copying.<sup>1</sup> It emphasizes active engagement of national stakeholders in developing their own policy solutions based on the understanding that there are simply no valid models but at most a wealth of international experience in dealing with similar policy issues in other contexts. The concept has major implications for foreign assistance and in particular for the role that individual and institutional policy advisers can and should play in their cooperation with colleagues in partner countries.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will discuss the overall issue of education policy being influenced transnationally. It will locate policy learning at the centre of these transnational processes and will focus in particular on how international assistance can better contribute to sustainable reform of national education systems.<sup>3</sup> We will argue that there are many similarities between the current international discussions about new learning, the new professionalization of teachers and our own view about the role of international policy advisers. Educationalists are discussing the need for teachers and trainers to shift from being transmitters of expert knowledge and skills to students – who are largely considered to be passive receivers of information – towards becoming facilitators of the learning processes of people who want to become competent themselves. If systemic policy reform is about national stakeholders needing – and being willing – to actively learn new policies rather than being told what to do, then international advisers should take proper notice of these discussions. After all, the new learning paradigm is firmly based on new insights about how people learn and about how more experienced ‘experts’ can help them to become competent.

The text first locates the mission and role of the ETF, followed by a definition of the key concepts related to ‘policy learning’, then by a description of the educational policy challenges facing countries in transition and an analysis of how transnational educational policy frameworks influence national vocational education and training (VET) policy making, with a brief reference to emerging EU policies. Then key messages from the new learning paradigm are extracted, and from these guidelines

for their application in the policy-making field are derived. A brief reflection on three recent ETF cases of policy learning in action in Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Turkey will be presented. Finally, ETF's new, overarching VET development strategy is discussed, an approach that has the ambition of combining policy learning with evidence-informed policy making in education. We will conclude the chapter by drawing out some implications for foreign policy advisers in the HRD field.

## The mission and role of the European Training Foundation

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The ETF is the European Union's Centre of Expertise supporting vocational education and training reform in third countries in the context of the EU external relations programmes. The ETF is assisting EU neighbouring countries in reforming education and training systems through dissemination of EU policies and good practice, undertaking information and analysis, and facilitating policy learning and capacity building.<sup>4</sup> The ETF works in 29 countries in south east Europe, eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the southern Mediterranean region.

While the ETF is not a research institute but a centre of expertise in development of vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective, the Foundation must always work in a knowledge-based way in carrying out its often very complicated tasks in countries of transition. More generally, the issue of what educational systems are supposed to achieve constitutes what has been called a complex and ill-defined problem. It is common sense that education has an influence on individuals and society, but how and to what extent is still very much a matter of substantial debate. There is demand for research and useable knowledge in educational policy making, a demand that is not being met as well as it could be. The challenges are much bigger in countries in transition or under modernization however. Transition implies a substantial change of life – it involves the dismantling of the old and the emergence of a new social structure. The transition process has turned out to be a much longer, more complex and contradictory social process, involving more painful social consequences, than expected. The VET and labour market reforms take place within a deep-rooted transformation where the important drivers in our partner countries have been and are a movement towards the basic characteristics of the new social order: private ownership, a market economy, multi-party parliamentary democracy, civil institutions, human freedom and rights. This all requires a deeper knowledge base and a developed knowledge-management system in the ETF.

The ETF has to work within an expertise triangle of: 1) VET and labour market expertise; 2) radically expanding and innovative EU policies in our field; and 3) in-depth country knowledge. This is a territory not very well covered by contemporary social and educational research, and the ETF therefore has an obligation to help develop a better and more consolidated knowledge base for policy facilitation.

Today, the evidence base regarding the effects of reforms – and whether those effects are intended or unintended – is relatively poor, although there is an increasing emphasis on documentation of what works, how and why. Within this context, it



could be useful to consider more closely the distinction between different types of policy research: research on educational policy and educational research for policy. The former type of research tends to be ad-hoc, conceptual, backward-looking and critical, whereas the latter tends to be forward-looking and concerned with solutions to practical problems. The ETF's role is always to focus on development and to be practically involved in facilitating VET reform processes, and our interest in developing the knowledge base is therefore stimulated by the latter type of research. The focus is always oriented towards the solution of problems in specific contexts. Development activities and action research, understood as generating knowledge in and from practice, must in the ETF be governed by finding solutions to concrete problems and being directly applicable. Thus, knowledge is not only produced by (fundamental) science, but is also an output of other functional societal systems, which embody a knowledge production of their own.

## From policy lending and borrowing towards policy learning

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In the specific HRD fields in which the ETF works, many assistance projects funded and undertaken by international donors are characterized by policy transfer or policy copying. They are based on the assumption that there exist 'best policy practices' that are relevant for any other country and can therefore be easily taught by and learned from international consultants, or studied and copied by national policy makers. The practices are considered 'best' because they fit particular theoretical or ideological constructs, or because they 'work'. However, policies based on transfer or copying of best practices have generally resulted in unsustainable policy proposals. The main reasons for this are that they did not fit in the wider context of the countries, there was no real ownership among key national stakeholders, and therefore no commitment or even possibility for anybody to make the policies work in practice after a funding agency withdrew. As a result, implementation of new policies has practically never achieved the results foreseen.

In turn, many national policy makers, certainly in initial stages of transition but sometimes also long after, were more interested in receiving funding than in policy making. They were convinced that the key problem was the impoverished state of their educational infrastructures. Moreover, they have often been unable to assess the fitness of donors' proposals for best practice against the institutional context of their own VET systems.

As has been pointed out by Steiner-Khamsi (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2006) in her analysis of the politics and economics of policy borrowing based on studies in Mongolia, there is also often a 'policy bilingualism' in play that the international experts need to understand. The national government simultaneously engages in 'global speak' (geared towards international donors) and 'local speak' (addressing its Mongolian constituents). This challenge is shared with many development and transition countries.

This combination of donor and recipient expectations and behaviour has created problems of sustainability for many donor-supported reform initiatives. Much of the earlier assistance to VET reform in various countries was guided by principles of

policy copying and policy taking. The guiding principle on the donor side seems often to have been: we know your future and your past is irrelevant. Stakeholders and policy makers in transition countries have not been able to learn much about their new roles in a changing VET system, although they may sometimes have become experts on the systems of other, developed countries.

Current reforms in VET are very complex development processes that hardly compare to traditional reform conceptions with their clear stages of preparation, formulation, implementation and evaluation. This is especially true for reforms in development and transition countries that seek to combine systemic reforms with structural changes and modernization of contents and approaches. Such reforms are not one-off social engineering events designed by external experts but ongoing change processes set within a broadly agreed reform agenda.

The reform agenda can be quite radical but requires further operational detailing, based on local innovation processes. Because of this, teachers who are actively engaged in local innovation and experimentation are an important source of expertise for national policy makers, and reform strategies have to build on engaging teachers and trainers working inside their school organizations. Such an understanding of reform puts policy learning, capacity building and policy advice at both national and school levels in a new perspective, and with much more urgency than before.<sup>5</sup> Traditional top-down or bottom-up strategies have become too simplistic and are insufficient to make reforms work. Policy learning as a process requires a continuous interaction and dialogue between national and local partners, vertically, as well as among the various local initiatives horizontally.

It is in the recognition of the interplay of the local and the global, when new policy making related to reform of VET systems is required, that the value of policy learning becomes most evident. Globalization and international competition have made governments everywhere more willing to compare their performance against international benchmarks and to use international comparisons as a source of policy ideas. However, policy borrowing – the attempts to transfer institutions and policies from other settings – rarely works. There is always a need to search for a deeper understanding of why certain practices may be effective, of the circumstances under which different practices are effective, and of practical issues that have to be addressed in developing and implementing them. Policy learning, on the other hand, involves using comparisons both to understand one's own country better and to better understand current policy problems and possible solutions by observing similarities and differences across different national settings. Peer policy learning seems therefore to be a more effective way for governments to inform policy by drawing lessons from available evidence and experience (Grootings, 2004; Raffe and Spours, 2007; Chakroun and Sahlberg, 2008).

Recent work in ETF (*ETF Yearbooks*, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008) suggests that policy learning – as distinct from policy borrowing and copying – encourages situated problem solving and reflection. New policies need to be strategically linked to goals and outcomes for national education systems and must be firmly related to the specific institutional context of the country.<sup>6</sup>

Policy learning can be defined as 'the ability of governments, or systems of governance, to inform policy development by drawing lessons from available evidence and experience' (Raffe and Spours, 2007: 1).

Effective policy learning should aim for a deeper understanding of policy problems and processes than is provided by a simple search for ‘best practice’ (Grootings, 2008). The concept includes:

- the ability to learn from past experience;
- the ability to learn appropriately from other countries;
- an ability to learn from local innovation.

Therefore, there is a lot to be learned from ongoing learning theory discussions on the challenge of ownership, even though the practical and operational dimensions of creating strong policy-learning environments still need further development (Chakroun and Jimeno Sicilia, 2010).

## VET policy challenges for countries in transition

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A widespread impoverishment has been the consequence of change in all transition countries. Institutional impoverishment in vocational education has led to the disappearance of innovative capacities within the educational system, in particular the vocational education part of it. VET systems have been forced to focus entirely on the operational day-to-day provision of education and training at the cost of development. This was also the result of the closing down of central support systems, for ideological and financial reasons, especially those for curriculum development and in-service teacher training in vocational education. The building up of new support structures to replace the former ones has been slow.<sup>7</sup>

There is a dramatic lack of resources, financial, human and conceptual, to rebuild the VET systems. Instead, a specific constellation of aid and cooperation is in place. The donor community now greatly influences whether skills development is taken up as a policy priority, what focus these policies have, and how they are being developed and implemented. The combination of individual memories, institutional legacies and donor policies in most countries means that the key issue is seen by most national stakeholders to be the absence of funds to purchase up-to-date teaching equipment, renovate premises and pay decent salaries: in short, to restore an institution that was perceived to be doing just fine.

VET and HRD reform processes, however, are ongoing in all transition countries. These are donor-led and designed by international experts, with foreign technical assistance dominating the implementation in the countries. Here local educators and VET experts are very often employed as local experts, and as a consequence there is a quite strong familiarity with EU policy frameworks (in fact often higher than in EU Member States) as well as individual, national Western European examples of good practice. But these development activities are externally defined, technocratic (done with another purpose than understanding and recognition), and normally carried out as short-term activities under sharp deadlines. These activities, furthermore, do not lead to the building up of professional research and development capacities.<sup>8</sup>

A serious challenge for transition and development countries is the fact that their own donor-led VET reforms are taking place in a period of radical change of

European and global VET policy frameworks. How can countries cope with this, and how do they avoid jumping into automatic policy taking and policy copying under the pressures from many interwoven discourses and EU ‘processes’ of VET policy today?

In almost all countries it is possible to identify three levels of policy ‘drivers’ and contexts:

- globalization as a ‘driver’ for change of VET policies;
- EU VET policies, with a focus on the Bologna process (1997), the Lisbon Strategy (2000), Lifelong Learning (2001), Europe2020 (2010), the Copenhagen Process (2002) and the introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in EU policies;
- national VET policy priorities and reform initiatives.

These challenges are also facing most ETF partner countries, in particular countries with EU candidate status (Croatia, Turkey, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) but also those countries that have been given an EU membership perspective (the western Balkans). For all these countries a sharpened focus must be placed on how and through which mechanisms these policy discourses can possibly be transformed into practice within the national VET and HRD systems.

Each country has to find national solutions in a European – and global – context. European cooperation can support and inspire countries, there are good possibilities for shared learning – but the hard work will have to be done at home through the countries’ own national priority setting and policy decisions. Policy makers and practitioners at all levels therefore have to develop the capacity to become ‘policy learners’ and ‘policy interpreters’, as there is a variety of models, measures and practices available to achieve the same goal. In all transition and development countries there is a huge need to develop institutional capacities to translate goals into nationally preferred practices and to manage the internal processes involved. Critical elements of the policy chain have to be identified and overcome, and the task is increasingly seen as one of devising new approaches to help countries ‘shape’ their own policies and overcome barriers to implementation. Reforms are in reality major social learning processes, and the challenge still remains how to organize such policy-learning activities in the coming years. There is now an urgent need, on the one hand, to understand and conceptualize what the new learning paradigm may yield when applied to educational reforms in partner countries and, on the other hand, to develop new approaches to how such policy-learning platforms and processes can be facilitated. This, in turn, reflects the fact that the current reforms in the broader HRD field and in VET are very complex development processes.

## What can HRD policies learn from learning theories?

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Just to replace policy transfer or policy copying by talking about policy learning will not in itself change much, as the concept of policy learning can be applied

within very different approaches to learning. In reality, there is always implicitly some view about learning present in all assistance activities. Indeed, it is when we are trying to make the underlying learning assumptions more explicit that much of policy development assistance is shown to be rooted in an understanding of how people learn that has already lost much of its relevance within the learning theory community at large. It is quite frankly astonishing how little international assistance in HRD and education policy development in fact draws on modern theories of learning.

Engaging students in successful learning has always been a key problem for educationalists since the development of formal education systems that provided standardized, compulsory school-based education programmes.

The policy debates have been coloured by the dominant understanding of why, what, where and how people learn, and how people can be motivated to learn at all. The traditional behaviourist and cognitive approaches on which much of the standardized (formal and non-formal) education has been based have assumed that learning is basically a steady accumulation of discrete entities of knowledge and skills that can be presented to learners as if filling empty vessels.<sup>9</sup> Hager (2004: 411) has pointed out five further assumptions that follow from this understanding of learning: 1) there is one best way of learning; 2) learning is essentially an individual activity; 3) learning that is non-transparent is inferior or, in other words, tacit knowledge does not really exist; 4) learning centres on the stable and enduring (facts and proven evidence); and 5) learning is replicable.

In contrast, by seeing learning as a continuous – and highly selective – process of exchange between individuals and their environment, constructivist approaches argue that people give their own meaning to information. They do so on the basis of what they already know and the process is framed by the way they have become accustomed to see the world around them. They select and retain what is relevant for them. In doing so they construct their own understanding of reality as a basis to intervene and act.

Constructivists also argue that there are many ways through which people can learn without someone else passing on pieces of expert knowledge (Illeris, 2000); that learning is foremost a social activity (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998); that there is a lot of tacit learning taking place that is not easily to be categorized and demonstrated but that is there when needed (Schön, 1983); that learning is dynamic and very much context-bound, and that good learning therefore depends on meaningful learning environments (Kolb, 1984; Simons, van der Linden and Duffy, 2000). In combination, these insights are now known as new learning or active learning. While there are currently many attempts to introduce active-learning techniques in traditional education settings, a more holistic active-learning approach has developed into something like a new paradigm. Based on the principles of active learning, several countries have now for years reformed parts of their public education systems.

The emergence of an increased interest in the active-learning paradigm during the 1990s was the combined result of fundamental changes occurring in the labour market<sup>10</sup> and new insights and research evidence from a whole range of disciplines dealing with the question of how people learn and retain new information.<sup>11</sup> These learning approaches give a more active role to learners in managing and shaping



their own learning processes, based on the understanding that good learning cannot be achieved when learners remain passive receivers of information and instructions.

New kinds of learning outcomes have become important as well. These include the ability to learn, think, collaborate and regulate. People should be able to adapt quickly to changing situations, be able to cope well with continuing uncertainty, and know where and how to find the information that they need to deal with the challenges of their work and life situation.<sup>12</sup>

For educational professionals, the key question is how they can promote new learning outcomes through organizing appropriate learning processes and developing instructional strategies. The new learning theories argue that learners are more successful in acquiring, digesting, applying and retrieving new knowledge, skills and attitudes when they have been actively engaged in these processes. Active involvement, cooperation with other learners and realistic contexts also help to increase the motivation to learn, which in turn makes it easier for people to take responsibility for their learning into their own hands.

Active learning implies considerable changes in the roles that teachers and students play in education. With the growing attention towards active learning, there is a shift of responsibility from the teacher to the learner. The teacher becomes more an organizer and facilitator of learning processes than the transmitter of expert knowledge or skills, while the learner is asked to actively participate in identifying learning needs and in managing the process of acquiring new knowledge. Teachers have to be able to identify what learners already know and how they learn best and then to guide them to find the information that can increase their knowledge further. In terms of structure of the educational system, active-learning insights give strong arguments for creating open and flexible pathways in education, providing a rich variety of learning environments, and recognizing prior and informal learning outcomes (Simons, van der Linden and Duffy, 2000; Driscoll, 2000; Grootings and Nielsen, 2005; OECD, 2005).

This new understanding of learning has considerable implications for the organization of formal education (structures and contents), for informal and non-formal learning (recognition and validation), and the role of policy makers, teachers, students and other stakeholders in education. The active-learning paradigm is of relevance for any learning situation where people seek to acquire new knowledge and understanding in order to be able to act competently within a changing context. (See also Chapter 3 for more information about learning theories.)

## **Policy learning: applying the changing learning paradigm for facilitation of policy advice on VET reform in transition countries**

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To what extent then is the active-learning paradigm relevant for policy makers in transition and development countries when they are faced with reforming their HRD and education and training systems?

Development requirements for HRD and VET innovation – East and West – often confront us with problems to which nobody really has clear answers. A strategy based on a learning model will probably be the most effective way to ensure continuous development of new, locally adapted solutions to problems for which few answers are known today.

The basic assumption underlying the concept of policy learning is not so much that policies can be learned but that actual policies are learned policies. This refers back to current discussions in learning theory in which the traditional cognitive and behaviourist concept of learning is being replaced by constructivist approaches that stress the active role of learners in making sense of their environment and ‘constructing’ their own knowledge and skills as the basis for action. Learning is not simply the transfer of expert knowledge or behaviour from one person to another but rather the acquisition of understanding and skill through participation in processes.

The constructivist perspective of learning has led to various different approaches, each emphasizing single aspects of learning processes. The most comprehensive and relevant for our purposes seem to be the one developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), who argue that learning is situated learning and, more particularly, legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. Novice learners learn best when they are engaged in a community of more expert learners; during the learning process they become more competent themselves and move from the margin to the centre.

The argument developed in this chapter is that these debates about learning are of fundamental importance for understanding how policy makers in transition and development countries develop new policies in HRD and VET. Indeed, policy development in this perspective is policy learning (see *ETF Yearbook*, 2004). This is not learning in the sense of external experts transferring their expert knowledge to policy makers and telling them what they should do but, following a more constructivist approach, rather of policy makers as active learners who are trying to make sense of their – radically changing – policy environment and developing an understanding of what they should do as policy makers.

Policy makers are not only policy learners; they also have to act, and act on the political scene, especially in environments that are undergoing radical change such as in development and transition countries, which does not always leave a lot of space and time for careful and gradual learning. On the other hand, especially in development and transition countries, policy makers engaged in systemic, radical reforms are in need of new learning that very often contradicts established knowledge and routines. They have to engage in daily political decision making and, depending on their position in the system, that active engagement may often take priority. For policy makers therefore, perhaps even more so than for other learners, learning is more than merely a cognitive process: learning is practice. Their learning, following Lave and Wenger, is situated learning as it is an integral and inseparable aspect of their social practice. This understanding of the ‘situatedness’ of learning complements the always existing ‘context boundness’ of policies. However, what is said here about national policy makers can equally be said about teachers and learners in schools.



Thinking in terms of participating in communities of practice may help us shed light on aspects of HRD and VET as such, including specific ways of organizing education and training in order to achieve certain learning outcomes, and the role of teachers and trainers as professionals in such learning processes. That in turn may help us to think differently about how the policy-learning processes that stakeholders in HRD and VET reforms are engaged in can be facilitated. Thus, it can be argued that there is considerable congruence between the professional roles of teachers in education and training, on the one hand, and the roles of policy advisers in facilitating policy-learning processes.

Learning outcomes will depend on how learning processes are organized. Along the same lines one can also argue that different EC instruments for assistance and cooperation can be used within a variety of conceptions and approaches. They are after all instruments and not an end in themselves (though from time to time they are in fact treated as such). Therefore it all depends on the expected learning outcomes and the way these instruments are used in practice to achieve the intended outcomes. More reflection is needed about making better use of existing instruments within a policy-learning perspective rather than about developing new ones.

## **Policy learning in action: Phase I 2007–08: examples from Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Turkey**

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A key question since the ETF began its activities 16 years ago has been how to engage with partner countries to support the development of their education and training systems. A milestone in this internal debate was set at the 2003 Advisory Forum meeting, which formally endorsed ‘policy learning’ as the fundamental approach upon which work in and with the partner countries should be based. Consequently, the ETF needs to improve its policy-learning facilitation capacity in practice to face new challenges.

The policy-learning approach in the ETF starts from the question: how can an outside party (the helper or the ETF) assist those who are undertaking autonomous activities (the doers or policy makers and shapers) without overriding or undercutting their autonomy? Standard technical assistance follows traditional teaching approaches by providing policy advice through attempting to transfer or copy policies from elsewhere. Policy learning, in contrast, aims at enabling policy makers and other key stakeholders to learn to develop and implement their own policies that fit into the specific context of the country in question.

A key challenge is to get to a situation in which local policy makers are encouraged and able to assess the fitness of the advice provided and in which international advisers are able to assess the fitness of prior knowledge and contextualize new knowledge to the situation in the partner country. Policy learning is thus not just about learning the policies developed by other countries but rather about learning which policies can be developed locally by reflecting on the relevance of other countries’ policies for their own situation.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Contribution to VET reform in partner countries – across three regions

Policy learning being a key development task for the ETF, in the 2007–08 work programme the Foundation made a strategic move to enable policy learning in partner countries. A major policy-learning project<sup>13</sup> was carried out to support and facilitate the ongoing development of HRD and VET expertise in the Foundation. Although ETF interventions in the three countries – Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Turkey – were different in scope and objectives (support to the VET system reform in Kyrgyzstan, developing an apprenticeship scheme in Morocco, and developing a social learning model for reform impact evaluation in Turkey), the guiding principle of ETF interventions was everywhere the facilitation of a policy-learning approach aiming at ‘helping people to help themselves’.

The overarching aim of this policy-learning project was to further refine how the ETF in practice can engage in policy-learning processes with the countries without providing ready-made models and solutions, but rather improving the capacity of partner countries to develop and implement their own national policies and implementation strategies.

A number of lessons were learned from this project, which tested three types of policy learning:

- *The ability to learn from past experience and develop a capacity to recognize continuities with the past*

This approach was successfully implemented in Turkey and to some extent in Morocco, but partly failed in Kyrgyzstan, where the imported National Qualifications Framework concepts and the pursuit of novelty overshadowed the reality that the old political, social and economic forces were still there. More can always be learned from past experience and the learning potentials of failures are just as important as past successes. Here ETF could do more in future.

- *The ability to learn appropriately from other countries*

Governments are today almost too willing to compare their performance and models against international benchmarks and to use comparisons as a source of policy ideas. However, this easily leads to policy borrowing rather than policy learning. Policy borrowing rarely works. The policy-learning approach tested in the three countries involved used comparisons both to understand one’s own country better and to try to come to grips with current policy problems and possible solutions, by observing similarities and differences with other countries. Here ETF policy facilitation still needs considerable development. National policy makers and ETF staff may still tend to see international comparisons mainly as a source of models for good practice instead of understanding the specific conditions under which ‘good practice’ is effective. Instead of looking mostly for ‘best practice’, the ETF should sharpen the focus on the broader contexts in which it is applied.

- *An ability to learn from local innovation*

Effective policy learning should capitalize on the creativity and capacity to innovate of teachers, trainers and other practitioners at the local level. Lessons learned from local initiatives and experiments should be identified and adopted elsewhere. The most important form of learning across local initiatives is that which leads not to an identification of good practice but to an understanding of the underlying processes. The design and implementation of the pilot cases did not fully use the scope for promoting such local innovation, and ETF will need to argue for such expanded scope with national governments to empower local practitioners.

## Contribution to community assistance

A general lesson for EC assistance to partner countries and for ETF facilitation of policy learning in all the above areas of policy learning is that the concept of 'best practice' may obstruct the search for a deeper understanding of why certain practices may be effective, and of the enabling contexts and the practical issues that must be addressed in developing and implementing them. We should avoid looking only at success but also learn just as much from failures. A narrow focus on 'best practice' will not lead to practices that can be understood, owned, adopted and adapted by those who implement them. A more simple search for 'what works' may often be the start of a policy-learning process.

## ETF possible further follow-up actions

Reflections on the ETF pilot project on policy learning indicate that effective ETF facilitation of policy learning should in future focus less on 'best practice' and much more on 'next practice', or more specifically the links between the two. It should aim for a deeper understanding of local policy problems and processes.

On the basis of the outcomes of the project and the lessons learned, the ETF will need to develop refined approaches and new instruments in order to improve its institutional capacity for facilitating policy advice. Some preliminary findings lead to proposing the following measures:

- 1** Develop a better understanding of the environments and processes of HRD and educational policy making.

The Moroccan case illustrates that we may underestimate the difference between 'politics' and 'policies'; policy analyses show that the policy process is not only technical but also has a strong power dimension.

- 2** Develop tools for stimulating policy learning to become effective policy change.

The Turkish case illuminates the need for better coaching skills in ETF policy facilitation in partner countries. While there is a high level of activity during ETF events and also agreement on what is to be done, key actors and stakeholders do not just take agreed initiatives forward on their own but normally ask the ETF to retain ownership of processes. We have to be better at supporting people to help themselves.

- 3** Heavily invest in development of the ETF facilitation role in policy-learning processes in partner countries.

The Kyrgyz case has demonstrated that facilitation of policy-learning processes requires a new emphasis on the third angle of the ETF expertise triangle: 1) EC policy framework; 2) VET expertise; and 3) solid and consolidated country knowledge – as policy-learning approaches require a deeper understanding of the specific contexts of individual countries. The ETF needs a stronger capacity in intercultural competence to be able to ensure embeddedness and fit into context. It also needs to better ensure qualified and relevant outputs from participant-steered learning processes. Striking the right balance between the 'process' and the final 'product' is still a serious challenge to work on in new policy-learning activities. There is a need to develop psychological 'contracts' with participants from the launch of a process so that expectations are always made clear to all, guidelines are unequivocal and milestones defined. The product requirements are always high in ETF work due to the fact that final documents have a policy impact and, in Kyrgyzstan, formed the basis for an EC-funded SWAP project; high expectations about the quality, relevance and clarity of national policy and strategy papers therefore cannot be avoided, even in an ETF innovation and learning project that is mainly intended to test new ideas.

## Policy learning in action: Phase II 2010 onwards: The Torino Process and evidence-informed policy development

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In educational policy and in international consulting and cooperation there is an increasing demand for concepts and tools that aid experts, policy makers and advisors in taking stock of the state of VET and broader HRD systems. There is an even higher need for VET policy makers in ETF partner countries to be able to continuously assess where they are now in reform and where they could go next. A sharper focus on analytical concepts and approaches is needed. This field is of high importance to the ETF.<sup>14</sup>

Two major discourses dominate contemporary educational research; one is derived from the quest for international comparisons, and the other is 'evidence-based' education. Policy makers are increasingly interested in what education delivers – and hence with what educational research can tell us about this. This is an even more acute need in countries in transition, where donor-driven VET reforms have radically changed earlier systems. Given the scarce resources for education reform, the public interest in education, the importance it has for national policy makers and the diversity of opinions and approaches within the technical assistance community, the ability to assess what works in VET is critical. The increased priority for making use of policy analysis and structured information from policy research is a result of this need for informed policy making.

Within EU Member States there is a growing interest in evidence-based policy and practice, and increased activity related to strengthening the knowledge base in education and training. The German Presidency of the Council of the EU organized in March 2007 a major conference on 'Knowledge for action in education and training'. Practitioners look mostly for empirical evidence and clear and precise answers that can be applied. Politicians look for research results presented in such a way that they can be used in politics and decision making. As was emphasized by the then Director of Education and Culture of the European Commission, Mrs Odile Quintin, referring to Europe's future depending on the right decisions on education and training policies, the creation and diffusion of knowledge is not enough; for evidence in educational policy and practice we need to reduce the application gap and to devise new mechanisms for implementing research findings by policy makers and administrators.<sup>15</sup>

This political interest is related to a better configuration of the relationship between research, policy and practice in education and training. The EU Commission published a Staff Working Document 'Towards more knowledge-based policy and practice in education and training' (Brussels SEC, 2007: 1098), and it is highlighted in the Communication 'A new impetus for European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy' from the European Commission (COM, 2010, 296 final: 11) that: 'Evidence-based policy making will continue to be supported through the research, expertise and analysis of Cedefop and ETF as well as statistical evidences provided by Eurostat.'

The ETF is committed to promoting the capacity of countries to apply evidence-informed methods for the development, monitoring and assessment of policies in the field of VET (ETF Mid-term Perspective, 2010–1013: 6). Although all ETF activities and projects use evidence-informed policy development as a principle of action, a targeted effort has been made to enhance this approach through the Torino Process since 2010. This process is an ETF participatory instrument for VET analysis and policy assessment that will be implemented in partner countries on a bi-annual basis. The Torino Process has documented the vision that policy makers have defined for vocational education and training, and captured evidence to assess the integration of VET policy within broader social and economic development. In addition, the Process has mapped the main features of the VET system and used available evidence to assess its internal efficiency as well as its capacity to meet the needs of the labour market and social inclusion. The results of the first round in 2010 confirm the shortage and limited use of evidence, combined with limited institutional capacity. However, the Torino Process has also documented a strong commitment by policy makers in partner countries to progress in this type of policy development. The increased priority for making use of policy analysis and structured information from policy research is a result of this need for more targeted policy making. This is a key message from the Torino Declaration of 11 May 2011.<sup>16</sup>

The Torino Process will take this forward by enhancing long-term capacity and the quality and relevance of policy making, and provide opportunities for partner countries to learn together with other stakeholders. To stimulate knowledge that is taken forward into action, the ETF has launched the ‘Torinet’ platform with the purpose of raising countries’ capacity to carry out objective policy assessment, gradually evolving an international standard across the human-capital development spectrum and throughout the policy cycle according to the specific needs of each country. Torinet will be a partnership between the ETF and countries and build upon the Torino Process with country-specific actions.

In the ‘Torinet’ project the operationalization of the policy-learning concept will include developing the ability to: 1) learn from past national experience; 2) learn from other countries; and 3) learn from local innovation projects. The ‘Torinet’ platform will therefore be designed around country-led policy-learning approaches, whereby countries develop a capacity to continuously learn from reform initiatives. This project will provide opportunities in terms of time and space to share experience and reflect on how to improve policy making in the participants’ own countries.

## Conclusion

An overarching theme in this chapter has been the analysis of strategies to enable policy learning, particularly by asking the question: how can we apply the changing learning paradigm to facilitate policy advice on structural VET reform in transition countries? The discussions about new learning are definitely relevant for HRD, education and training reforms in transition and development countries. They provide key criteria for successful reform and reform assistance. Education and HRD

reform can only be sustainable if reform policies are owned by local stakeholders and are embedded in the context of the country. Educational reform is really about stakeholders being motivated to learn new ways to organize education and training systems. Learning is about developing new roles for all stakeholders at all levels in all the building blocks of the system. The challenge for donors and aid agencies therefore is not to sell prefab 'what' solutions but to find the appropriate answer to the question 'How to help people help themselves?' (Ellerman, 2004, 2005).<sup>17</sup>

The terms 'policy' and 'learning' have been moving jointly in recent years from the periphery towards the centre of the discourse on policy development. In part, this reflects the failure of 'borrowing' VET policies from abroad and 'quick fix' approaches of policy makers in partner countries. Seeing policy makers as (policy) learners, international policy advisers should consider themselves as facilitators of policy-learning processes, in many ways similar to the new roles that teachers are developing as facilitators of learning processes. The current debates about learning processes, learners and new teacher roles, therefore, are also of immediate concern for policy makers and their advisers. Policy reform is a learning process for the simple reason that no blueprints exist.

More generally, a new policy-learning focus towards facilitating systemic HRD and VET policy reform would imply a radically different ETF approach: moving from knowledge and answers that are disseminated and transferred to the partners (the controlling taskmaster) towards a broker/learning facilitator role (an enabling helper). How do we put this new function into practice? Many of the fundamental elements of such learning needs to be developed, and we lack empirical work and lessons to be learned from policy learning, particularly in ETF partner countries.

As the three country case studies (of the first phase) illustrate, a lot of work is still pending in the coming years to create sharper instruments for establishing learning platforms and organizing concrete and inductive learning environments that stimulate creative learning processes closely linked to how policy makers and other key stakeholders actually work. Building on the quest for evidence-based policy making, the ETF (in phase two) has designed and implemented the Torino Process, which will gradually become a systemic self-assessment instrument and a sort of 'diagnostic tool' for ETF partner countries. This is an important new approach to facilitating HRD and VET reform and, as it builds directly on the established policy-learning platform, it gives promises of strengthening national ownership, embeddedness and more sustainable initiatives.

However, the relationship between policy learning and policy change is still insufficiently understood and needs further investigation. To achieve deeper clarification of conceptual, methodological and operational dimensions of policy learning and distinguish these from related concepts (policy advice, policy analysis, etc) is still a major task.



## Questions for reflection

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- If you were a European Training Foundation consultant what advice would you give to developing countries?
- In what ways might learning theories influence HRD policies?
- To what extent should policies be borrowed and placed without alteration in another country?

## Notes

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- 1 Since 2002 (Sören Nielsen) I have worked closely in ETF with my colleague Peter Grootings to develop the policy-learning concept and new guidelines for facilitation of policy advice in the ETF's 30 partner countries. Peter Grootings died on 3 July 2009 and a lot of the thinking in this paper is inspired by his incredible creativity.
- 2 The policy-learning approach was formally endorsed by the ETF general Advisory Forum (AF) conference in 2003 and reinforced by the AF conference in June 2006. See formal statements on [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu).
- 3 The European Training Foundation (ETF) is the European Union's Centre of Expertise supporting vocational education and training reform in third countries in the context of the EU external relations programmes. The ETF assists EU neighbouring countries in reforming education and training systems through dissemination of EU policies and good practice, policy advice/learning and capacity building, and information and analysis. For details see [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu).
- 4 For further details see [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu).
- 5 Experience from countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark also points to the need to have additional coordinating and support institutions at the sector, regional and school-type level. This is the role that associations of secondary and higher vocational schools, on the one hand, and sector-based expertise centres are playing. Specialized local, regional and national research and development institutions in turn support these. In other words, reform, innovation or development infrastructures require more than national stakeholders and teachers in schools.
- 6 For an interesting analysis of the 'push' and 'pull' in policy reform related to the introduction of national qualification frameworks in the Arab region perceived through the prisms of a policy-learning logic, see Chakroun and Jimeno Sicilia, 2010.
- 7 In the *ETF Yearbook 2004* and *2005* (Grootings 2004; Grootings and Nielsen 2005) we have analysed wider aspects of the impoverishment of vocational education and training, such as the need to distinguish between modernization needs and systemic reform needs. We have also pointed to the neglected position of teachers and trainers and the need to think in terms of a double role for them (as both educational professionals and stakeholders in education reform) in order to bring the reform of vocational education and training forward.
- 8 For an analysis of VET research in countries in transition, see Grootings and Nielsen (2009b), *Research and VET reform policy in transition countries*, in F Rauner and R Maclean (eds) (2009) *Handbook of Vocational Education Research*, Springer.
- 9 For a critical presentation of these various learning theories, see Driscoll, 2000.



- 10 OECD, 1996. Declining public budgets have also contributed to attempts to make education more efficient and effective, and neo-liberal policy agendas on the left and the right have placed the responsible and autonomous citizen back on stage again. Changes in the organization of work within companies also build on responsible workers able to foresee and prevent rather than to react ex-post or too late. The overall economic and political climate of the 1990s has been very receptive for active-learning insights. Active learning is more than a scientific approach to learning.
- 11 These include, besides psychology and educational science (Driscoll, 2000), also brain research (OECD, 2002).
- 12 These are also called social or key competences.
- 13 ILP – Policy learning in partner countries, ETF Project Number WP08–40–22 – Work Programme 2008, [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu). The lessons learned from the project as well as the case studies from the three countries involved form the backbone of the *ETF Yearbook 2008, Policy Learning in Action*.
- 14 The *ETF Yearbook 2012* will analyse this problematique in a number of chapters.
- 15 Symposium on Knowledge for action: research strategies for an evidence-based education policy, 28–30 March 2007, Frankfurt/Main, during Germany's EU Presidency.
- 16 For the formal statement of the Torino Declaration of May 2011 on evidence-based policy making, see [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu).
- 17 Ellerman (2005) has summarized this challenge into three Dos (start from present institutions, see the world through the eyes of the client, respect the autonomy of the doers) and two Don'ts (don't override self-help capacity with social engineering, don't undercut self-help).

## Further information sources

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European Training Foundation: [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu)

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## 11

# Capacity development and human resource development

**DALIA AL-ZENDI and JOHN P WILSON**

*Freedom is man's capacity to take a hand in his own development. It is our capacity to mould ourselves. (MAY, 2009: 119)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the nature of capacity development and capacity building;
- understand the importance of strategic planning and project management;
- recognize the importance of learning and human resource development within the process of capacity development;
- understand the value of stakeholder consultation and involvement;
- map and consider priorities;
- design and deliver interventions that achieve objectives.

## Introduction

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In the past, many interventions in developing countries have failed to live up to their objectives and, moreover, have ended as soon as the investment finished, leaving few

visible signs of progress. Subsequent criticism and evaluation revealed that there was a need to incorporate capacity building and development within the projects to increase their chances of success. As a result most, if not all, interventions now incorporate capacity development.

The terms capacity building and capacity development are closely related, although capacity building is generally considered to be a forerunner of the more accurately termed capacity development. Both names are used most frequently in connection with developing countries, but they do not relate exclusively to them since all countries, organizations and individuals strive to grow their potential and capacity.

This chapter begins with a description of how capacity building and capacity development have evolved and, through closer examination, provides a number of definitions. Also, core elements of capacity development such as freedom and sustainability are considered, together with the critically important area of human resource development. The practical realities of managing development projects are then examined through a consideration of the UNDP programme of development in Iraq. Other chapters within this book (including the four main areas of the training/learning cycle: identification of learning needs, programme design, delivery and evaluation) will complement much of the content of this chapter and provide practitioners with the overall knowledge and skills for effective application in their own areas of operation.

## The evolution of capacity building and capacity development

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The concept of capacity building grew out of the Marshall Plan, which successfully supported the rebuilding of Europe following the devastation caused by the Second World War. This intervention thus avoided the reparation and settlement mistakes that arose at the end of the First World War and that contributed to subsequent economic hardship and ultimately to the Second World War. The basic principles of the Marshall Plan were the transfer of capital and know-how, and these were considered sufficient to encourage rapid economic development; however, subsequent application of these principles elsewhere often proved less successful.

During the 1950s and 1960s emphasis turned to the design and building of public sector organizations, and this continued into the 1970s with the strengthening of these organizations through training to enable the transfer of responsibilities to local control. Later, in the same decade, development programmes for social development and human needs were delivered. In the 1980s, institutional development involved restructuring and organizational change to provide value to citizens, and during this period capacity building began to be introduced. During the following decade a more integrated strategy of capacity building was developed that involved a broader and more integrated consideration of change, governance, economics, institutional development and systems thinking (UNDP, 1997).

These interventions had mixed fortunes, with some being successful but many others having a limited impact, often only for the duration of the project. The following

observation by the Community Development Resource Association (1995: 9) highlights the challenges that continue to be faced:

It does not help to train individuals when organizational vision is unclear, organizational culture is unhelpful and structure is confusing or obtuse. It does not help to secure resources when the organization is not equipped to carry out its tasks. It does not help to develop information management systems when the basic organizational attitude is one which rejects learning through monitoring and evaluation in favour of frantic activity.

Unsurprisingly, the limitations of international development provoked criticism and introspection, with the result that attention moved from ‘what and why’ to ‘how’ and concentration was given to ‘learning, empowerment, social capital and an enabling environment’ (UNDP, 1997: vi). Increasingly, international agencies began to recognize the sometimes greater potential of capacity building than of specific interventions. For example, the World Bank observed that, ‘Enhancing the capacity of indigenous NGOs through operational collaboration may well generate a development impact which surpasses immediate project goals’ (Malena, 1995: 65).

## Defining capacity building and capacity development

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Capacity building and capacity development encompass such a large territory and range of issues that they are often difficult to describe. As a consequence, they have often been ill-defined, which makes understanding and interpretation difficult so that some interventions lack the theory and conceptual frameworks that would help them be more successful. Not only is there no fully agreed definition but Moore (1995: 2) warned, ‘Aid agencies would be wise to have no truck with the new jargon of “capacity building” and to insist on using language and terms that have identifiable and precise meanings.’

In order to provide greater clarity and precision it is helpful to investigate the term capacity, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as, ‘the amount something can produce’. In the context of national development this translates into ‘what the country can produce’; alternatively, it can relate to what an organization or individual can produce. In fact, individual, organizational and national factors are interdependent and each one influences the others’ abilities and capabilities to be productive, as is illustrated in Figure 11.1.

The two definitions of capacity below illustrate some of the inherent dimensions:

An organization with capacity has the ability to function as a resilient, strategic and autonomous entity.

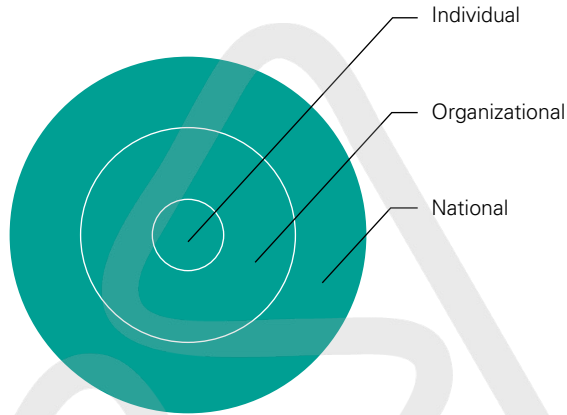
(Kaplan, 1999: 20)

Capacity represents the potential for using resources effectively and maintaining gains in performance with gradually reduced levels of external support.

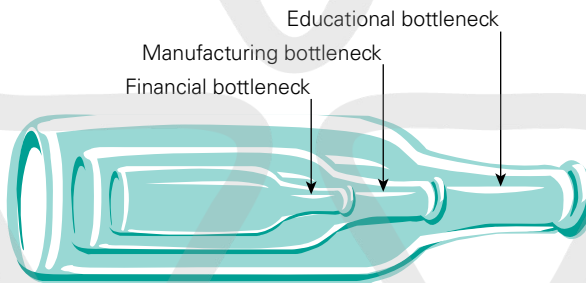
(LaFond and Brown, 2003: 7)

One way to consider capacity is illustrated in Figure 11.2, in which each of the bottles has a narrow neck that limits the speed at which the liquid contents can be emptied.

**FIGURE 11.1** The capacity development relationship of individual, organizational and national factors



**FIGURE 11.2** Capacity bottlenecks and rate-limiting factors



This is analogous to countries that wish to develop their capacity and find that there is insufficient finance to invest in new infrastructure. Once they acquire the finance (perhaps from donors) they are then confronted by a new bottleneck, which might be the limited availability of manufacturing capacity. This may then lead to another bottleneck or rate-limiting factor such as an insufficiently educated workforce to build and service the new infrastructure. And so the cycle continues with other constraining factors that inhibit progress. It should be noted that capacity constraints exist for all nations, organizations and individuals, and a similar process was described by Greiner (1972), who described five stages of organizational growth that were punctuated by a range of capacity blockages or crises: leadership, autonomy, control, staff and unknown.

Capacity building was described by Eade (1997: 32) as not about 'creating dependency; weakening the state; a separate activity; or, solely concerned with financial sustainability' but in fact as a means, a process and an end. However, the term capacity building is limited since it also can imply the creation of something



from the beginning. One of the criticisms of some interventions was that they involved the transfer from other countries of turnkey structures, systems, technologies and other elements that were alien to the local environment and were inappropriate. Moreover, the interventions were often unsuccessful because they disregarded local conditions and existing structures and systems that had evolved to respond to those conditions. It was for reasons such as these that the OECD (2006: 12) maintained that it preferred the term capacity development rather than the metaphor of capacity building, which suggested: ‘a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way.’

Yet, although capacity development would appear to be a more accurate description of the intervention activities, it has still been described as having ‘continued conceptual muddiness’ (Hailey and James, 2006: 2) with different institutions offering varying definitions that illustrate the range of interpretations and applications:

‘Capacity’ is understood as the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully... ‘Capacity development’ is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.

(OECD, 2006)

Capacity development is the process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. It needs to be addressed at three inter-related levels: individual, institutional and societal. Specifically, capacity-building encompasses the country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environment potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned.

(UN Economics and Social Panel, 2006: 7)

Capacity development is the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.

(UNDP, 2008a: 04)

## Capacity development for all nations

Before proceeding further, it is important to note that although the terms capacity building and capacity development are frequently used in connection with developing countries they are also pertinent to so-called developed countries. The Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999: xi) observed that all countries needed to develop and stated:

We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago... And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of

famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Many of these deprivations can be observed, in one form or another, in rich countries as well as poor ones... Overcoming these problems is a central part of the exercise of development.

Similarly, the application of the term capacity building also has been widened by Weidner, Jänicke and Jörgens (2002: v) who remarked, 'While various institutions, including UNEP, FAO, World Bank and OECD, have hitherto used the terms environmental capacity and capacity building almost exclusively to developing countries, we have extended the concepts to industrialised countries, as well.'

Thus, it is clear that the building and development of capacity is equally applicable to individuals, organizations and nations of all types. Indeed, all nations and organizations have constraints that inhibit growth and restrict capacity with the result that most, if not all, are seeking ways in which to expand their capacity and to grow their economies.

## Development as freedom

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The term development can be interpreted in many ways, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as, 'a specified state of growth or advancement'. Development has also been interpreted as meaning freedom by a number of writers; for instance, Todaro (2000: 16) argued that development was, 'both a physical reality and a state of mind' and consisted of three core values that are needed by individuals and societies:

- *Sustenance*: the availability of basic needs: food, shelter, health and protection.
- *Self-esteem*: the raising of levels of living including higher incomes, more jobs, better education, human and cultural values which increase individual and national self-esteem.
- *Freedom from servitude and dependence*: increasing the range of economic and social choice and removing servitude from the 'forces of ignorance and human misery.

(Todaro, 2000: 18)

The view of development as freedom can be found in this chapter's introductory quotation from Rollo May (2009: 119) who said, 'Freedom is man's capacity to take a hand in his own development. It is our capacity to mould ourselves.' A similar perspective is taken by Amartya Sen (1999), who argued that many of the problems the world faces, such as poverty, tyranny, peace, healthcare and social deprivation, are threats to basic liberties that inhibit freedom. Sen (1999: xii) stated:

Expansion of freedom is viewed, in this approach, both as the primary end and as the principal means of development. Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is *constitutive* of development.

He continued, 'Development can be seen, it is argued here, as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy' (1999: 3).

## The capacity development process

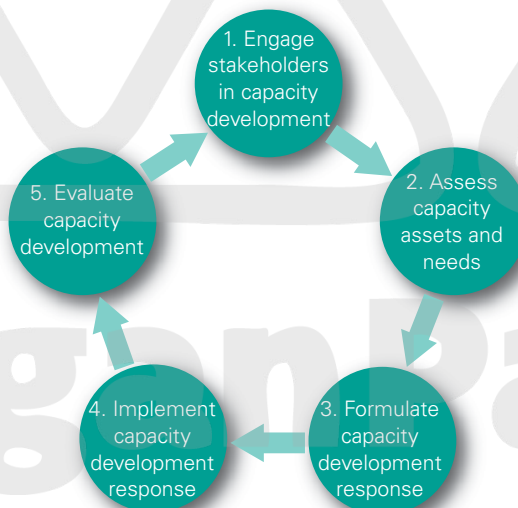
The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005) was made by the signatory nations and was designed to bring about greater harmonization, monitoring and evaluation and, most importantly, to help ensure the effectiveness of development interventions. Significant emphasis was given to the establishment of systematic processes, and the Declaration stated:

The capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources.

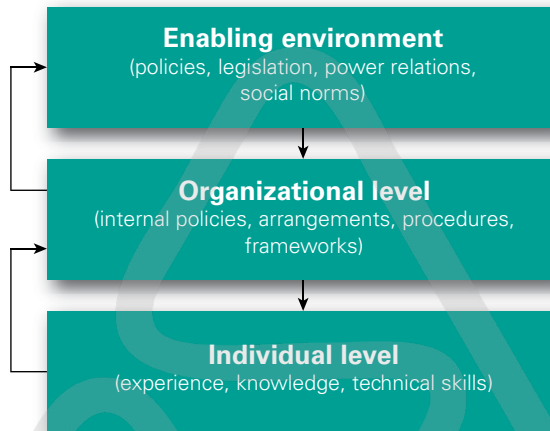
(OECD, 2005: 5)

Evolving from the need to create a more systematic approach to aid projects and enhance their effectiveness, the UNDP's (2008a: 8) Capacity Development Group developed a five-step process for the capacity development process, which would appear to be based on the quality improvement cycle (Figure 11.3). In particular, it recognized the need to clearly specify the key performance indicators, sometimes called progress indicators, and developed a capacity assessment methodology (UNDP, 2008b). The capacity development process acknowledges the interaction of three main areas of the enabling environment, organizational level and individual level (Figure 11.4).

**FIGURE 11.3** The capacity development process



**SOURCE:** UNDP, 2008a: 8.

**FIGURE 11.4** Levels of capacity

**SOURCE:** UNDP, 2008a: 6.

As part of the capacity development process, the UNDP (2003: 13) identified 10 principles for capacity development:

- Don't rush. Capacity development is a long-term process.
- Respect the value systems and foster self-esteem.
- Scan locally and globally; reinvent locally.
- Challenge mindsets and power differentials.
- Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes.
- Establish positive incentives.
- Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems.
- Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones.
- Stay engaged under difficult circumstances.
- Remain accountable to the ultimate beneficiaries.

## Capacity building/capacity development and human resource development

Any examination of the literature about capacity development and capacity building will swiftly reveal the key roles that education, training and development provide. For example, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2009: 8) defined capacity development as, 'a process whereby people, organizations and society strengthen and maintain capacity. It includes:

- human resources development;
- organizational development;
- institutional development.’

Similarly, Capacity (2011) described capacity development as consisting of five main areas:

- training and human resources development;
- participatory approaches;
- organizational development;
- policy and institutional development;
- multi-actor processes and systems.

What can be seen in both of these categorizations of capacity development is the importance of training and human resources development. However, although training and HRD are listed first they are not, and should not be, the only consideration in capacity development. They are major elements in the developmental toolbox but they should only be used when they contribute to the achievement of objectives. As the Capacity Development Group (2008: 1) clearly expressed:

capacity development is much more than supporting training programmes and the use of national expertise – these are necessary and on the rise, but we must include response and support strategies for accountable leadership, investments in long-term education and learning, strengthened public systems and voice mechanisms between citizen and state and institutional reform that ensures a responsive public and private sector that manages and delivers services to those who need them most.

The role of learning is essential to all capacity development strategies and the World Bank’s (2011) definition of capacity development illustrates this close synergy:

A locally driven process of transformational learning by leaders, coalitions and other agents that leads to actions that support changes in institutional capacity areas – ownership, policy, and organizational – to advance development goals.

This focus on learning is also illustrated through the range of technical support approaches suggested by the Joint UN Programme (UNAIDS, 2009: 10). All of these approaches involve learning and learning transfer:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Learning groups                              | Networking   |
| Mentoring/coaching                           | Partnering/South–South technical cooperation         |
| Cross-organizational/cross-sectoral planning | Assistance from national/international consultant(s) |
| Training workshops                           | Joint development of educational programmes          |
| Formal learning programmes/courses           | Joint field planning/programme reviews               |
| Distance learning                            | Participatory strategic planning                     |
| On-the-job training                          | Study visits   |
| Internships                                  | Staff exchanges                                      |
| Secondment                                   | Peer reviews   |

The UN's Capacity Development Group (2008: 4) provided a number of policy statements about the development of human resources and the role of education, training and learning:

- Greater investments must be made in in-country education systems, including in post-secondary education and technical institutions of learning. Only well-resourced systems can become the long-term foundation of national capacity.
- The vision and content of post-secondary education should be more directly focused on affecting the development outcomes and reform agenda of the country.
- Access to continued learning (through professional training and education opportunities) is an essential non-monetary incentive for the retention of capacity and must hence be invested in.
- The study of ethics and values, including respect for human rights and gender equality, should be a formal part of the curriculum in education and public administration training.
- Access to data and knowledge (through public information services and statistical literacy strategies) is highly capacitating and should be incorporated and costed into national development strategies and organizational business plans.

## United Nations Development Programme

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The first United Nations Development Programme report in 1990 began with the words, 'People are the real wealth of a nation' (UNDP, 1990: 9), thus indirectly referencing and striking a contrast with Adam Smith's (1776) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (often abbreviated to *The Wealth of Nation*). Smith's main focus was on the generation of wealth; however, wealth is only a means to other objectives and the UNDP report underlined this and referred to Aristotle who stated, 'Wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking, for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else.'

The UNDP (1990: 10) explained that:

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect.

The UNDP Report for 2010 acknowledged this definition but added that it was insufficient and should also be about ensuring development over time, and provided a new definition:

Human development is the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and the drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups.

(UNDP, 2010: 2)

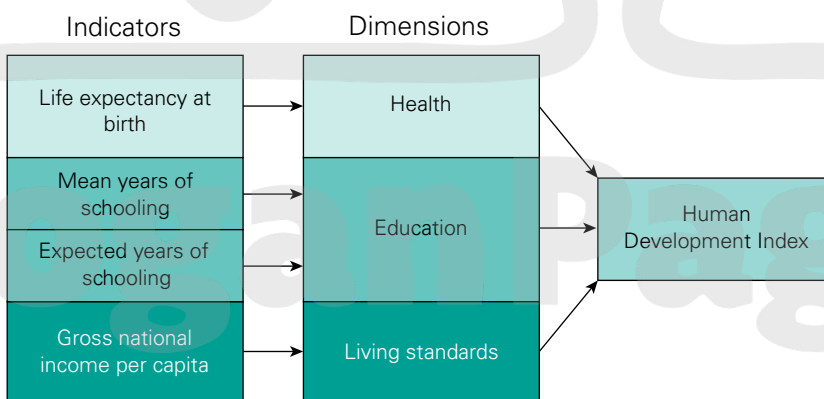
Indeed, economic growth and human development are closely intertwined, with ‘human development helping economic growth and economic growth helping human development’ (UNDP, 1996: iii). Moreover, the UNDP report (1990: 10) observed that, ‘income is a good proxy for all other human choices since access to income permits exercise of every other option.’ However, this is not always the case; the Report also noted that income does not always translate into development for a number of reasons:

- Income may be used for both positive and negative purposes, for instance the purchase of medicine or narcotic drugs.
- High human development levels are sometimes found where there are modest income levels.
- Current income may not reflect future growth and will depend on how the income is invested.
- Rich nations demonstrate numerous human problems and income is no guarantee of progress.

## The United Nations’ Human Development Index

Economic growth does not always provide a direct correlation with human development because of the reasons described above. For this reason, the Human Development Index (HDI) was developed to measure development and allow comparisons and assess progress between nations; it is based on a composite measure of health, education and income (Figure 11.5). In 2010, the top five countries in order of development were: Norway, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Ireland. Of the 135 countries measured between 1990 and 2010, only three deteriorated: Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**FIGURE 11.5** Human Development Index



**SOURCE:** UNDP, 2010.



Of course, the use of indices to measure national development is insufficient in itself; targets need to be set to encourage all nations, both developing and donor, to strive to achieve meaningful objectives. In 2000 the United Nations made its Millennium Declaration, which specified eight Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015:

- 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- 2 Achieve universal primary education.
- 3 Promote gender equality and empower women.
- 4 Reduce child mortality.
- 5 Improve maternal health.
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- 7 Ensure environmental sustainability.
- 8 Develop a global partnership for development.

Echoing the greater need for clearly measurable progress indicators, these goals are broken down into 21 quantifiable targets and 60 indicators. The challenges to achieve these goals are immense and a review in 2010 by the UN indicated that there had been significant progress but that there still remained much to be done (United Nations, 2010).

## Development for well-being

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During the economic crisis of 2008 the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, became concerned that the economic and statistical data that many countries relied upon were severely flawed and had not signalled the abrupt changes in the economy. Moreover, he believed that the economic data presented an inadequate perspective on life quality. He therefore invited a number of people, chiefly economists, to form a Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. The Report of the Commission (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008: 8) acknowledged the inadequacies of current measures of economic performance and the failure of market participants to predict the economic crisis. The report concluded that, 'It has long been clear that GDP is an inadequate metric to gauge well-being over time particularly in its economic, environmental, and social dimensions, some aspects of which are often referred to as *sustainability*.'

The Report continued by arguing that, 'The time is ripe for our measurement systems to *shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being*' (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008: 12). The Commission identified eight key dimensions of well-being:

- material living standards (income, consumption and wealth);
- health;
- education;

- personal activities, including work;
  - political voice and governance;
  - social connections and relationships;
  - environment (present and future conditions);
  - insecurity, of an economic as well as a physical nature.
- (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008: 14–15)

## The challenges facing capacity development

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Aid interventions are designed to increase the ability of countries to grow sustainably and develop their people, resources and infrastructure. Indeed, about a quarter of aid budget assistance (US \$25 billion) is allocated to the development of capacity (Ubels, Acquaye-Baddoo and Fowler, 2010), and hundreds of thousands of people are involved in these interventions (ActionAid, 2006). However, the level of success is very mixed and the OECD (2006: 11) concluded that:

Despite the magnitude of these inputs, evaluation results confirm that development of sustainable capacity remains one of the most difficult areas of international development practice. Capacity development has been one of the least responsive targets of donor assistance, lagging behind progress in infrastructure development or improving health and child mortality.

Although the Marshall Plan was considered a success, its principles of capital transfer and know-how were found subsequently to be insufficient for transplanting the programme to developing countries. It was discovered that the imposition of strategies without a consideration of the local circumstances often resulted in failure or that the strategies were unsustainable over the long term. Moreover, superimposing external solutions over existing structures frequently undermined local capacity rather than supporting it.

Subsequent investigations and evaluations revealed that to increase the potential for success it was necessary to have the complementary resources of well-functioning institutions and local knowledge. Also, given that countries had developed their own capacity on the basis of an understanding of local conditions, it was much more practical to organically develop these structures rather than replace them with external turn-key ones (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002). Indeed, a significant change of direction has occurred, in which ownership of interventional strategies has transferred from the aid agencies to local ownership in which there is a partnership that is led by the local partner.

## Development and sustainability

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Among the criticisms of many early development interventions was the fact that numerous projects ended when investment ceased, rather than carrying on and providing future benefits. This failure to build capacity and enable continuity galvanized the partners to address these weaknesses and focus not just on the immediate objectives of the project but on building long-term capacity development. Thus, one of the core components of capacity development is the need for long-term sustainability, and this element has come to be written into the objectives and key performance indicators.

Sustainability was defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987: 8) as, 'Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. And, since then, the issue of sustainability has increased substantially, not just for developing nations but for the survival of the earth and all its inhabitants. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) held in Rio de Janeiro, the first principle was that, 'Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.'

However, sustainability is not easily achieved, particularly when people and countries are often mortgaging the future in order to live and survive today. The constraints of achieving sustainability, or what is sometimes called endogenous capacity, are dependent on a number of factors and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992: para 37.1) stated that:

The ability of a country to follow sustainable development paths is determined to a large extent by the capacity of its people and its institutions as well as by its ecological and geographical conditions. Specifically, capacity building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities.

Ensuring sustainable development is unquestionably a challenge that, as we have seen, does not always succeed; however, peoples in many countries have lived in a sustainable manner over indefinite periods, and James (1998: 130) observed with regard to Africa that:

For generations Africans have lived in their rural villages completely self-sufficient because the forests and savannahs provided the necessities of life: food, shelter, and resources for clothing. Although the fragile African soils are not known for their great depth of rich, productive soils, some areas of the continent have proven for centuries that if their carrying capacities are not exceeded, they can be productive in perpetuity. Some areas in the central region of the continent can serve as breadbaskets for the continent if cultivated properly.

## Capacity development results framework

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Despite the significant financial investments made in capacity development projects, results have been inconsistent, and Otoo, Agapitova and Behrens (2009: 1) commented that, 'The results of efforts to develop capacity have persistently fallen short of expectations.' The causes of these problems are complex and reflect the intricate nature of capacity development and the multiple interacting factors that influence results. Eade (1997: 29) cautioned that:

Behind every apparent problem lies a deeper one. Taking a capacity-building approach may mean starting several steps behind the obvious starting point of entry to avoid generating resistance. For instance, starting up a female literacy class without first understanding *why* so many more women than men are illiterate, may even be counter-productive.

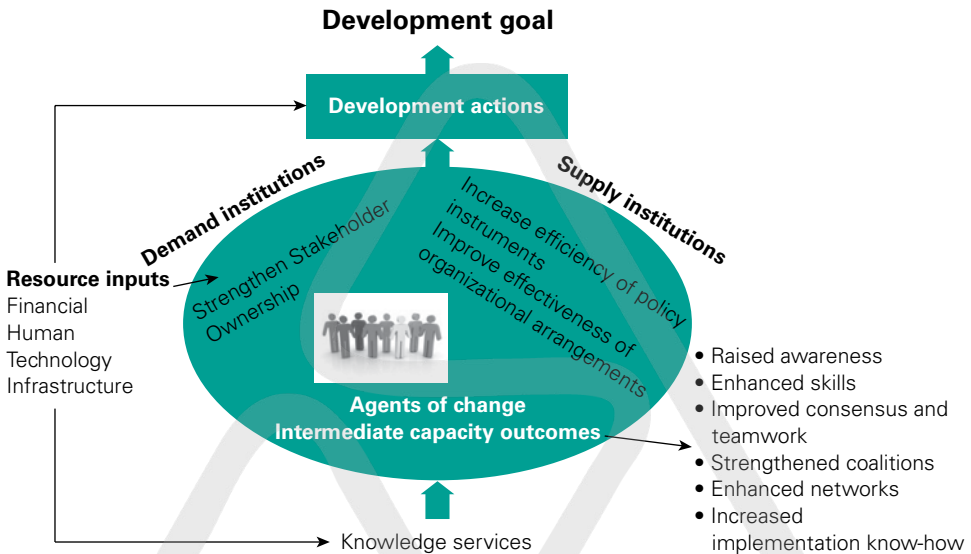
However, three main factors hindering the achievement of successful capacity development were identified: 'the lack of clear definitions, coherent conceptual frameworks, and effective monitoring of results' (Otoo, Agapitova and Behrens, 2009: iii).

In order to address some of the challenges facing capacity development interventions the World Bank Institute developed a Capacity Development Results Framework (Otoo, Agapitova and Behrens, 2009: 3), which provided two definitions:

Capacity for development is the availability of resources and the efficiency and effectiveness with which societies deploy those resources to identify and pursue their development goals on a sustainable basis.

Capacity development is a locally driven process of learning by leaders, coalitions and other agents of change that brings about changes in socio-political, policy-related, and organizational factors to enhance local ownership for and the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to achieve a development goal.

The main focus of the Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF) was on capacity factors that obstructed the achievement of objectives and the way learning interventions could be used to enhance the 'development friendliness' of capacity factors through the encouragement of locally directed change. To achieve this, the CDRF incorporates change theory, capacity economics, monitoring and evaluation practice, pedagogical science and project management, and is designed to provide a systematic step-by-step procedure for designing, implementing, monitoring, managing and evaluating development projects. This systematic nature of the Framework supports the explicit description of the complete results chain and requires the participants to map the variables and model the change process that is supported by learning. Thus, the CDRF requires that all the main actors are identified and given the knowledge and tools they require to achieve the objectives. In addition, all the critical points in the project must be identified so that an iterative reassessment might be conducted before further progress begins.

**FIGURE 11.6** Capacity Development Results Framework

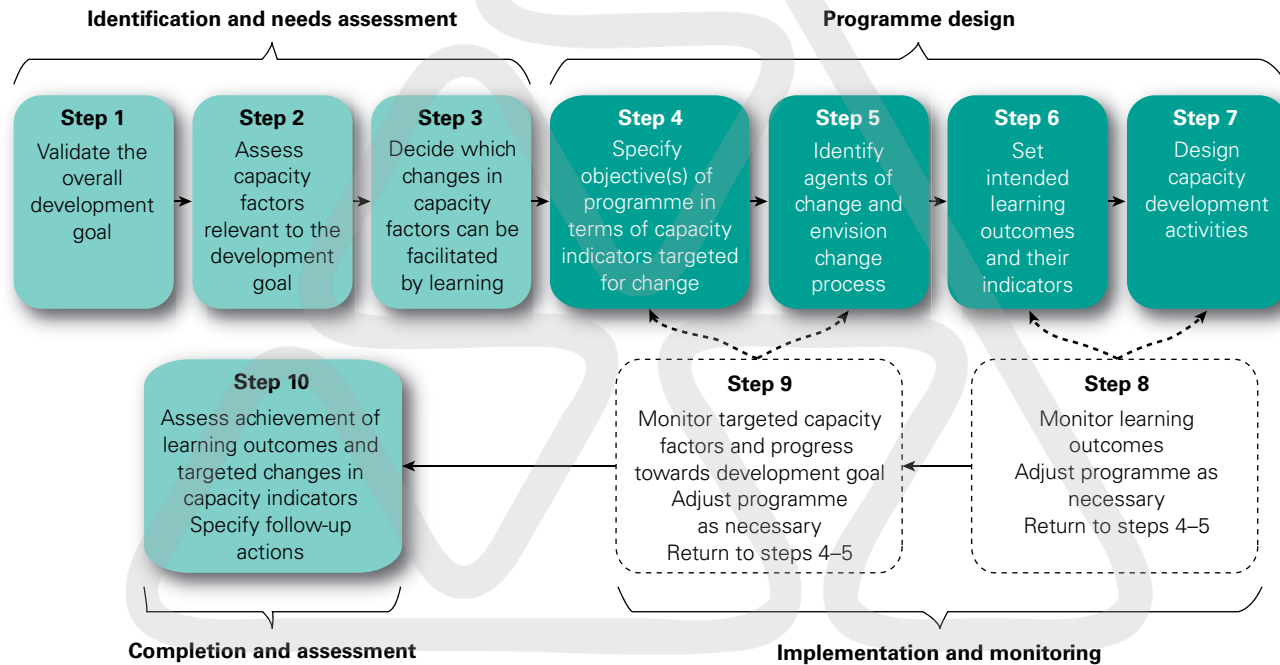
**SOURCE:** Otoo, 2011.

The CDRF (Otoo, Agapitova and Behrens, 2009: 5) identified seven main applications:

- to guide capacity needs assessments and identify capacity constraints;
- to engage stakeholders in the entire programme cycle and ensure local ownership;
- to define capacity development strategies to apply at community, regional, or country levels;
- to build indicators into programme design to track progress and, when necessary, adjust programmes for improved adaptive management;
- to assess programme results achieved, as well as results-orientation of programme design and actual implementation;
- to communicate meaningful results to diverse stakeholders, other practitioners and donors;
- to compare programmes and determine what does and does not work to advance practice.

There are 10 steps in the CDRF programme cycle, which are progressively broken down into smaller, measurable targets that support the achievement of the project objectives.

**FIGURE 11.7** The Capacity Development Results Framework programme cycle



**SOURCE:** Otoo, Agapitova, and Behrens, 2009: 24.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy

For many years Liberia experienced economic mismanagement and 14 years of civil war in which 270,000 people died and hundreds of thousands of people were made refugees. Peace was restored in 2003 and democratic elections were held in 2005, with a new government being installed in January 2006 under the leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Since then there has been significant growth and development, with the economy expanding by 9 per cent in 2007 and, in order to continue this progress, broad policies have been introduced to support peace, increase reconstruction and ensure strong systems of government.

Included in these policies was the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which had the vision of encouraging rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth between 2008 and 2011 and thereby raising the average per capita income from \$280 per year, which had meant that 48 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty. Inherent within the original Poverty Reduction Strategy was the need to mitigate the potential for violence through addressing the mismanagement of natural resources, land conflicts, political polarization, unemployed youths and former child soldiers, building the relationship between the state and the citizens, and renewing the weak and dysfunctional justice systems (IMF, 2008).

A three-pronged strategy for growth was developed, which consisted of rebuilding infrastructure, restoring the production of natural resources and reducing the costs of production so that goods and products can be exported internationally. Integral to this strategy for growth are four pillars consisting of: security; economic revitalization, governance and rule of law; infrastructure; and basic services.

To assist the rebuilding process a range of international agencies have partnered with governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to put into place a range of projects and strategies, in which a considerable amount of attention was given to capacity development. The World Bank Institute's Capacity Development Results Framework has been applied to some of the Liberian interventions and involves a mapping of the emerging priorities, capacity development needed, relevant information to improve the coherent and results-focused address of capacity constraints, and strategies to change capacity by planned efforts. The results-focused review process is illustrated in Figure 11.8.

**FIGURE 11.8** Results-focused review process



**SOURCE:** Otoo, 2011.

The initial Poverty Reduction Scheme has been superseded by Poverty Reduction Scheme 2 and a number of other national strategies, including Liberia Rising 2030 in which there is an objective of Liberia becoming a middle-income country with annual per capita income of \$1000–\$2000, requiring growth rates of 12–18 per cent (Lift Liberia, 2011).



## Conclusion

In this chapter we have traced the development of nations from the Marshall Plan after the Second World War to capacity building for developing nations and finally to the term capacity development, which more clearly represents a respect for the validity of local structures and institutions rather than their wholesale replacement by external interventions. We have also drawn attention to the fact that capacity development is applicable to both developed and developing nations. There is also a recognition that numerous capacity development projects have faced serious challenges and have not always been sustainable. The result of this has been more vigorous monitoring and control processes such as the World Bank Institute's Capacity Development Results Framework, which has assisted in supporting more successful and sustainable projects. Finally, with globalization and a closely interconnected world, successful capacity development in developing countries will not only benefit the local populations; the benefits will spread more widely to neighbouring countries and beyond.

The human mind makes possible all other development achievements, from health advances and agricultural innovation to infrastructure construction and private sector growth. For developing countries to reap these benefits fully – both by learning from the stock of global ideas and through innovation – they need to unleash the potential of the human mind. And there is no better tool for doing so than education.

(World Bank, 2011: 1)

### CASE STUDY

#### **In practice: Iraq Public Sector Modernization programme**

##### United Nations Development Programme

The Iraq Public Sector Modernization programme (I-PSM) is a US\$55 million Joint Programme of the UN led by the UNDP with the participation of seven other UN agencies: WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHABITAT, UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNESCWA. The programme is supporting the Government of Iraq (GoI) in modernizing its public sector by adopting a reform strategy for all of government, and is launching its implementation in three key sectors. It will address existing public sector governance constraints through a government-led, centrally administered and coordinated approach that: 1) rationalizes the architecture and machinery of government; 2) improves human resource management and culture; 3) enhances administrative functionality and generalized management systems; 4) develops clearly defined and costed service delivery models in target sectors; 5) approaches decentralization through a service-delivery lens on a sector-by-sector basis; 6) increases the devolution of service delivery to local government to secure effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and sustainability, with enhanced public participation; and 7) improves the capacity of local government institutions for decentralized service delivery.

The programme will establish synergies with existing UN programmes aimed at addressing corruption, will involve the active participation of civil society, and will fully integrate cross-cutting issues in relation to poverty, gender, social exclusion and the environment. The programme design has been shaped by analytical and diagnostic work alongside participatory workshops, stakeholder meetings and donor group discussion. The programme will initially be implemented within the three key social service sectors that most significantly impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: health, education and domestic water supply and sanitation. By focusing on social service delivery, the government can show the people that public sector reform has concrete and tangible benefits for the population as a whole. The programme will be fully coordinated with reform initiatives of bilateral assistance providers and with the Private Sector Development (PSD) joint programme of the UN, particularly with a view to formulating appropriate next-generation sectoral reforms to build on relevant policy development of the PSD.

### Summary of problems to be addressed by the I-PSM programme

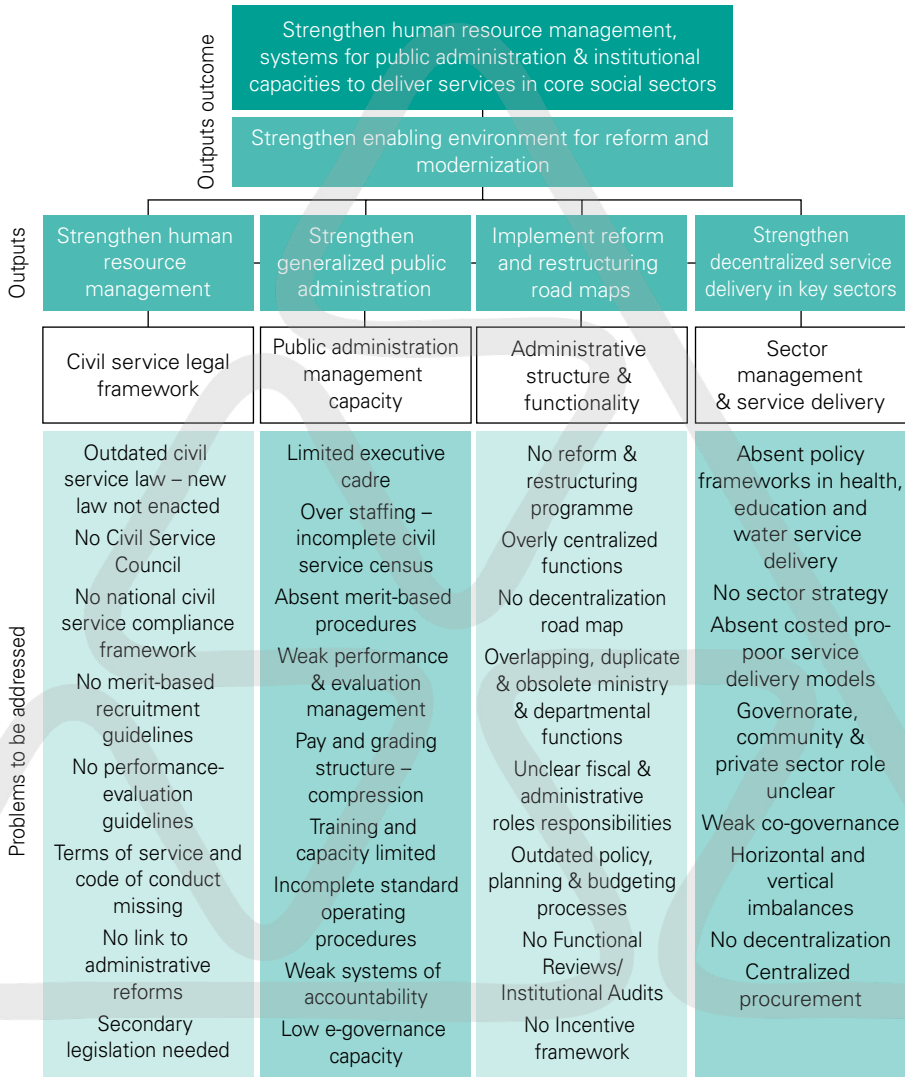
Based on the results of diagnostic and analytical work, including workshops and extensive discussion with government, Figure 11.9 identifies problems to be addressed in the area of the civil service legal framework, civil service management capacity, administrative structure and functionality, and at the level of sector management and service delivery. Given that resolving these constraints is vital to improved governance in Iraq, these problems need to be overcome through a consolidated whole-of-government approach supported by coordinated donor support and UN agency engagement. At the first stage, this includes working to foster an enabling environment within which change management can occur, given that currently the focus of government has been on delivery of basic and essential services rather than reforms per se, and given the relative lack of experience in delivering such a programme in the current context.

Given the scale of support required to address many of these problems, and considering international experience in similar reform and restructuring contexts, securing successful socio-economic transition is likely to take a period of up to 10 years. As a result, given that the I-PSM covers only 48 months, prioritization and sequencing of activities to meet outputs will be based on risk aversion and impact, with the aim of establishing sustainable processes of reform and also replicable models. Therefore, to overcome the many constraints, a step-wise approach has been adopted, allowing the management culture to change over time to guarantee sustainability. A short situational overview is provided in Figure 11.9 with regard to each of these areas of concern.

### Human resources management capacity

Currently Iraqi employment is overly dependent on government, while merit-based recruitment and performance-based promotion have been undermined as government ramps up its employment as a surrogate social security programme. Job descriptions are either lacking or do not match functions, and human resource plans in government institutions are missing. There is a general lack of accountability and efficiency in government institutions, including reliance on manual systems that have not been reviewed or updated, and too much discretion for officials, which fosters corruption. Lack of preparation for and differences in interpretation

**FIGURE 11.9** Iraq-Public Sector Modernization Problem hierarchy: linkage between problems and programme outputs



of decentralization, as mandated in the Constitution and the Provincial Powers Law, have led to uncertainty in policy formulation and therefore also in execution. Behavioural challenges, as a legacy from the past, related to taking initiative and assigning responsibility within the government institutions as well as in the private sector, require mentoring, while it is also essential to address capacity gaps and strengthen policy making, planning and budgeting linkages.

## I-PSM capacity development approach

Under the I-PSM programme, capacity development is defined as support that enhances institutional sustainability, leadership, knowledge and accountability. The I-PSM approach takes the existing capacity bases in every situation as its starting point and supports national efforts to extend and retain them, building on nationally determined priorities, policies and results.

Figure 11.9 identifies the problems to be addressed by the I-PSM programme within the four areas of the civil service legal framework, public administration management capacity, administrative structure and functionality, and sector management and service delivery. To address these areas systematic interventions have been established for the four areas that involve: strengthening human resource management, strengthening generalized public administration, implementing reform and restructuring road maps, and strengthening decentralized service delivery in key sectors. Also, action has been taken in the following areas:

- *Institutional sustainability*: This includes the policies, systems and processes that organizations use to legislate, plan and manage activities efficiently and to effectively coordinate with others in order to fulfil their service delivery mandate at the central and governorate level. Under the I-PSM this includes: 1) support to the design of civil service reforms; 2) support to the design of comprehensive systems for human resource management; 3) designing incentive systems for results-based management; and 4) analysis of core functions and determination of the core mandates, roles and responsibilities of organizational units and their mutual interactions.
- *Leadership*: Developing the leadership capacity and structure to deliver this challenging programme, including: 1) support for setting policy goals, priorities and strategic approaches around which leadership roles are defined; 2) support for the development of a senior executive service; 3) facilitation through the development of risk and change management skills; 4) coaching, training and mentoring programmes; and 5) support for the creation of career management systems, including the incentive framework for execution.
- *Knowledge*: The approach adopted here focuses on developing institutional knowledge capacities for the reform and modernization programme, including: 1) advocacy and education with regard to reform strategies, their design, adoption and execution; 2) the development of training and learning methodologies for continued learning, including in-service civil service training; and 3) the establishment of regional knowledge networks to allow knowledge linkages to emerge and be sustained. Knowledge networks across government at national, regional and local levels will be enabled and developed.
- *Accountability*: To foster accountability structures the I-PSM programme focuses on capacity development support: 1) strengthening stakeholder feedback mechanisms, including monitoring and evaluation systems; 2) developing mutual accountability systems at the national and governorate level; 3) support for public information disclosure; and 4) public policy dialogue over programme design and execution.

**SOURCES:** Peter Batchelor, Deputy Country Director/UNDP Iraq; Dalia Zendi, Programme Associate/UNDP Iraq; UNDP-Iraq office/Public Sector Modernization Program Document; <http://www.geopolicity.com> Geopolicity report: Government of Iraq (GoI) Five Year Strategic Plan, CoR budget, World Bank PEFA (2005–6), UNICEF, UNESCO.

## Questions for reflection

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- International development has had mixed success with interventions – what strategies would you apply to raise the levels of success?
- Should areas such as happiness and well-being be included in the Human Development Index?
- What might you or your organization contribute to the development of individuals or groups in developing nations?

## Further information sources

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United Nations Development Programme: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

World Bank: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

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PART FOUR  
**The training cycle**

PART FOUR A  
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# 12

# The identification of learning needs

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*There is something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability. (ELBERT HUBBARD)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- apply LNA procedures at organizational, departmental, occupational and individual levels;
- apply various criteria in order to prioritize training and development needs;
- conduct a SWOT analysis and apply job analysis techniques to training needs analysis;
- understand the research and development of a competences model in Brazil.

## Introduction

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The first stage of the systematic training/learning cycle is the identification of learning needs. This is where trainers, individuals, line managers or even customers identify where there are training/learning needs that should be addressed. We discussed in Chapter 1 the differences and similarities between training and learning, and for the purposes of this chapter we shall use the phrase learning needs analysis (LNA) to cover the spectrum of learning, training and development needs analysis.

## Undertaking a learning needs analysis

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It is critical that the training professional, or whoever is carrying out the analysis, has access to the most accurate and relevant information available on the organization's present performance and problems and future plans. As Kenney and Reid (1986: 69) point out, 'The quality of the training can be no better than the quality of the analysis permits.' Some sources of data are shown in the next section. Data collection can also take the form of questionnaires, interviews, discussions, brainstorming groups and observation.

For the purposes of this chapter, we shall consider undertaking an LNA through-out a whole organization. The prime difficulty ahead of us is the size and complexity of the task. We therefore need to break the process down into bite-size manageable chunks.

Boydell (1983) has identified three levels of training needs within organizations:

- organizational;
- occupational;
- individual.

We shall use these three broad areas as a starting point to break down the process. A fourth area, needs at departmental level, is also a useful consideration when analysing training needs in larger organizations and is included here.

## Needs at the organizational level

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### *Business objectives*

The starting point for an LNA has to be the corporate or business plan. Every organization has a plan. This may be bound in a general strategic statement, be couched as precise business objectives or take the form of broad policy guidelines. In some organizations, it may not be in written form, but to survive and move forward there is somewhere a plan, even if it is only in the head of the CEO. This is the starting point for examining learning needs.

Most well-run organizations will have a well-defined set of business objectives. Where these exist, they will normally cascade down the organization so that departments, sections and individual managers will have sub-objectives that dovetail into the business plan. These are the prime source of information in developing the LNA at this level, for here are the specific, measurable targets that the organization is committed to pursue.

For example, an organization plans to increase sales of Product A by 10 per cent over the next year. To facilitate this, a further sales manager is being recruited, telesales effort is being redirected to promote this particular product, and manufacturing is gearing up for the anticipated rise in demand. Furthermore, assemblers from a production cell that makes a product with falling demand are to be transferred to Product A cell, and marketing support are preparing new corporate brochures and

materials for all field sales personnel. As a part of this, a CD is being prepared as a mailshot.

The planned increase in sales has already thrown up a myriad of learning implications. These include: induction for the new sales manager, training implications for telesales, cross-training of assemblers, briefing of marketing support in the objectives of new promotional materials, and training in the production of PC-based materials. There may also be other training implications to consider; for example, the team leaders of the two affected manufacturing departments may require new skills, and there may be further implications for other areas of the organization. Note that this organizational-level objective is causing learning needs at an organizational, departmental, occupational and individual level.

Organizational-level objectives may contain very large training implications. For example, the redirection of a corporate culture to new beginnings, take-over or merger will require careful consideration with regard to the associated learning needs. These will normally require a detailed analysis and a substantial commitment of training resource before they can be implemented.

As an example, consider an organization that has committed itself to move to a culture of continuous improvement. A comprehensive strategy is needed, with a phased implementation plan. Such a strategy will typically include improved communications systems, restructuring of job responsibilities, job redesign for supervisors, empowerment issues, improvements to intergroup interfaces, new alliances with suppliers, and development of group and teamworking capability. Such a major programme will generate a whole suite of training courses that may embrace every employee.

These are complex interventions that will call for an organizational development approach. They will possibly stretch over a number of years and require external consultancy expertise. As such, this scale of programme requires an ongoing needs analysis in its own right.

### ***New implementations***

Another associated way of considering the objectives of the organization is to consider everything new that is proposed in the foreseeable future. Anything that is new will generally have a learning implication. The following is a list of considerations:

- new product;
- new process or method;
- new technology;
- new piece of equipment;
- new legislation;
- new/transferred employee;
- new procedures/standards;
- new customer/market.

All new developments involve change and the potential for mistakes or lost opportunities. The smarter organization will review the learning implications before rather

than during the implementation of anything new. Having said that, the line manager may not always think this way. It is here that the training professional, in keeping an eye open for new implementations, can make a valuable input to ensure the learning need is considered at the right time.

## Performance measures

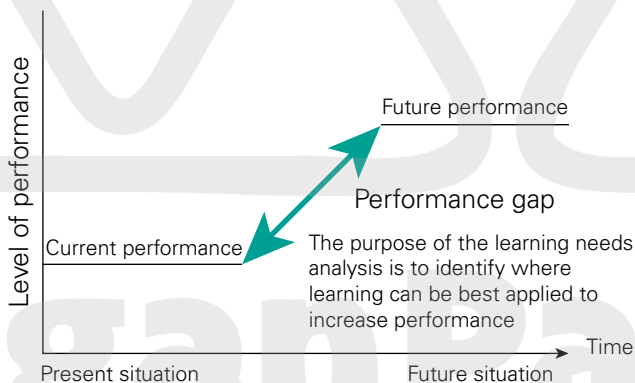
The organization will be measuring itself not only in terms of traditional financial performance indicators, but also increasingly in other areas. Corporate and departmental metrics such as accident rates, customer complaints, warranty costs and quality costs all give indications of where things are going wrong. Training professionals should ensure they are privy to these measures.

There is a need to look beyond the simple figures. Something going wrong does not necessarily indicate a training need. For instance, a shortfall in production in a department may have a training implication; on the other hand, it may simply be down to poor performance of a sub-supplier. In this respect some caution is necessary. A learning needs analysis is perhaps better termed a 'needs analysis'. *The needs of the organization are not necessarily training needs.* Very often, there may be process, systems or procedural issues that need addressing.

## The performance gap

While all needs of an organization might not be learning needs, it is true to say that most learning needs can be thought of as arising from a gap between current performance and future desired performance – the performance gap (see Figure 12.1).

**FIGURE 12.1** Performance gap



The learning needs analysis is most often concerned with this gap between current and future performance. When this occurs in a steady-state situation, it can present a scenario for which it is not difficult to propose a solution. For instance, an organization may be following a new marketing strategy. A comprehensive training package



is rolled out to all relevant employees to explain how they will be required to operate this strategy. Everyone now understands what future performance is required of them, and can begin to work towards this. The learning need is solved. But organizational existence is not always so straightforward.

Let us imagine that within a very short space of time a new aggressive competitor enters the market. The proposed marketing strategy is swiftly made redundant. It is not clear how the organization should respond to this threat. Future performance now becomes an unknown. It is clear that there is a severe performance gap in the market, but the organization does not have a clear way to fix this. The need is undefined, and hence so is the learning need.

Forming a learning needs analysis will therefore not always be a straightforward process. The owner of the analysis will need to gather intelligence from as broad a range of sources as possible. Forming a strong network of contacts within the organization at different levels and from different functions will help enormously, as will the application of sensitive thinking and an emotionally intelligent view of the current state and likely future scenarios. It is a difficult result to come to because it is more than likely that no one in the organization will know truly what is going to happen.

Ulrich (1997: 60), in discussing strategic partnering of HR, warns of the dangers of quick fixes.

Diet books, marriage manuals, easy-learning books (foreign language tapes, for example) sell briskly with promises of quick fixes... Successful weight loss diets, successful marriages, and the acquisition of a foreign language require work. Likewise, HR professionals need to avoid the lure of the quick fix.

Learning needs at the organizational level might not be easily identified or solved by simple interventions. An incisive, well-sourced and sensitively intelligent diagnosis is required to get as close as possible to the true needs of the organization.

### **Problem-solving groups**

Many organizations have embraced continuous improvement or Six Sigma philosophies that use quality groups to address operational problems and devise and implement solutions. Such groups can occur at any level within the hierarchy. They may be cross-functional or discreet within a function or department.

These groups work on critical incidents or failures within organizational processes. As such, they are valuable sources of information on where learning needs may be occurring. Very often, these groups are coordinated in their activity via a steering committee, facilitator or quality function. The machinery of the continuous improvement methodology is therefore doing some of the training professional's work in identifying where things are failing within the organization.

### **Human resource planning**

The organization may have a well-developed plan giving detailed projections on the skill levels required over the next few years. Where such a plan is not available, a lot of valuable information can be garnered from HR statistics, records and management

information systems. A simple analysis of age profiles, qualification levels and labour turnover will start to give shape to the sorts of people and skills that the organization requires in the foreseeable future, and hence the learning needs.

Some form of succession plan is also required. This can be in a rough-cut format. Detailed plans are very often difficult to produce, owing to the high degree of future uncertainty. However, some format is needed to highlight those within the organization worthy of development (see the section on individual needs below).

## Needs at the departmental level

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In any but smaller organizations, a detailed LNA becomes too complex and difficult to be generated centrally. This is where the use of LNAs on a departmental basis can be invaluable. It is doubly valuable as it delegates the responsibility for detailed day-to-day learning analysis down to where it should be, with the line manager.

The departmental analysis is performed in exactly the same way as the analysis at organizational level. For instance, reviewing the categories above, the business objectives should have been cascaded down to a departmental level. In the example given above, the manager of Product A cell is already considering the step-up in production. The manager already has more detailed personal objectives relating to the phased increase in production over the next year. S/he knows which transferees are coming into the department and is already planning the reassignment of duties and who will train the newcomers.

Likewise, the consideration of anything new can be effective at departmental level. The arrival of a new piece of equipment in the department entails a learning need. It is not necessarily a need that could or would be identified or met by a central training facility's analysis of corporate needs. The department may also have its own set of performance measures. Output, accident rates and absenteeism may all be measured locally and have local training implications. Similarly, there is value in local human resource planning. The manager will know what retirements are forthcoming, absences due for maternity or pre-planned medical leave, new entrants arriving and so on.

### *Departmental problem-solving groups*

Where these exist, they can be a useful source of information for training needs at the departmental level. They can provide information at two levels:

- They will be searching for solutions to departmental problems. Some of these solutions will involve learning needs. For example a Six Sigma project team has redesigned a departmental process. Have all users been trained appropriately in the new process?
- These teams can be directed specifically towards training and people-related issues to identify needs.

An organization may already have trained teams in specific problem-solving techniques. These could be brainstorming, Pareto analysis, fishbone diagrams, forcefield analysis,

SWOT analysis, specialist Six Sigma tools or other widely available problem-solving models. These are tools traditionally considered useful for the solution of operational problems, but there is no reason why the majority cannot be applied to training or human resource-related issues, and they are particularly valid at departmental level.

An easily applied tool is the SWOT analysis, which asks the team to consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to a specific situation. The finishing and packing department of a manufacturing organization has asked its problem-solving team to look at the training implications within the department as a starting point for consideration of next year's learning needs. The team has come up with the analysis, shown in Figure 12.2.

**FIGURE 12.2** Finishing and packaging department:  
human resources SWOT

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New department manager</li> <li>Stable department workforce</li> <li>Start of multi-skilling</li> <li>Good morale</li> </ul>                | <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in forecast sales</li> <li>Access to PC-based training</li> <li>New packaging machine next year</li> <li>'Return to learning' scheme available next year</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stock shortages causing too much firefighting</li> <li>Two trainees recruited</li> <li>Problem-solving team not fully effective</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team leader retires next year</li> <li>Competition establishing factory nearby</li> <li>Wage rates uncompetitive</li> </ul>  |

Such a SWOT analysis provides some useful information to the department. One great value of a SWOT analysis is that it is more than just a snapshot. It is forward-looking in the two right-hand quadrants as well as considering the present situation in the two left-hand quadrants, and it examines both positive and negative aspects of a situation.

The above example raises a number of training issues. The new departmental manager faces a number of changes within the department – a likely increase in throughput, new machinery and some staff changes. It is also evident that there are a number of issues relating to the spread of skills within the department that will need to be addressed.

The new incumbent must also consider the motivation and retention of the staff in the immediate future, since there is likely to be increased competition locally for skills. A further issue, relating to stock shortages, does not necessarily have a training implication but will impact on the people issues within the department and must be taken into consideration. The SWOT analysis therefore gives some useful raw data that can be further refined to analyse the precise needs of the area. Much of this

departmental activity is too detailed to be identified at a corporate level but can be identified locally, formulated into a departmental plan, then integrated into the corporate training plan.

Using analysis at departmental level does in fact provide an alternative method for organization-wide analysis. The role of the training professional in this method is to coordinate and collate all departmental needs, thereby extracting and meeting any common needs that occur.

### The skills matrix

A useful instrument that incorporates much of this information locally is a skills or training matrix. This gives the department a snapshot of the current skills status within the department and, by its very nature, shows where learning needs exist. An example of a very simple matrix, showing broad competence areas, is given in Table 12.1.

**TABLE 12.1** Skills matrix, Product A cell

|             | Assembly | Drilling | Bending | Fork lift | Spray | Test | Ship |
|-------------|----------|----------|---------|-----------|-------|------|------|
| John Briggs | C        | C        | C       | C         | C     | C    | C    |
| Dal Patel   | C        | C        | C       | C         | C     |      | C    |
| Jean Phipps | C        | C        | C       | C         |       | C    |      |
| Jan Libich  | C        | C        |         |           | C     | C    |      |
| Tony Blitz  | C        | C        | C       |           |       | T    | T    |
| Nadya Smith | C        | T        |         |           |       |      |      |
| Ellie Johns | C        | C        |         |           | C     |      | T    |

For instance, knowing that a skilled operative, Dal Patel, retires in six months' time, the manager is presently training up a number of operatives in the skills that will be lost. The matrix can be enhanced to give more qualitative information on the level of competences, using a categorization such as:

- can do job only by reference to job instructions or supervisor;
- can do job without reference to instructions/supervisor, but not always to agreed output and quality;
- can do job to prescribed output and quality levels;
- can do all the above and can train others.

The skills matrix provides an invaluable instant picture of where skills are distributed in a department and provides an excellent visual management tool. The matrices can also be integrated centrally to provide a skills inventory.

## Needs at occupational levels

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At this level, learning needs are expressed as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed to carry out specific duties within a job. They are normally defined through the process of job analysis. Gael (1988: xv) discusses more than 40 different approaches to job analysis. He stated that it:

may be viewed as the hub of virtually all human resources administration and management activities necessary for the successful functioning of organizations. Hardly a program of interest to human resource specialists and other practitioners whose work pertains to organizational personnel does not depend on or cannot benefit from job analysis results. The importance of precise and accurate job information cannot be overemphasized, considering the impact that decisions based upon job information have on individual job applicants and employees and organizations.

Pearn and Kandola (1988) discuss 18 methods of job analysis. These range considerably in their levels of sophistication and the resources required. The spectrum starts with the apparently simple, yet time-consuming, technique of observing the job-holder.

Other ways of collecting data are to get the job-holder to record via diaries, logs or self-descriptions the work carried out, or to undertake a job analysis interview with the job-holder. There are also more sophisticated techniques, including the critical incident technique. This method collects information on incidents that are critical or very important in the performance of the job. The range continues through the use of repertory grids, to detailed checklists, inventories and so on. There are, therefore, many techniques available to carry out a job analysis. This chapter does not have the space to discuss all the differing techniques; however, we can review the general principles involved in the process:

- Some common sources of information for a job analysis are the job description, which will list major responsibilities and tasks, and the job specification, which will give indicators on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the job.
- The analysis involves breaking down the job into component tasks. The relevant skills and knowledge required to perform each of these tasks are then listed. Attitudes are a difficult area and these are more rarely measured. Analysis will therefore tend to concentrate on knowledge and skills.
- There is now a comprehensive listing of all the skills and knowledge required to perform the whole job. Next, the level of competence for the knowledge and skills needs to be defined. This is important, since not all tasks contained within the job will be performed with the same frequency, nor be of equal importance.

- From here the necessary training programmes can be developed to train the job-holder against the required standards. The technique is particularly relevant in defining training needs where new jobs or ranges of jobs are being created. For example, a new factory on a green-field site may find the technique appropriate.

Job analysis is, however, a detailed technique. It therefore lends itself particularly to situations where larger numbers of homogeneous jobs exist. To perform a detailed analysis on one-off jobs is a time-consuming process. Indeed, Wellens (1970) points out that job analysis as a means of determining training needs is at its most effective at the lower end of the organization. The discretionary and ever-changing nature of supervisory and managerial jobs means that they cannot be predetermined or prescribed accurately.

Wilson (1997: 75) summarizes the debate on the effectiveness of a macro or micro approach to job analysis:

In order to conduct job analysis, there is the danger of concentrating on the individual elements and details of the job and consequently failing to observe the overall picture (failing to see the wood for the trees). Alternatively, viewing the job as an entity or as purely an outcome may result in a failure to recognize important details.

Job analysis, however, remains a very valid technique for the identification of the skills and knowledge required at the occupational or job level.

## Needs at the individual level

---

There is something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability.

(Elbert Hubbard)

At this level, the organization is seeking to identify any shortfall in the individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform his or her job. The difference between the desired level of performance and the current level of performance is *the training gap*.

The analysis of needs at this level has two prerequisites. The first is that the performance parameters of the job have been defined. This can be against a job analysis, as defined above. Alternatively, individual performance measures may be identified, particularly at management level, where a manager is measured against personal objectives. However, failure to meet a personal objective does not necessarily indicate a training need; an example might be the failure of a production manager to meet output targets where this is a result of serious plant breakdowns. The second prerequisite is that some form of review takes place against the performance parameters. This is traditionally the performance appraisal or review. Other techniques include self-assessment, assessment centres and 360° feedback. Whatever the technique employed, some form of performance measure is required.

Without these two elements – the required and the actual performance – an analysis cannot take place. Where these are in place, there are still difficulties in evaluating individual training needs. For example, consider a new receptionist receiving



a six-monthly appraisal. The manager has identified a satisfactory match with the functional skills required to perform the job. These include completion of the visitors' book, issuing security passes, answering incoming calls and routing to the relevant extension, notification of visitors to the relevant recipient and so on. Here the receptionist is utilizing both the required functional skills and required knowledge to perform the job role. No training gap is perceived. The manager is, however, concerned about the job-holder's attitude towards visitors. It appears cold and does not reflect the company's customer-centric values. This leads towards a difficult area of definition. Are the manager's expectations about the receptionist's attitude fair and how can they be measured? And what is a possible training solution? It could be that the job-holder does not possess the warmth the manager expects and the error was made at the recruitment phase.

At the individual level, we also need to review development opportunities. Many appraisal and review systems do build in a forward-looking aspect in which employee and manager can together discuss both the individual's and the organization's view of their future. Other sources of information will be succession plans and human resource plans, where these exist. Development of individual employees is vital to future organizational growth. Bennis (1989: 47) states:

Our educational system is really better at training than educating. And that's unfortunate. Training is good for dogs because we require obedience from them. In people, all it does is orient them toward the bottom line.

The valid point here is that it is quite feasible for an organization to place too much emphasis on training to meet current performance and business objectives, meeting the short-term bottom-line results at the expense of developing people for the future.

The degree of development activity will depend upon organizational culture and training policy. Some organizations will invest only in the bare minimum of training. Others encourage learning for its own sake and have well-established personal development programmes. Ford's EDAP is a prime example that enables employees to develop themselves.

Programmes such as EDAP allow many employees back into the learning arena and develop their learning skills and enhance their confidence levels. These philosophies also fit well with continuous improvement programmes whereby organizations seek to enhance all employees' contributions to the business, so that untapped and unseen potential can be harnessed. These programmes, whether they be learning a language at a local college, improving computer skills or taking a Master's degree, are risky investments. They may have no immediate impact upon company performance nor fulfil any immediate training need. However, issues of leadership, innovation and creativity are becoming more critical to organizational success. Thus, it is these sorts of investments in individual potential that become more valid and sensible.

There is always the danger of assessing learning needs solely from the perspective of the organization. Many individual employees will have their own agendas and plans concerning their educational and developmental needs. And there are sound business and motivational reasons for organizations to assist employees to fulfil these self-development needs.



As human beings, we all have our own personal struggle to find ourselves and our role in life. There are very few who live solely to work, but because work occupies the lion's share of our waking life, each individual usually seeks to gain fulfilment and satisfaction within the working environment. That self-awareness and self-development are, by definition, broader than the pursuit of organizational objectives. As Handy (1997: 90) has said:

We have today the opportunity, which is also the challenge, to shape ourselves, even to reinvent ourselves. Our lives are not completely foreordained, either by science or by our souls. We can make of our lives a masterpiece if we so wish. It is an opportunity that ought to be available to all humans. It could be. It is the fortunate combination of liberal democracy and free market capitalism that gives us this opportunity, as long as we make these two our servants, not our masters.

Developmental training can be more structured, particularly where this is linked into career development programmes. Where succession planning is present, plans may exist for managers to gain experience, for example through secondment to a new function, and to develop themselves educationally. These training needs are identified and budgeted for in agreed development plans.

Development needs, specifically those that are initiated by the individual employee, are hard to quantify in terms of cost benefit to the organization. They therefore become harder to justify and to support as a priority need (see below). For this reason, they should be embedded within a corporate policy, as a percentage figure or money/time investment. Otherwise, they are easily trimmed out as an unquantifiable expenditure.

## Defining the training priorities

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Having undertaken an organization-wide LNA, it is likely that the number of training needs identified are much larger than can be met through current resources. It is therefore imperative to prioritize the needs into some order of importance. The priorities may be self-evident but where this is not the case, the following technique can be applied. It is useful to do this as a group exercise, for example in a training committee:

- 1 Certain training needs will already be defined through company policy or strategy. For instance, the organization has committed to train three designated managers on an MBA programme. All PC users are to be trained in the new suite of software by the third quarter. Such strategic and policy training decisions are already preordained.
- 2 A distinction must be made between training needs and training wants: that is, between the essential and the desirable. Where needs are identified against organizational objectives, then the arising needs should be prioritized in order to achieve the objectives. However, it is probable that in the course of undertaking an LNA, general requests for training will emerge. These may include wants rather than needs. For instance, the financial controller may consider that line managers have a poor understanding of the financial

measures used in the organization. This might be true. While a properly designed course in finance for non-financial managers may address this issue, would it actually improve the organization's performance? It may be desirable but it is not necessarily essential.

- 3 Pareto analysis can be employed as a technique to define the highest priority training needs among the remaining needs. A cost saving resulting from the proposed training is calculated (estimated savings minus estimated training costs). The cost savings are compared and the best savings become the priority needs. Consider the Pareto principle: 20 per cent of the training input is likely to yield 80 per cent of the savings. Take, for instance, an organization that is having broken merchandise returned due to faulty packing. It emerges that staff in the packing department have not been fully trained in the correct packaging methods for a new product range. Returns are costing the organization £3,000 per month. If this is left unresolved, a substantial cost will accrue. Such a piece of training becomes a high priority against other costed training needs.

Costing of training in softer skills can be trickier. But all that is being attempted here is some rough measure to enable some comparisons to be drawn. Avoid getting drawn into detailed and complex calculations; a rough yardstick is all that may be required.

The three-stage process for prioritizing training needs is summarized below:

- 1 Include training needs predetermined at policy level.
- 2 Divide remaining needs into essential and desirable.
- 3 Cost the essential needs and prioritize via Pareto.

## Conclusion

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We have now reviewed a number of methods for identifying learning needs at four levels throughout the organization and seen that:

- The relevance of the various LNA techniques will depend upon the culture and size of the organization.
- Most literature on the subject infers that the identification of learning needs is the preserve of the training professional, or at least looks at it from this perspective.
- Trends over the last decade have led to the devolution of responsibility into smaller autonomous units within organizations. Smaller business units, self-directed work teams, teamworking, more local empowerment, all lead to the conclusion that LNA must move closer to the coal face.
- As training becomes more highly recognized as a legitimate business investment, the volume of training is likely to rise accordingly.
- With the devolution of responsibility and the rise in the amount of training, training and the identification of learning needs have to become more and

more a part of the line manager's and supervisor's people-management responsibility. If they are not, they will become distanced and less relevant to local operating needs.

- The devolution of responsibility for the identification of learning needs raises its own learning need. Have we, as HRD professionals, shown our managers and supervisors how it is done?

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Competencies development and its application – construction model from the analysis of a concrete services company in Brazil

#### Background

This case study presents the identification, development and adoption of a competencies model for a cement sector company in Brazil. The company is a world leader and one of Brazil's largest producers of construction materials, with leading positions in the cement, concrete, aggregates and gypsum. Established in 1950, the company has about 80,000 employees throughout different states, notably Minas Gerais, Paraíba, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Goias, Sao Paulo and Pernambuco.

The competencies model for operational jobs was intended to align the profile of the operational workforce and guide their activities to achieve strategic objectives. In addition, it sought to align the recruitment and selection process, and to consolidate quality and performance through better training to deliver organizational objectives.

#### Methodology for model construction competencies development

Considering the nature and scope of work, we chose an approach based on the qualitative aspect of research in the constructivist perspective. The research was concentrated on eight production units of the base operating services firm, Concrete, located in Minas Gerais. It focused on analysing the operational work roles of cement flow operator, driver (payments), mixer driver, driver/cement pump operator, loader operator, laboratory worker and operations assistant.

The research and data collection was conducted through document analysis, interviews and direct observation through visits to the site. The 'terms of operation' were discussed in a conference between the board and HR team of the company and data collection was subsequently undertaken using the following techniques:

- Document analysis of records available in printed and electronic media.
- Personal interviews, telephone and face modalities, involving:
  - board of directors;
  - members of the HR team;
  - central coordinators;
  - regional managers;
  - other professionals working in power, other staff and drivers.

- Direct observation by technical visits to operations of different sizes and locations.
- Meetings with the company's staff for purposes such as presentation and evaluation of proposals, work monitoring, action critical review and directing the activities.

As part of the study different aspects were emphasized, namely:

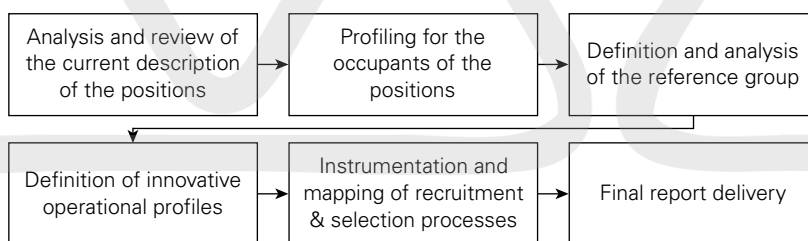
- analysis of data on the positions and the organization, through sources such as search results, exit interviews, the performance evaluation system, the organization's strategic planning and the human resources development programme;
- analysis of the content and dynamics of operational positions (cement flow operators, drivers, operators, laboratory technicians and helpers);
- review of positions in light of the competencies approach;
- defining the profile of the incumbents, with an indication of competencies required;
- composition and analysis of the reference group for validation of the competency profile;
- indication of adequate instruments for recruitment and selection of candidates for operational positions.

In summary, using a combination of these techniques it has been possible to redesign the organizational structure of operational positions with a focus on management competencies in order to leverage, especially, recruitment and selection of professionals to ensure their alignment with the organization's strategic intent.

### The model development based on the results of the analysis

The work included the phases shown in Figure 12.3, established in accordance with the scope of the study.

**FIGURE 12.3** Phases of the research study



Each phase presented different dynamics for its achievement. Below, the main aspects of each step and their interdependence are explained as a way of highlighting the scope of the project.

The existing job descriptions were analysed and then updated on the basis of a review of the roles and responsibilities of the various positions. At this stage, we could establish a classification of positions from a matrix composed of the following evaluation criteria: 1) autonomy, defined as resulting from the rank and level of supervision received; 2) complexity of tasks; and 3) direct impact on organizational results in terms of quality and financial

resources. Each criterion was allocated a score of 1 (lowest level) to 3 (highest level). This classification served as an initial reference for defining the competency profile of positions as it indicated the alignment between the different functions. Table 12.2 records the ranking and total points for each position.

**TABLE 12.2** Autonomy x complexity x impact

| Position             | Autonomy | Complexity | Impact | TOTAL |
|----------------------|----------|------------|--------|-------|
| Lever                | 3        | 3          | 3      | 9     |
| Driver fiscal        | 2        | 2          | 2      | 6     |
| Driver pump operator | 2        | 2          | 2      | 6     |
| Mixer driver         | 3        | 3          | 3      | 9     |
| Loader operator      | 1        | 2          | 2      | 5     |
| Laboratory worker    | 1        | 1          | 1      | 3     |
| Operations assistant | 1        | 2          | 2      | 5     |

The next step involved profiling the occupants of the positions using a competencies approach. In this phase, we sought to identify the knowledge, competencies and attitudes required for each function. Table 12.3 illustrates the competencies identified for each position, updated from the descriptions of activities and aligned according to the functional organizational structure and strategic direction of the organization.

A group involving a regional manager, two coordinators and members of the HR team was established to define and specify the people involved in the reference group. This approach also ensured the involvement of line managers.

Using the array of competencies, a reference group of professionals from different occupational positions was chosen based on those who had been observed and distinguished themselves in the exercise of their functions.

At this stage, employees who constituted the reference group were approached by means of direct observation and dialogue in the field. Some professionals, however, were not in the centre during the research period and, to avoid compromising the analysis, they were replaced by other professionals. Through on-site observation, we tried to deepen understanding of performance dynamics in various positions with a focus on the competencies required. In the comments, we highlight some aspects:

- *Cement flow operator*: This post demands of the occupants, along with the responsibilities indicated, some specific characteristics: high energy, quick thinking, ease of communication, openness and attention. It should be mentioned that the job-holders express a sense of identification with the job because it provides them with a particular status in the production process of the plant. In this sense, identification with the company's values becomes crucial.

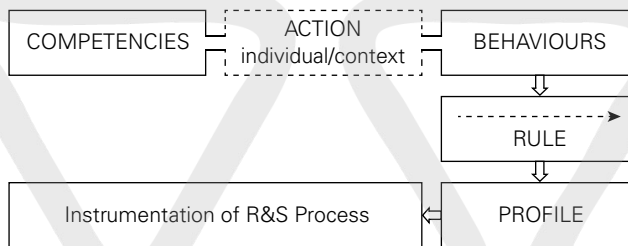
**TABLE 12.3** Competency matrix

|                              | Cement flow operator | Driver (payments) | Driver mixer | Driver/cement pump operator | Laboratory technician | Loader operator | Operations assistant |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Planning                     | X                    | X                 |              |                             |                       |                 |                      |
| Leadership                   | X                    | X                 |              |                             |                       |                 |                      |
| Initiative                   | X                    | X                 |              |                             |                       |                 |                      |
| Ability to work unsupervised | X                    | X                 |              |                             |                       |                 |                      |
| Organization                 |                      |                   | X            | X                           | X                     | X               | X                    |
| Teamwork                     | X                    | X                 | X            | X                           | X                     |                 | X                    |
| Pressure tolerance           | X                    |                   | X            |                             | X                     |                 |                      |
| Responsibility               |                      |                   | X            | X                           | X                     | X               | X                    |
| Ethics                       |                      |                   | X            |                             |                       |                 |                      |
| Customer orientation         | X                    | X                 | X            | X                           |                       |                 |                      |
| Quality of work              | X                    |                   |              |                             | X                     |                 |                      |
| Productivity                 | X                    |                   |              |                             |                       |                 |                      |

- *Op pump driver*: Some characteristics stand out, beyond the requirements mentioned: namely, ease of communication and good relationships.
- *Mixer driver op*: Certain features were emphasized, along with the responsibilities mentioned, namely commitment to the equipment and safety standards.
- *Driver (Payments)*: Deep involvement and concern for safety, and ease of communication.
- *Operator loader*: Beyond the capabilities mentioned, we identified a need for high energy and a capacity to organize work and monitor the implementation of safety standards (on the central site).
- *Laboratory technician*: Discipline and strict adherence to procedures.
- *Operations assistant*: Beyond the basic capacities, we identified the need to display physical strength and to pay close attention to work in hazardous environments, including working at heights.

This enabled us to produce a definitive competency profile for each position, and thus to produce a set of customized proposals for managing the competencies of people in the organization. The innovative operational profiles were defined on the basis of the data obtained, and described the skill set for each position. This research used a rule for competence assessment, adapted from Alles (2009), as shown in Figure 12.4. Twelve competencies were selected initially for the positions, evaluated as a matrix and presented in Table 12.3 above.

**FIGURE 12.4** Diagram of the competence rule application



For each competency, the complexity level of each position was taken into account in the assessment at the time of recruitment, selection and performance evaluation. There was a need to take account of some other competencies that were required in all positions, such as the ability to learn, commitment and dynamism/energy:

- *Ability to learn*: This is associated with the assimilation of new information and new knowledge, and their efficient implementation. It relates to incorporation of new cognitive models into the usual repertoire of behaviours.
- *Commitment*: Supporting organizational goals. Preventing and overcoming obstacles that interfere with the achievement of business objectives. Ensuring the performance of agreed actions. Complying with the job's commitments, both personal and professional.
- *Dynamism/energy*: This is the ability to work hard in different situations and with different interlocutors during long working hours, without affecting one's activity level.



We used the following concepts based on Alles (2009):

- *Planning*: Ability to determine goals and priorities effectively, managing actions, deadlines and resources.
- *Leadership*: This concept refers to the leadership of groups, in terms of motivating people to take effective action in a given direction. Ability to set goals and provide feedback, integrating other people's opinions.
- *Initiative*: Willingness to take action, create opportunities to improve results without external demand.
- *Self-control*: Ability to control emotions and avoid negative reactions in the face of provocations, opposition or hostile opinions, and to act effectively when under stress.
- *Organization*: Continuous concern to ensure well-informed performance of work to meet the organization's goals. This involves discipline in following procedures.
- *Teamwork*: Ability to actively participate in a common goal. Encourage interpersonal relations and having the ability to understand the impact of one's own tasks on the success of joint actions.
- *Pressure tolerance*: Ability to effectively perform operations under time pressure or in situations of disagreement, opposition and diversity. Ability to produce high performance in very demanding situations.
- *Accountability*: Commitment to tasks that take place. Concern for the fulfilment of what is delegated above one's own interests.
- *Ethics*: Understanding and work always aligned with moral values, morals and practices, while respecting organizational policies.
- *Customer orientation*: A desire to help or serve customers, to understand and meet their needs, even those not expressed, both for end customers and for other parts of the organization involved in the relationship.
- *Quality of work*: Ensuring excellent performance of the work to be done. This means having extensive knowledge of the issues of working area. Demonstrating interest in learning and constantly doing better.
- *Productivity*: Ability to establish performance goals or achieve above normal performance, stretching capacities successfully.

The definition of each competency, however, proved elusive because the evidence shown in its application can signal a range of abilities. Thus, we adopted the model of the 'rule of jurisdiction' as a way to describe the content in grades: for instance, Grade A = greater area of expertise, and grade D or E = a domain of low level of competence. In this way the tool can be applied to different processes of managing people and it is possible to define the competencies required for each function and the minimum level required. In addition, the ability to assess people in this way made it possible to specify appropriate strategies for recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, training, compensation and careers.

The last step consisted of recruitment and selection instrumentation and mapping, which involved the discussion of curriculum screening, psychological testing and interview competencies. This enabled the screening of curriculum vitae/resumés using central office criteria such as systems for advertising vacancies, receiving resumés and carrying out initial

screening based on: experience in the position and/or concrete area of activity; previous jobs; place of residence; availability and so on. Psychological tests were applied that related to the requirements of positions and to the competency profile, and also potential for development. It was suggested that the company should hire a specialized service provider for the psychological assessment. The choice of provider would depend on the volume of tests to be applied (by month or week, depending on turnover) and the required response time for delivery of results. Feedback should be designed so that the central coordinator could evaluate the decision making without the need for an interpretation by a psychologist in the company. Other considerations were cost and the type of psychological test: for example, preparation of individual reports or summary information on the test results.

The interview competencies were constructed from questions based on situations in the work context and related to the profile for each position. This tool provides evidence of competence in action, based on past experience, and identifies gaps for further development. It is worth emphasizing the importance of the interview scripts for specific competencies as a way to identify more accurately the potential of each candidate *vis-à-vis* activities to be developed.

Finally, the study identified the activities resulting from the identification of competencies: job descriptions, identification of competencies required, filtering, and a basic competencies matrix developed by using the established and developing competencies rule.

### Conclusions

This case study is intended to encourage the reader to undertake job analysis, possibly using the methods presented in this context. In summary, it can be stated that the competency profiles represent objectively mapped efforts to align the workforce to the organization's strategic aspirations. In addition, the competencies provide an important reference for the processes of recruitment and selection, training and development, and other human resource activities.

## Questions for reflection

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- Which approach do you believe would be the best for conducting a learning needs analysis?
- How would you undertake the development of a competency framework for employees in your organization?
- How would you prioritize the learning needs that were identified by the learning needs analysis?

## Further information sources

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Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/identifying-learning-talent-development-needs.aspx>

National Employers Skills Survey: <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/bispartners/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-13-ness-key-findings-2009.pdf>

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**Design**

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# 13

## Designing learning events

DAVID SIMMONDS

*Design is the method of putting form and content together. Design, just as art, has multiple definitions; there is no single definition. Design can be art. Design can be aesthetics. Design is so simple, that's why it is so complicated.* (PAUL RAND)

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- apply the Honeycomb Model<sup>®</sup> of learning design;
- select design components based upon informed judgment;
- produce an effective design for any learning event, for any learners, at any level, at any time, in any place, and for any organization.

### Introduction

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There is no one single right way to help people to learn, which for the newcomer to the field can be a daunting proposition. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to reduce the numbers of variables facing the designer, and to offer the HRD practitioner criteria upon which to make a more appropriate selection amongst the array of possibilities involved in learning design.

When the author discussed the outline for this chapter with an accomplished architect, he suggested that the important elements when considering design should include:

- *Brief:* What exactly is the client looking for? (This can be a protracted process of discovery as often clients struggle to articulate what they want.)



- *Context*: What is the context (physical, historic, geographic, cultural etc) in which the design will operate/function?
- *Budget*: How much scope does the budget provide?
- *Functionality*: Is the design practical and efficient?
- *Beauty*: Will the design delight its user?
- *Integrity*: Will the design stand up against the forces acting against it (gravity, rain, wind, etc).
- *Harmony*: Linked to ‘beauty’ and ‘context’, there should be a continuity of approach in good design at all scales within the object itself and beyond.
- *Surprise*: Very good design might even surprise its user, stimulating a response (positive or negative) that enriches the user’s experience.
- *Eco-friendliness*: Is the design sympathetic to environmental considerations?
- *Longevity and Flexibility*: Will the proposal stand the test of time and changing needs?

Similar generalized design principles have been applied to HRD in Table 13.1.

**TABLE 13.1** Design principles and HRD

| General design principles | HRD design applications   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Balance                   | The relative proportions of cognitive capacity, capability and behaviour must produce stability.                                    |
| Contrast                  | Learning often involves startling people by using paradox, contradiction and irony.   |
| Direction                 | HRD professionals need to create safe learning environments that learners can explore for themselves.                               |
| Economy                   | Efficiency and effectiveness are paramount in this parlous economic climate; every moment of the learning event must be beneficial. |
| Emphasis                  | The figure-ground dichotomy outlined in Gestalt psychology needs to be offered for learners to examine in depth.                    |
| Rhythm                    | The symbiosis and mutual participation of people learning together creates its own pace and causes a kinaesthetic response.         |
| Unity                     | Ecology, structure, process and system all contribute to the holistic nature of learning.   |

**SOURCE:** adapted from Gibb, 2008: 65.

The genesis of the systematic approach to training and development probably began through the work of the Training Within Industry (TWI) organization during and after the Second World War, when large numbers of people needed training to restore national economies (Dooley, 1945). Since that time, the model has been revised and developed, most notably by Dick, Carey and Carey (1978–2008) and has often been referred to as the ADDIE system: Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate (Figure 13.1).

**FIGURE 13.1** The systematic approach to training and development – ADDIE



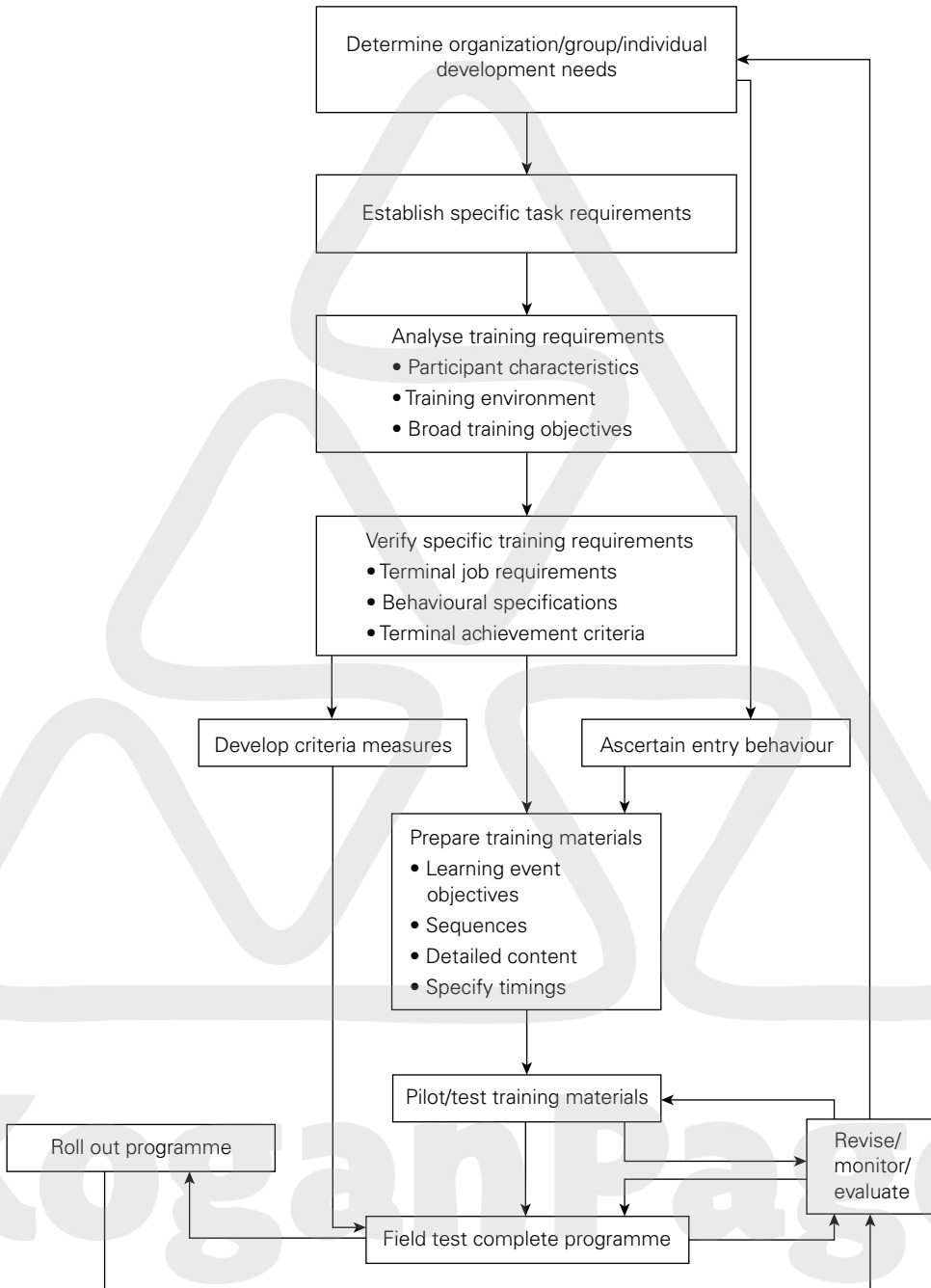
An alternative approach to systematic learning design is illustrated in Figure 13.2, which illustrates the need for iterative cycles of improvement and development based on piloting, feedback, monitoring and revision.

Whilst the systematic model and its modifications have been repeatedly quoted, few design structures actually embrace their totality. Perhaps the time has come to adopt a fresh approach, which I have called the Honeycomb Model<sup>®</sup> of effective learning design (Figure 13.3).

Figure 13.3 depicts an organic and dynamic model of learning design, which has the advantage of being adaptable to a wide range of learning events in addition to traditional classroom training. Indeed, it has been shown to be as effective in organizing large conferences as in a one-off coaching session.

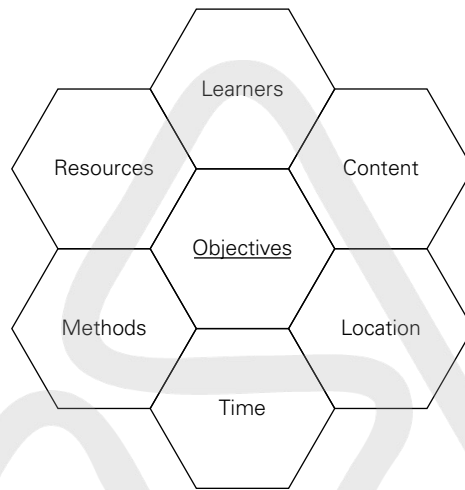
At the initial stage, the role of the facilitator or consultant is that of an interrogator (see also Chapter 22: HRD and consultancy). It is essential to ask questions of all the stakeholders, and to partner with them in the design process, in order to obtain maximum commitment. By asking challenging questions, the HRD professional will not only increase his or her credibility but will also gain answers in these seven essential areas. In order to obtain helpful responses, the learning designer should ask a series of high-order open questions:

- Why?
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How much?

**FIGURE 13.2** Converting training objectives into a programme

**SOURCE:** adapted from Lynton and Pareek, 2000: 262.

**FIGURE 13.3** The Honeycomb Model<sup>®</sup> of effective learning design



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## Objectives

Learning at work is an intentional activity (Mezirow, 1991). That is not to say that it is always planned, deliberate or predictable, because learning is often informal, unexpected and casual. Some have even argued that it can be subconscious (Watanabe, Nández and Sasaki, 2001). Nevertheless, in organizational settings, learning is directed at improving and developing performance. The goal and intention of the utilization of effort and resources must in some way be linked to the fulfilment of the organizational strategy. The purpose of individual growth at work is subject to the overarching need for organizational development.

It is clear that in an environment of rapid change, individuals must be able to adapt in order to meet new challenges. Training is the tool most often used to prepare individuals for this change. In fact, training is perhaps the most important component of any technological innovation in the workplace.

(Quiñones and Ehrenstein, 1997: 177)

Therefore, the most important element in learning design must be the establishment of learning objectives because without them the learning event will be:

- extremely wasteful of resources;
- impossible to adequately measure;
- likely to have a lasting negative impact.

Consequently, it is vital that the facilitator or consultant is involved in creating the learning objectives at the outset. In order adequately to be able to define the objectives,

however, there needs to be an early dialogue between all the stakeholders in order to accomplish satisfactory commitment and buy-in to the learning outcomes.

Apart from discussions with clients, senior executives, resource controllers and customers, the very first thing the HRD professional needs to do is to complete a tripartite *learning contract* together with both the employees and their immediate line manager. The learning contract must be signed and dated at least one week before the event. This will enable everybody to make an effective contribution to a successful accomplishment of the outcomes. The important elements of a learning contract include:

- the personal learning style of the employee;
- connections to organizational and departmental strategies and plans;
- links to appraisal reports and performance measures;
- references to personal and professional development plans;
- expected results and effects of the learning;
- opportunities for subsequent implementation and application of the learning;
- follow-up and monitoring plans;
- the learner's availability;
- time for completion.

Snow and Swanson (1992: 584) described five components of instructional theory:

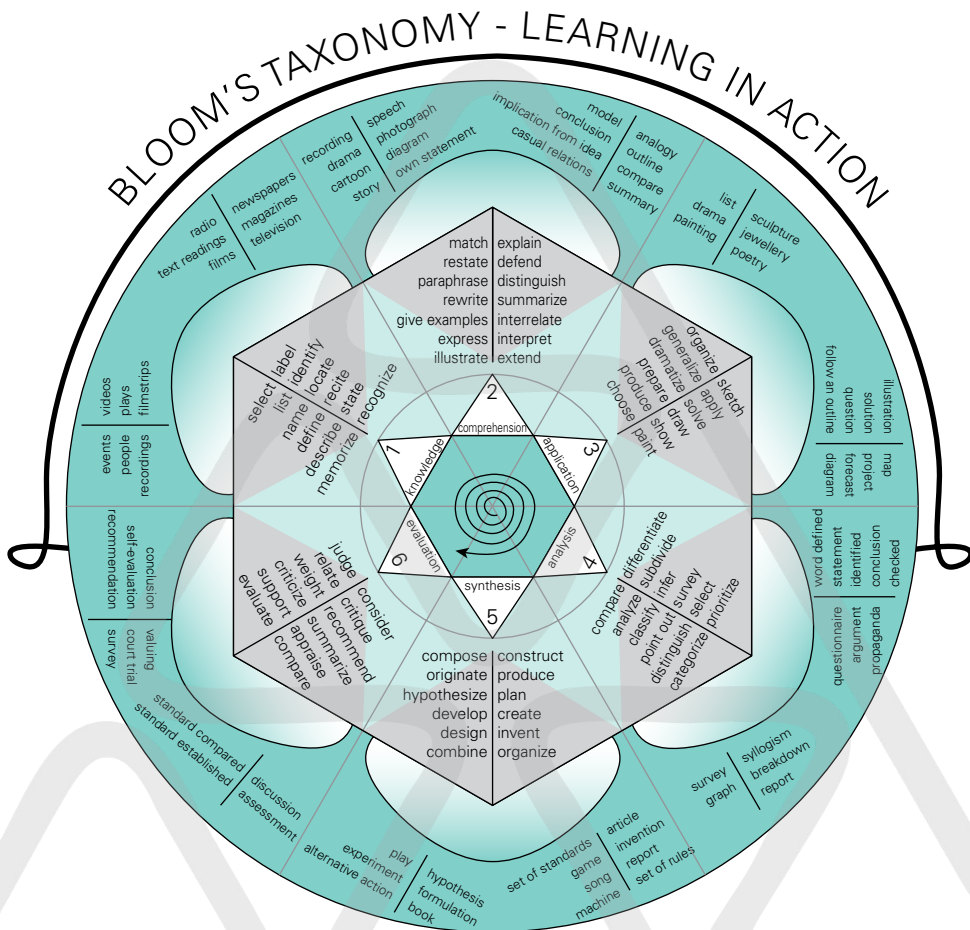
- description of the desired end states or goals of instruction in a domain;
- description of the goal-relevant initial states of learners prior to instruction;
- explication of the transition processes from initial to desired states;
- specification of instructional conditions that promote this transition;
- assessment of performance and instructional effects.

From this we can see that the design of effective learning events must be founded upon a thorough identification of the learning objectives. This will enable the learning gain to be assessed and the performance improvement to be measured. Any discussion of learning objectives should be informed by the seminal work in the field by: 1) Bloom et al (1956); 2) Mager (1962); and 3) Gagné and Briggs (1974).

### **Bloom's Taxonomy**

Many HRD professionals are aware of the enduring contribution of Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues in developing a hierarchical classification of objectives in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains (Bloom et al, 1956: 7; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, 1964: 6–7). Indeed, many educators and trainers still use the taxonomy as a bedrock foundation when constructing and planning new programmes and when developing learning outcomes. Figure 13.4 illustrates the cognitive domain in a novel and helpful way:

**FIGURE 13.4** Bloom’s taxonomy – cognitive domain



**SOURCE:** John Manuel, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bloom's\\_Rose.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bloom's_Rose.png)

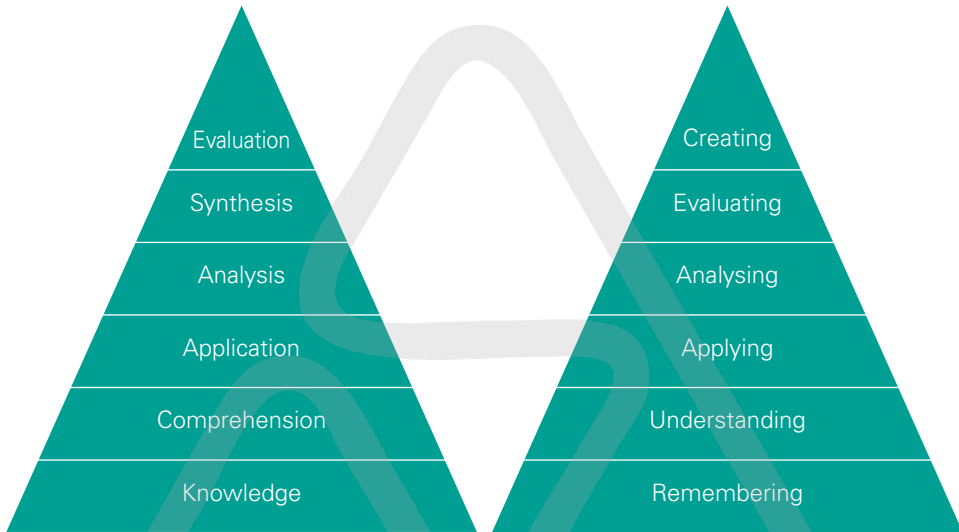
More recently, Bloom et al’s cognitive model has been revised and described by Anderson, a student of Bloom and one of the original group of researchers (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). This new model has changed the nouns to verbs and is illustrated in Figure 13.5.

### Mager’s three elements

Robert Mager’s work has greatly influenced many people in the fields of education and training when they have been developing behavioural learning objectives. In his most unusual programmed learning text, he proposed (1962: 12) that such objectives must contain three important elements – performance, conditions and standards:

- Identify the terminal behaviour by name; you can specify the kind of behaviour that will be accepted as evidence that the learner has achieved the objective.

**FIGURE 13.5** Old and new versions of the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy



**SOURCE:** Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001.

- Try to define the desired behaviour further by describing the important conditions under which the behaviour will be expected to occur.
- Specify the criteria of acceptable performance by describing how well the learner must perform to be considered acceptable.

Mager also illustrated (1962: 11) the importance of specificity and exactitude when selecting appropriate verbs for statements of learning outcomes – a task that still confounds many professionals today (Table 13.2).

By contrast, Heinich et al (1999) have offered a modification of Mager's approach, called the ABCD method (Table 13.3).

### **Gagné's five elements**

Educationists and development specialists alike owe much to the work by Robert Gagné. For example, his contribution to the field of establishing objectives centred upon five elements in defining performance objectives:

- 1 Action.
- 2 Object.
- 3 Situation.
- 4 Tools and other constraints.
- 5 Capability to be learned.

(Gagné and Briggs, 1974: 80)



**TABLE 13.2** Interpretation of words used when writing objectives

| Words open to many interpretations | Words open to fewer interpretations |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| To know                            | To write                            |
| To understand                      | To recite                           |
| To <i>really</i> understand        | To identify                         |
| To appreciate                      | To sort                             |
| To <i>fully</i> appreciate         | To solve                            |
| To grasp the significance of       | To construct                        |
| To enjoy                           | To list                             |
| To believe                         | To compare                          |
| To have faith in                   | To contrast                         |
| To internalize                     | To smile                            |

**SOURCE:** Mager, 1962: 11.

**TABLE 13.3** A comparison of the ABCD and Mager's methods

| ABCD method  | Mager's method   |
|--|--|
| Audience (Who is the learner?)   |  |
| Behaviour (What will the learner be able to do at the end of instruction?) | Performance (What is the learner expected to be able to do?)             |
| Conditions (Under what conditions will the behaviour be observed?)         | Conditions (Under what conditions is the performance expected to occur?) |
| Degree (How accurately should the learner complete it?)                    | Criteria (What is the level of competence that should be accomplished?)  |

A number of authors, when referring to the ADDIE model, have encouraged HRD professionals to establish a hierarchy of goals, based on terminal and enabling objectives (Ammerman and Melching, 1966; Tuckman and Edwards, 1973; Clauberg, 2004; Silber and Foshay, 2009; Hodell, 2011). However, a more fruitful approach could be to focus instead upon the elements of the job in the workplace, and on the benefits of multitasking. Craig (1994) has developed a hierarchical model for the purposes of analysing learning needs. He maintains that instead of focusing on the job role, professionals should undertake job analysis differently:

Jobs are many and varied and generally grow erratically because they are tied up with the changing fortunes of organizations and are a central part of the institutionalization that occurs within organizations. Jobs are normally broken down into identifiable 'chunks'. However, a vital part of any job performance are the behaviours that arise as a result of the interactions between these 'chunks' of activity (1994: 58).

Craig (1994) has identified 30 abilities that can be amalgamated in a number of permutations to provide a skill. Several transferable skills can be collected to accomplish a task. Different tasks can be brought together to form a function. And several functions are combined in a job role.

Therefore, it is important to centre learning events on abilities rather than jobs, for this will enable employees to be able to demonstrate a wide range of different skills; these can then be applied in a variety of contexts as different tasks; and then tasks will together fulfil the needs of a function. Figure 13.6 illustrates an example of this model for a production manager.

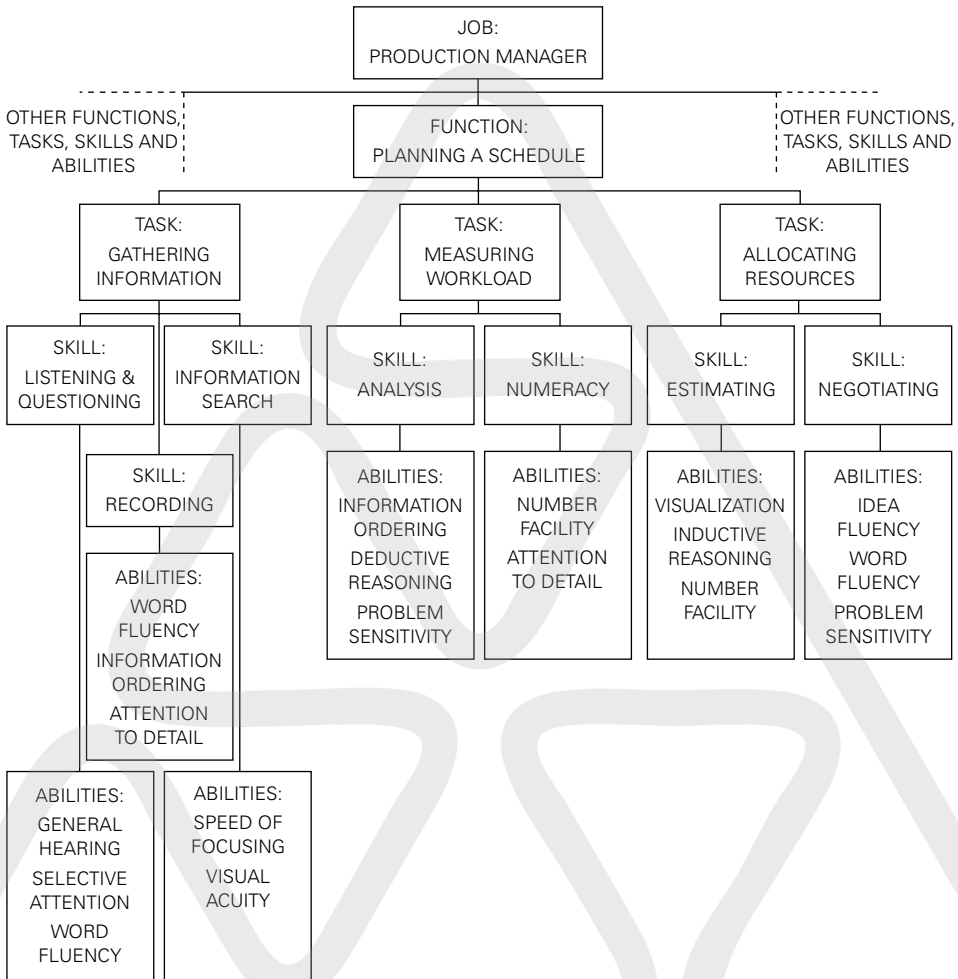
This example illustrates how a particular ability ('*word fluency*') can be combined with others ('*general hearing*' and '*selective attention*') to perform the skill called '*listening and questioning*'. Alternatively, it is possible to unite '*word fluency*' with '*information ordering*' and '*attention to detail*' to demonstrate the skill '*recording*'.

There appears to be a strong link here between such effective learning design and competence. Empirical research by Velada et al (2007: 293) found that: 'Training design, performance self-efficacy, training retention and performance feedback were significantly related to transfer of training over time.'

In summary, the first and most important task of the HRD practitioner when developing a learning design is to determine the learning objectives. These objectives must be:

- learner-centred;
- grounded;
- contextualized;
- practical;
- discrete;
- work-based;
- performance-oriented;
- progressive
- integrated;
- demonstrable.

**FIGURE 13.6** Functions, tasks, skills and abilities



**SOURCE:** Craig, 1994: 59. Copyright © Malcolm Craig 1994 and used with permission.

## Learners

A learner-centric approach is generally accepted by most HRD professionals these days, and this is valid whether designing a short piece of e-learning or a two-year management development programme. It is tempting to give the primary attention instead to the content, the curriculum, the location, the technology or the constraints; however, it is estimated (Afeti, 2009) that up to 90 per cent of all training expenditure is wasted because objectives and learning needs have not been established.

Brookes (1995) asserts that there are a number of issues for the HRD professional to identify and analyse concerning the *learners' entry behaviour*. Her list has been extended and developed here:

- existing levels of job competence, knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- learning styles and preferences;
- learning contracts, appraisal reports and 360<sup>0</sup> feedback;
- previous experience of learning and development;
- access to technology and other materials, equipment and resources;
- expectations of the learning event;
- commitment to the learning process;
- experience and position in the organization;
- conflicting operational demands and priorities;
- numbers of people to be developed;
- diversity matters, including mobility, caring responsibilities and language competence.

It is important for the learning designer to ask questions and obtain answers in each of these areas first of all, instead of rushing towards a training solution. All the issues can be addressed directly or indirectly, and through the standard range of quantitative, qualitative, primary and secondary research techniques.

### ***The four learning strategies***

In general, most people develop knowledge, skills and attitudes by using one – or more usually a combination – of these four ways of learning (Brookes, 1995; UNODC, 2007):

- trial-and-error and practice;
- being told and reading;
- imitation and modelling;
- thinking and reflecting.

HRD professionals need to use a combination of these strategies as appropriate for the learners' needs.

### ***Philosophies of adult learning***

Empirical quantitative data (O'Neill, Wainess and Baker, 2005; Bell and Kozlowski, 2008) support the hypothesis that learners react more favourably to instruction that uses more experiential, active approaches to learning. While more traditional approaches to teaching result in positive learning experiences for the learner, people learn even more when experiential learning methods are used in organizations. These findings should encourage designers of learning to structure events that feature hands-on learning where theoretical and conceptual topics are reinforced by experiences. Too many programmes relegate applications and lessons learned to the post-training period.

Thelen (1954: 131–39) summarized many of these design principles for helping people learn in groups:

- Establish training aims.
- Serve as a roving, ‘nomadic’ consultant.
- Training is a learning experience, and emphasis is placed on interpersonal relations through trying to solve problems.
- Grounded – in contact with reality. This implies tasks are within the group’s competence; its responsibilities are appropriate; it undertakes goal directed activities; members know how to participate; group membership is determined by the purposes of the individuals present or the tasks to be accomplished.
- Reality checks through reflection, analysis and feedback of the group’s own tested experience as an ongoing organism, in a safe learning environment.
- Development of group concerns from task to process – tendency to move from superficial interests or behaviours to feelings, motivations, conflicts and anxieties; from acting out and lack of awareness to thinking about problem requirements and finding creative solutions.
- The group changes through learning – increasing self-direction; increasing efficiency; increasing ability to cope with frustration; increasing skills in avoiding anticipated failure; increasing ability to channel emotions into work; increasing flexibility in designing plans to fit changing situations; increasing rate of recovery from periods of emotional damage; meeting more individual needs within the group; increased sense of reality. Members develop more rather than less individuality, through the freedom to try out new behaviours and attitudes; they learn how to change the group situation and so give themselves more opportunities to truly be themselves.
- Group growth is dependent upon the composition and dynamics of interpersonal relationships; conflicts and paradoxes are better for learning. Each group is unique. The greatest limitation to development is the ability of the trainer.
- Learning happens by individuals within a group setting, by adaptation to changes in the group, and also by changes to performance.

Thelen (1954: 139–41) also outlined that learning is transferable to the work situation when:

- The individual has a realistic understanding of what is happening.
- The person can relate the situation to a wide variety of past experience.
- The individual senses a reduction of anxiety and increased competence in his or her roles.
- The person achieves greater commitment to the processes of effective groups.

## Intelligence(s)

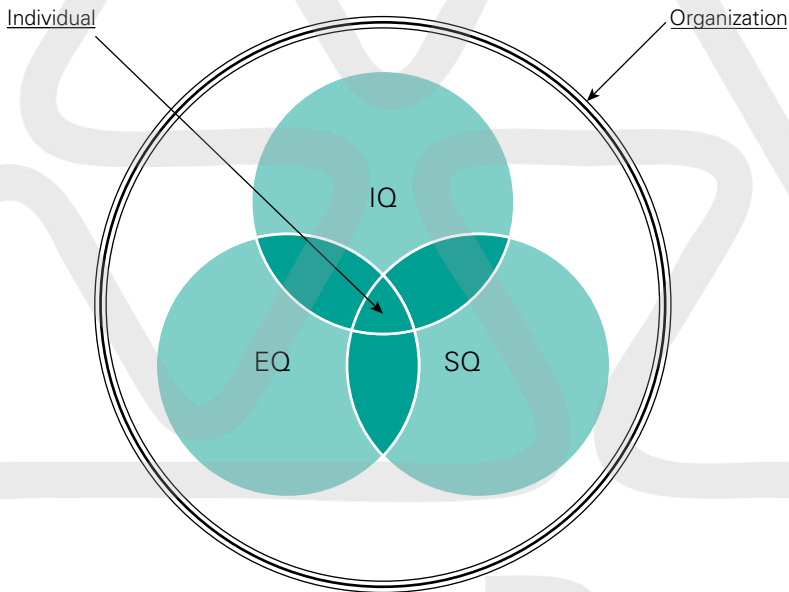
Finally, in this discussion of the individual differences of learners, it is important to consider the notion of multiple intelligences. Seminal work by Gardner (1983) challenged the assumption that intelligence and its measurement is unidimensional. He adopted a more diverse and inclusive approach, where different people can excel in a wide range of different areas and activities without being constrained by traditional notions of intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) (Greenspan et al, 1989; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1998) has become an important area of study for learning practitioners, particularly when considering aspects of leadership development.

It is also significant that the notion of spiritual intelligence (SQ) (Zohar, 2000) is being acknowledged by HRD professionals as having a part to play in the overall development of learners in the workplace. Increasingly, people are sensing the inadequacy of a traditional Platonic duality between body and mind, and preferring to adopt a more integrated and holistic approach to development. Embracing spirituality enables a more honest and open style of learning and development.

Building upon these approaches, I can now offer a new integrated and holistic model (Figure 13.7) of organizational development: *Organizational intelligence (OQ<sup>®</sup>)*. I believe that the future responsibility for HRD professionals will lie in embracing this more synthesized and assimilated form. Although represented statically here, the model is essentially moving, dynamic and organic in nature. In essence, what I am proposing is a full acceptance of the body, mind and spirit in all aspects of learning and at all levels of the organization.

**FIGURE 13.7** Organizational intelligence (OQ)



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## Content

The HRD professional is often faced with an insuperable problem: the volume of new knowledge to be learnt is greater than both the resources available and the learner's capacity allow. Therefore, it is the practitioner's responsibility to prioritize the content.

Firstly, it is important not to compromise the quality of the learning by being tempted or forced to reduce the learning gain by confronting the task with:

- too short a time;
- an inappropriate location;
- inadequate facilities or equipment;
- too large a group;
- excessive cost of materials, media or methods.

Otherwise, much of the effort and expenditure will be wasted, and the learners will be unable to retain their learning. Instead, practitioners should always refer back to the learners' entry behaviour and the learning outcomes. Resources can always be changed to incorporate additional material.

### Prioritizing content

There are three major ways for a learning practitioner to prioritize content: level, relevance, and expediency.

#### Level

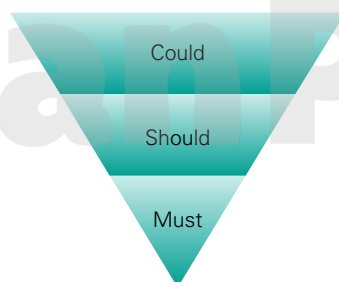
One of the easiest ways of addressing the requirement for supplementary content is by designing a hierarchy of programmes for, say, introductory, intermediate and advanced learners.

#### Relevance

Another way to prioritize the content is by a filtration method that focuses on relevance. The HRD professional should question – and gain agreement from stakeholders to – the pertinence, applicability, appropriateness and significance of each and every proposed element of the syllabus, by using the funnel approach shown in Figure 13.8.

The filter of relevance will help practitioners to focus on those essential elements that are imperative (*'must'*) to fulfilling the objectives and meeting the learners' needs. Additional material ought to (*'should'*) be retained for discussion, further case

**FIGURE 13.8** The filter of relevance





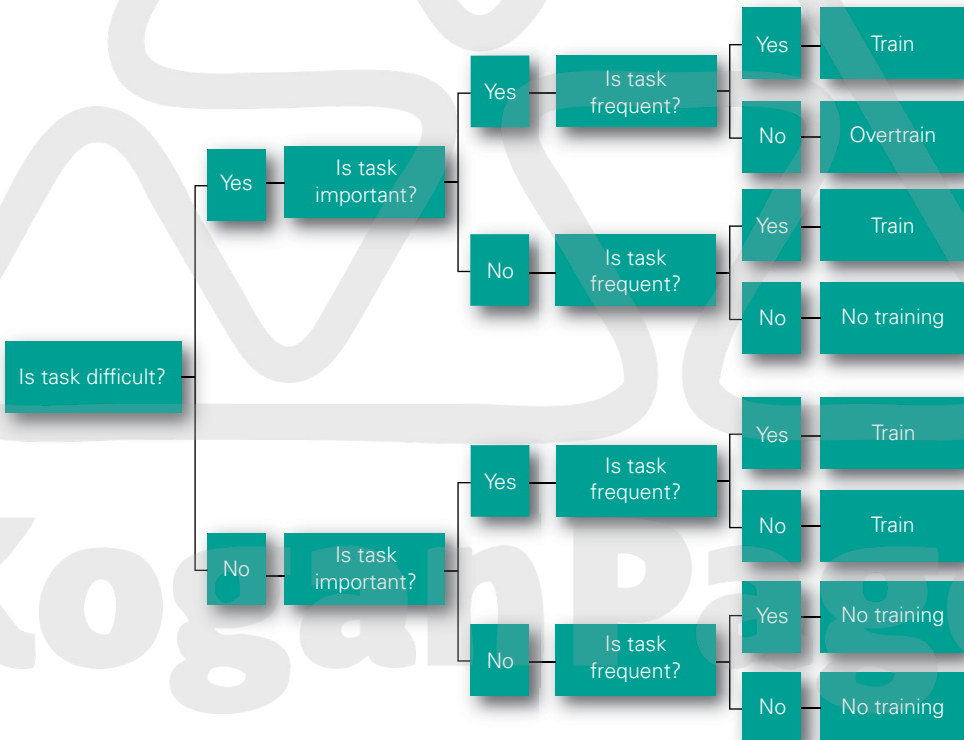
studies or to encourage faster learners. And finally, any supplementary content may perhaps ('could') be offered as learner-directed activities or follow-up after the formal learning event.

## Expediency

A final way to prioritize the content of the learning event is to consider those aspects of the job that the learners will perform most often or most quickly; those things that are considered most vital; and those features that are most complex to learn or implement. The difficulty, importance, frequency (DIF) rating scale (Friedman, 1990; Pine, 1995; McKillip, 1999) helps the practitioner to assign values among conflicting demands based upon an assessment of the relative difficulty, importance and frequency of individual tasks. By following the algorithm, it is easier to determine an effective training result. Figure 13.9 illustrates a range of consequences, such as whether it is appropriate to train, to overtrain, or not to train at all.

In summary, the HRD professional should adopt a logical and rational approach to determine which specific aspects of content should be included in any particular learning event.

**FIGURE 13.9** Difficulty, importance, frequency analysis



**SOURCE:** Buckley and Caple, 2007: 93; used with permission.

## Location

Increasingly, learning is being undertaken beyond the confines of the traditional classroom or conference centre (see Chapter 23: Learning spaces that change people and organizations). Authors have reported that the location for the learning can greatly influence its effectiveness. Wilson (1966) found that management development programmes were better if held away from the workplace. Van Cleve and Marshall (1975) discovered that start-up training for SMEs can influence the relocation of industry to a deprived area, and other researchers have discussed the costs and benefits accruing to the location of government training centres (Hughes, 1975; Zideman, 1977). On the other hand, both Steiner et al (1998) and Barclay et al (2001) found that moving medical training out of hospitals and into GP practice centres did not improve the learning of junior doctors.

Buses, coaches, trains, lorries, airplanes, ships and trailers have all been used to transport learning and development facilities around different organizational locations, as well as into innovative settings, including car parks, trading estates, ports, community centres, village greens and pubs. Learning offered in such mobile spaces has embraced a range of different programmes, including outreach development by social services departments, bookseller training, health promotion, IT training, ophthalmic surgery, business development for SMEs and catering training.

However, for most HRD professionals, the decision of where to encourage learning in organizations is usually restricted to a choice between a limited range of locations:

### On-job

- at the desk or machine;
- at the training booth or desk in the office or department;
- in the manager's, mentor's, coach's or trainer's room.

Established society – by its apprenticeship system – developed technical and social skills simultaneously in the individual.

(Mayo, 1945: 13)

### Off-job

- conference centre;
- board room;
- video conference suite;
- outdoor training centre;
- corporate university hub;
- IT training centre;
- simulator building;
- neutral setting, such as a coffee shop.

## Mobile

Since the advent of the Open University, learners have increasingly demanded that their learning should take place on the move and at a place of their own choosing. They want to be able to self-manage their development anywhere that they can use their MP3 player, laptop, tablet, DVD player, games player, mobile phone, book reader or smart phone, including:

- at the top of a mountain;
- at the gym;
- at an internet cafe;
- on the sea bed;
- at the space station;
- in church;
- in the middle of the Sahara;
- at the South Pole;
- on the London Underground.

The challenge for HRD professionals therefore is to embrace the latest innovations of e-learning. The benefits to Generation Y of using social media for learning have been widely documented (eg Price and Rogers, 2004; Chatti et al, 2006; Kammerer, Nairn and Pirolli, 2009; Duke, 2009).

In conclusion, therefore, practitioners and professionals concerned with individual and organizational development need to adopt more creative approaches when designing learning events. This will help to offset the overhead costs associated with running large corporate training centres. It will also take advantage of learners' increasing motivation for learning on the move.

## Time

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There are several issues that should be considered by the learning designer in relation to time: concentration span, sequencing and chronological preferences.

### **Concentration span**

The concentration span of the average adult is much shorter than the normal length of a lecture! The learners' ability to concentrate depends on their:

- commitment;
- enthusiasm for the task;
- skill at doing the task;
- emotional and physical state;
- psychological state;
- environment.

Instead of the turgid death-by-PowerPoint sessions that are all too prevalent, it is the HRD professional's responsibility to enhance and increase concentration spans by adopting a number of techniques built into the learning design, including:

- stopping dramatically in mid-sentence;
- introducing paradoxes;
- challenging assumptions;
- avoiding words on PowerPoint slides;
- asking questions of individuals as well as the group;
- changing the 'texture' of the event at least every 20 minutes or so;
- having comfort breaks every 90 minutes or so;
- getting people to work in different pairs and groups;
- asking the learners to silently read a short passage, article or case study;
- enabling people to contribute from their own experience;
- getting the learners to write their responses on the flip-chart;
- encouraging the use of technology, including smart phones;
- using repetition and reinforcement;
- changing the location;
- using break-out rooms;
- introducing fun, competitions and prizes;
- turning down the heating and increasing the ventilation;
- using music (Brant and Harvey, 2001; Millbower, 2004);
- being aware of learners' 'saturation levels';
- having water, fruit and confectionery available;
- using different aromas in the air conditioning (Davis and Eichenbaum, 1991);
- avoiding any form of passive learning after lunch;
- having a visiting speaker;
- exploiting simulations.

Increasingly, HRD professionals are adopting a 'bite-size' approach to learning design. Instead of the normal two-day workshop, learning is offered in very short 20–30 minute slots on a rolling basis throughout the day. This could be the same or different content. Learners are notified of the overall programme, but don't need to book up in advance. If the session is full when they arrive, they can return for the next session just 20–30 minutes later. Such short sessions also have the advantage of the learners being able to apply their learning immediately afterwards. This approach is particularly suitable for e-learning, where people often find it difficult to concentrate for long periods.

## Sequencing

Learning is not a single activity but a prolonged series of iterative interactions, including periods of reflection and change.

Theorists seem to agree that wisdom involves special types of experience-based knowledge and is characterized by the ability to be reflective in one's thinking and to make sound judgments in everyday life.

(Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: 202)

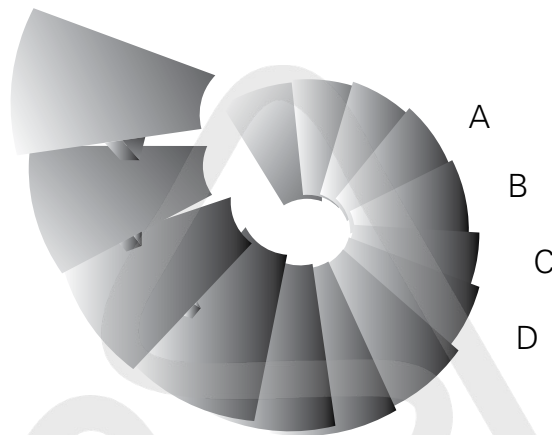
A process of gradual approximation – or mastery (Fadde, 2007) – involves learners in amending and adapting their thinking, behaviour and outlook based on a number of factors:

- *recall*: memory of recently acquired information, skills and perceptions;
- *feedback*: responses from a trusted person concerning these changes, and how to improve further;
- *vision*: an impression of the idealized performance;
- *reward*: an expectation of the outcomes of success.

Generally speaking, there are directions in the discovery process that will enhance the learning. Practitioners should enable and facilitate the learner to move sequentially (Table 13.4). Taking the illustration in Figure 13.10, let us assume that learners need to get from A to D. The first step is to become competent at A before rushing on to B. The next step, B, has to be performed well on its own. The third step is then to perform A and B *together* before progressing. Only when the learners can satisfactorily carry out this joint function can they then go on to the next step, which is C. However, this metaphor would in reality also involve going back several steps on different occasions in a dynamic organic flow of practice, feedback, reflection, iteration and rehearsal.

**TABLE 13.4** Sequence of learning

| From what is    | To what is     |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Already known   | Yet unknown    |
| Straightforward | Complex        |
| General         | Specific       |
| Real            | Imagined       |
| In the present  | In the future  |
| Located here    | Somewhere else |

**FIGURE 13.10** Step-wise learning

Sequencing also involves assisting the learner to make small steps.

### **Chronological preferences**

It is important to recognize that learners have a range of different biorhythmic responses and preferences. Traditionally, maths and science were often taught in schools in the morning, whilst English and sport were taught in the afternoons. Some adult learners too may be more alert first thing in the morning or last thing at night, and given the choice most people would avoid training at the beginning and end of the week. Friday and weekends could also preclude some people from formal events for religious reasons.

Similarly, organizational demands and pressures may present a variety of conflicting demands at different times that may prevent employees from accessing specific learning events; these include:

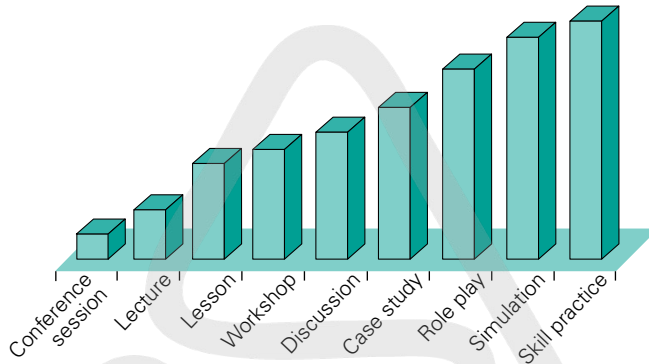
- seasonal fluctuations in demand or supply;
- weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual requirements for reports or meetings;
- cycles of production or maintenance;
- part-time or shift working.

Therefore, the learning practitioner needs to adapt the design towards the learners' needs.

Finally, different techniques, methods and media require relatively different amounts of time. The amounts of time required will increase in direct proportion to the level of interaction and participation by the learners. Schematically, this can be seen in Figure 13.11.

Therefore, it is imperative at the learning design stage to plan well for the amount of time required to gain competence in any particular area. Being learner-centric requires the professional to proceed at the pace of the learner.

**FIGURE 13.11** Relative amounts of time required for different learning methods



**NOTE:** This chart represents relative, rather than absolute, values.

## Methods

In order to be able to select appropriate learning methods to meet the needs of the learners and fulfil the learning objectives, the HRD professional should recognize the value of several factors influencing the learning process:

- Need is highly motivating and training should focus on the training needs of the learner.
- Learning will be facilitated if meaningful connections are made between new learning material and more familiar areas: in other words, proceed from the known to the unknown.
- Training inputs should be sequenced from the simple to the complex.
- Active learning is a voluntary process, and involvement inspires the learner and enhances learning.
- Sufficient time should be allowed during training for practising to assist acceptance, assimilation, internalization and testing.
- Success is motivating; therefore, immediate feedback should be provided to encourage further learning in the trainee.
- Law of intensity: exciting, dramatic and vivid learning experiences are more likely to be remembered.

(UNODC, 2007)

It is said that most learning professionals are aware of about a dozen different learning methods – and use half of them! In fact there are many more ways to learn at work. It is probably unnecessary to describe in detail the use, function and application of the plethora of learning methods available to the HRD practitioner today, since they are documented elsewhere (Simmonds, 2000, 2003).



What is perhaps more useful is to emphasize that the choice of method must be dependent upon the learning aims (Table 13.5). Similarly, a helpful way to select learning media is based on the need to enable increased learning retention (Table 13.6). HRD practitioners are encouraged to apply this or a similar framework in order to make informed rational choices of the best use of learning methods.

Researchers have found that learning is more effective when the methods employed are:

- learner-centred (Liao, 2000);
- cooperative (Johnson, Johnson and Stanne, 2000; Veenman et al, 2000);
- active (Kvam, 2000; Poirier and O'Neil, 2000);
- inquiry-based (McConnell and Steer, 2001);
- experiential (Tveita, 2000);
- inductive (Prince and Felder, 2006);
- blended (Wonacott, 2002).

In summary,

For producing an optimal learning outcome it is therefore important to 'blend' various pedagogical approaches (eg constructivism, behaviourism, cognitivism), different learning modes like real and virtual classrooms (eg web-based ones) and self-paced and collaborative learning. A harmonious effect of learning and working can be created by mixing instructional technology with actual job tasks.

(Hamburg, Lindecke and ten Thij, 2003)

## Resources

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Having ascertained the best possible fit between the vast range of variables and the learning outcomes, the HRD practitioner must finally face what is often the greatest hurdle, namely insufficient resources. However, this should be the last consideration and not the first. Many senior executives, on the other hand, will tend to start a discussion of training by outlining the budget available or the accessibility of rooms. Learning professionals need to demonstrate first the purpose and deliverables of the programme, and the benefits of the learning, in terms of performance improvement and organizational development. When the conversation begins with an outline of resource constraints, then it becomes extremely difficult to justify the expenditure or defend the need to encourage the line manager to release staff.

Having said that, it is imperative that the whole design must be feasible, realistic and practical from the outset. It must be totally focused on meeting individual and organizational objectives. It ought to be geared towards an efficient and effective method of achieving optimum learning gain. The design should easily demonstrate how learners' preferences and styles have been incorporated. And the plan needs to clearly illustrate how considerations of time and location have been met. Once these parameters have been satisfied, then the HRD professional can engage in a discussion of resources.

**TABLE 13.5** Learning aims and 47 learning methods

SIX COMMON LEARNING AIMS

|  | <i>Disseminate knowledge to learners</i>         | <i>Develop the learner's capability to use ideas and information</i> | <i>Develop the learner's ability to test validity of ideas and evidence</i> | <i>Develop the learner's ability to generate new ideas and evidence</i> | <i>Facilitate the learner's personal development by encouraging them to use;</i> | <i>Develop the capacity of learners to plan and manage their own learning</i> |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
|  | Lectures   | Case studies   | Seminars/workshops  | Research projects   | Feedback   | Learning contracts/personal development                                       |
|  | Up-to-date textbooks and articles                | Practical exercises  | Supervision and tutorials   | Creative problem solving  | Experiential learning  | The Internet (eg e-learning, podcasts, vodcasts)                              |
|  | Conferences                                      | Work placements/internships  | Presentations   | Group discussions   | Learning contracts   | Action-learning sets  |
|  | Research and development                         | Role-plays   | Action-learning sets  | Action-learning sets  | Supervision and tutorials  | Supervision and tutorials   |
|  | 'Guest' speakers                                 | Demonstrations   | Research projects   | Lateral and critical thinking   | Learning logs, blogs and wikis   | Mentors   |
|  | Practical exercises                              | Learner group discussions  | Literature reviews  | Brainstorming   | Role-plays   | Learning logs, blogs and wikis  |
|  | Advanced library research skills                 | Simulations – paper-based or computer-based or machines              | Exams/multiple-choice questions   | Mind-mapping/brain patterning   | Reflective practice/after-action reviews   | Guided independent study (GIS)  |
|  | Guided independent study (GIS)                   | Communities of practice (CoPs)                                       | Communities of learning (Cols)  | Creative visualization/ appreciative inquiry                            | Personal development planning  | Essay and dissertation writing  |
|  | Open/distance learning materials                 | Evaluation and critical assessment (formative and summative)         | Peer assessment   | Coaching  | Networking/discussion forums   | Self-assessment   |
|  | The internet (eg e-learning, podcasts, vodcasts) | Essay and dissertation writing                                       | Self-assessment   | Open space technology (OST)   | Cognitive profiling and EQ/IQ/ SQ instruments                                    | Portfolio development   |

47 COMMON LEARNING METHODS

**SOURCE:** Adapted by J Fawcett (2008) <http://learningvoice.tv> from an original idea by Bourner and Flowers (1997).

**TABLE 13.6** Selecting learning media to increase retention

| Retention level | Media  | Learner involvement  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 10%             | <b>Reading</b><br>Books, handouts, journals,<br>computer text  | Passive<br>Visual receiving<br>Sight                                 |
| 20%             | <b>Listening</b><br>Lecture, audio cassette, radio   | Passive<br>Aural receiving<br>Hearing                                |
| 30%             | <b>Looking</b><br>Charts, diagrams, flip-chart,<br>whiteboard, slides, overhead<br>projector transparencies,<br>visualizer, data projector | Active<br>Visual receiving<br>Sight                                  |
| 40%             | <b>Following</b><br>Computer graphics, transparency<br>overlays, working models  | Active<br>Aural and visual receiving<br>Sight                        |
| 50%             | <b>Watching</b><br>Videos, DVDs, demonstrations,<br>CD-ROMs, computer generated<br>animation   | Active<br>Aural and visual receiving<br>Hearing and sight            |
| 60%             | <b>Writing</b><br>Reports, learning logs, tests,<br>keyboards  | Active<br>Verbal contributing<br>Sight and touch                     |
| 70%             | <b>Talking</b><br>Discussions, 'telephone'<br>simulator, audio cassette,<br>computer voice recognition, DVD-I                              | Active<br>Oral and aural contributing<br>Hearing and taste           |
| 80%             | <b>Practising</b><br>Simulations, exercises,<br>multimedia   | Active<br>Participating<br>Sight, hearing, touch, taste<br>and smell |
| 90%             | <b>Experiencing</b><br>The real job  | Active<br>Doing<br>Sight, hearing, taste, touch<br>and smell         |

**SOURCE:** Simmonds, 2003.

However, that is when there will usually be a considerable amount of debate and bartering, because budget holders will often be unwilling to invest in learning and development. It is often seen as a cost to the organization, rather than as a long-term investment in the human assets. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the learning practitioner to be well prepared and to understand fully the relative resource constraints of various training plans.

Direct/variable resource elements to be incorporated could include:

- materials and media;
- equipment and technology;
- premises and accommodation;
- refreshments and travel;
- salaries of learners;
- programme administration.

Indirect/fixed resource components could include:

- contribution towards profit;
- heating, lighting and ventilation;
- salaries of facilitators/consultants;
- costs for analysing needs, development and evaluation;
- opportunity costs, including wastage, downtime and additional staffing costs.

However, these elements may be directly compensated by opportunities to generate income from:

- using spare capacity of space and facilities;
- filling extra places on programmes;
- training grants/tax incentives;
- selling products or services produced by learners during or immediately after the programme;
- contracting out HRD practitioners.

In summary, resource constraints should never cause the HRD professional to abandon the delivery of a learning design. Rather, an effective learning design will contain within it a number of variables that offer permutations and combinations. There will nearly always be an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes in a different way and so meet the objections of senior executives. Therefore, this consideration of resources has aimed to give the learning practitioner a number of creative solutions, such as:

- A two-day workshop could be undertaken instead as an e-learning programme.
- An off-site programme could be delivered instead through mentoring and coaching.
- A full-time MBA course could be taken instead through the Open University.
- Text books could be replaced by e-books.
- Meetings in conference centres could be substituted by web-conferencing.

## Conclusion

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A systematic approach, called the Honeycomb Model<sup>®</sup>, has been used to embrace the totality of elements essential for the construction of effective learning design. The HRD professional can now methodically apply the seven building blocks that are fundamental to the creation of any learning event, for any learners, at any level, at any time, in any place, and for any organization (see Figure 13.3 above).

## Questions for reflection

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- What factors would you take into consideration in designing a customer care programme for all the employees in an organization?
- How would you prioritize learning needs in an organization?
- How would you use Bloom's taxonomy to underpin the development of a training programme?

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## 14

# Working in multicultural and multilingual environments: HRD professionals as learning and change agents in the global workplace

MARIA CSEH and BEATRIZ CONINGHAM

*There are truths on this side of the Pyrenees, which are falsehoods on the other. (BLAISE PASCAL)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning of the term 'global workplace' as the context of the HRD practice;
- define the role of HRD professionals in the global workplace;
- understand how the role of HRD professionals can be enacted in the global workplace;
- identify fitting HRD approaches to support learning and change in the global workplace.

## Introduction

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The rapid pace of globalization, supported by the advances of technology and the sweeping political changes in different parts of the world in the past three decades, is widening the boundaries of international work and increasing the recognition of the diversity of voices across countries and within each country. In this environment, human resource development (HRD) professionals have the opportunity to exercise their expertise and play a significant role in enabling individuals and organizations around the globe to learn and change in their multicultural and multilingual contexts.

Although there are several opinions about the meaning of the term HRD and the role of HRD professionals, for the purpose of this chapter we envision HRD professionals as providing leadership in creating the conditions for learning and change at the individual, team, organizational and societal level. The content of our discussions is also based on our belief that only through strategic partnerships with organizations' internal and external stakeholders can this vision be fulfilled.

## What is a global workplace?

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One of the most fascinating and exciting characteristics of work today is that it is happening increasingly in organizations where the norm is collaboration between people from diverse backgrounds and geographical origins. These organizations are what we call, for the purpose of this chapter, global workplaces. They are work environments that extend themselves beyond country boundaries and bring together people from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds who most likely speak a variety of languages. They are, therefore, multicultural and multilingual. It is not necessary for an organization to be formally inserted in a country other than its country of origin in order to be culturally and linguistically diverse. The United States is a good example of a place where organizations may have in their workforce people from different countries or different ethnic backgrounds, although their operations may be strictly national. In this chapter, however, we want to discuss the role of HRD professionals in organizations that not only are diverse but also deal with the intriguing challenges of work being carried out in different parts of the world.

## How is the global workplace unique?

People bring into their workplace the outside world that includes their relationships, their life experiences, and thus their world views. Each person in the organization is also a member of a larger collective that does not go away when the person is at work. Rather, this larger collective has a role in shaping how people work and relate to others in the work environment. In global workplaces, this dynamic is heightened and importantly enriched by the fact that a significant part of the experiences and

world views brought in by each member of the organization is not shared by all members of the organization. Geographical distances and the mediation of technology add a level of complexity to the paradoxical coexistence of potential barriers and enablers of creativity and innovation.

The richness of perspectives of the individuals in a global workplace has the potential to allow for creative and innovative approaches in the life of the organization. On the other hand, when people lack an understanding of and respect for the diversity in the organization, this can become a barrier and lead to breakdowns in communication. Human beings construct meanings from the behaviours they observe and expressions of thoughts and feelings that they hear. People tend to construct meaning on the basis of their own world views, experiences and ways of being in relationships. This may lead to a different meaning from the one intended by the person who was observed or heard. This phenomenon is not exclusive to the global workplace but, in contexts in which a variety of cultures and languages coexist, the opportunity for misinterpretations increases. As Kameda (1996) noted, words do not mean; only people mean and the meaning will depend greatly on the culture of those involved and the particular situation. According to Kluckhohn (1951: 86):

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (ie historically derived and selected) ideas and specially their attached values.

The story below is an illustration of the above-mentioned misunderstanding caused by different meaning-making rooted in culture.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Lost in translation – cultural misunderstandings

An expatriate manager was responsible for an organization in which the senior management team members were host country nationals from a culture where expressing disagreement directly was not considered appropriate behaviour. In that culture, words such as 'No' or 'I do not agree' are avoided even among friends. The manager was disappointed that even after several attempts he could not persuade his team members to fully share their opinions about important organizational issues. The manager's perspective was that the team members did not dare to disagree with him. Therefore, he felt that he never knew what the team members really thought about the issues on which he was consulting them and that he was left alone to make decisions for which their candid input was crucial. The team members, on the other hand, felt intimidated by the manager's insistence on a style of communication that was not generally acceptable in their culture. Since a strong respect for hierarchical authority was also the norm in their culture, the team members shied away from what they viewed as inappropriately challenging their superior.

Cultural differences are real and they can be seriously disruptive. We would like to note, however, that while culture can be the source of misunderstandings that become barriers for collaboration, we should be cautious not to use culture as the explanation for all challenges and difficulties in human interactions in the global workplace. Because of the connections between culture and identity, the topic of culture can become highly political at times. We have observed that when a problem is assigned solely to the cultural domain, there is a perception that the problem is insurmountable and should therefore be left alone, which leads to important organizational issues remaining unsolved. This shows the crucial role of HRD professionals in assessing the root causes of the problems and in proposing fitting approaches to address them.

## What is the role of HRD professionals in the global workplace?

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HRD professionals in the global workplace should be strategic partners who use their professional knowledge of multicultural and geographically dispersed organizations to continuously support learning and change. Change does not happen without learning. Change and learning do not happen without leadership. HRD professionals are called upon to provide leadership that will enable learning and change. Sitting at the table with the organization's leaders, gaining functional power and being seen as strategic players give HRD professionals the influence to enact their strategic role.

In addition to deploying core competencies such as reflective practice, systems thinking and critical thinking needed for organizational diagnosis and design, implementation and evaluation of learning and change interventions, HRD professionals have to:

- identify and engage internal and external stakeholders in the process of learning and change;
- understand the complex dynamics of relationships among people from various cultures (eg preferred modes of communication and collaboration, expectations of authority) and the role of values as potential sources of ethical conflicts (Cseh, 2003; Cseh and Coningham, 2007);
- understand how culture influences the way in which business is conducted in different countries (Triandis, 1995b; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998);
- identify and interpret cultural dimensions that have influence on the scope of work (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995a; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998);
- facilitate mutual understanding and conflict resolution in multicultural, multilingual contexts;
- design and implement change interventions by choosing or adjusting processes that take into account the diversity of cultures and languages in the organization (Cseh and Short, 2006; Yaeger and Sorensen, 2011);
- select and use technology that can facilitate the participation and collaboration of people across geographical distances in the accomplishment of their tasks.

Discussions in the scholarly and practitioner literature during the past decade have focused on the need for different competencies, intelligences and mindsets to lead in the evolving context of the global workplace (Begley and Boyd, 2003; Bowen and Inkpen, 2009; Caligiuri and Di Santo, 2001; Cohen, 2010; Ng and Earley, 2006; Gupta and Gavindarajan, 2002; Paul, 2000; Rosen et al, 2000; Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2009; Triandis, 2006; Watkins and Cseh, 2009). These highlight the need for HRD professionals to develop their own competencies and mindsets that will enable them to become strategic partners and facilitate learning and change processes in this environment.

## How should the role of HRD professionals be enacted in the global workplace?

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Competencies and professional values define how the strategic role of HRD professionals in the global workplace is enacted.

### ***Business as unusual***

In the global workplace, ‘business as usual’ means very different things for different people and in different locations. Variation in how business is conducted within the same company is one of the most common phenomena HRD professionals encounter. An old saying goes that ‘curiosity killed the cat’. In the global workplace, curiosity is what keeps the cat alive, or should we say the HRD professional? Curiosity and true interest in human beings are fundamental in allowing for the constant learning and problem solving needed to navigate the variation in ‘business as usual’ in the global workplace. In the vast majority of cases, there are no off-the-shelf tools to diagnose, design, implement and evaluate learning and change interventions in the global workplace. Professional HRD knowledge based on the education and experience of one culture needs to become open to the influence of the different cultures in which it will be applied.

### ***Collaboration: no one can do it alone***

Collaboration should be a significant part of the HRD professional’s work. In the global workplace, the need to collaborate becomes a ‘make it or break it’ endeavour. For instance, HRD professionals will need to work with people who are speakers of different languages to have materials created or translated and adjusted to the culture and context of participants. Developing relationships with interpreters based on mutual learning is essential for the success of HRD. Even when all participants speak the same language, they may come from different cultures. So, HRD professionals will need to develop a network of cultural informants: that is, people they can go to in order to test concepts, approaches and materials for cultural appropriateness and effectiveness.

## Professional values and the question of ethics

In the global workplace, where the potential for conflicting values that can lead to ethical issues is heightened by the complexities of many cultures working together, professional values are the beacon in the fog: they provide a sense of direction in ambiguous situations. These values are found in the publications of professional associations such as the *Standards on Ethics and Integrity*, published by the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) on their website ([www.ahrd.org](http://www.ahrd.org)) and in the *Principles of OD Practice*, found on its website (<http://www.odnetwork.org>). Some examples of these professional values, based on these two professional associations, are given in the boxes below.

### OD Network Principles of Practice

The practice of OD is grounded in a distinctive set of core values and principles that guide behaviour and actions. Key values include:

- *Respect and inclusion*: Equitably valuing the perspective and opinions of everyone.
- *Collaboration*: Building collaborative relationships between the practitioner and the client while encouraging collaboration throughout the client system.
- *Authenticity*: Striving for authenticity and congruence and encouraging these qualities in clients.
- *Self-awareness*: Committing to developing self-awareness and interpersonal skills, engaging in personal and professional development through lifelong learning.
- *Empowerment*: Focusing efforts on helping everyone in the client organization or community increase their autonomy and empowerment to levels that make the workplace and/or community satisfying and productive.

Adapted from *Principles of OD Practice*, available from <http://www.odnetwork.org>.

### AHRD general principles

- *Competence*: HRD professionals strive to maintain high standards of competence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They maintain knowledge of relevant research and professional information related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education.
- *Integrity*: HRD professionals are honest, fair and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, fees, research or teaching, they do not make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive. They strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations, and the effect of these on their work. They avoid potentially conflicting relationships.



- **Professional responsibility:** HRD professionals uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behaviour, and adapt their methods to the needs of different populations.
- **Respect for people's rights and dignity:** HRD professionals accord appropriate respect to the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all people. They are aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socio-economic status.
- **Concern for others' welfare:** HRD professionals seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. When conflicts occur among professionals' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm.
- **Social responsibility:** HRD professionals are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community, the society in which they work and live, and the planet. They understand that a healthy economy, healthy organizations and a healthy ecosystem are intricately interconnected.

Adapted from AHRD *Standards on Ethics and Integrity*, available from [www.ahrd.org](http://www.ahrd.org).

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Enacting professional and personal values when things don't go as anticipated

Phil, an HRD professional, lives in the United States and was hired by an overseas government agency as an external consultant to design and deliver training. In preparation for the training, Phil met with two agency representatives a couple of times and exchanged e-mails with them, discussing the scope of the work, the approach and logistics. He then was connected with a junior manager who became his contact in the organization for the remaining preparation work. When Phil arrived in the host country to deliver the training, he realized that some of the working conditions he had expected were not in place. Instead of a group of 20 to 30 people, as he expected, there were only a few participants, and some of them were coming in and leaving at different times during the course of learning. Phil was very disappointed since there was no way he could deliver the quality of training that he had imagined under these conditions.

Before you read any further, consider:

- What could Phil have done differently that would have prevented the awkward situation in which he found himself?
- What professional values should guide Phil's behaviour in these circumstances?

When Phil realized the kind of problem he had on his hands, he thought to himself: 'What could I have done differently?' Phil believes firmly that key organization members need to be involved in the design and pre-planning of any work HRD professionals may intend to do, whether they are internal or external consultants. In this case he had thought he had sufficient involvement,

but now realized that he had not. Some of the key people in the organization did not understand what his role and expectations were, and the junior manager with whom he usually communicated probably did not have the power to ensure that participants were at the right place at the right time. Reflecting on his experience Phil realized, 'You can probably never do too much pre-planning and maybe you have to work more closely with the key or senior person and not an intermediary.'

As the week progressed and Phil struggled to deliver the training as planned, he talked with the junior manager with whom he had been communicating and indicated that this was not what he was expecting, and that he was not able to do some of the things that they had agreed he would do since he did not have a sufficient number of participants. He would not be able to develop the capability they were looking for. By initiating this honest dialogue, Phil got to know more about the organization, its culture and some of the current issues employees were facing. There was a lot of discomfort inside the organization about how much employees had to work and how overwhelmed they were. Later, talking with some of his peers in the same country, Phil learned how that particular government agency does not have a good reputation, whereas many government organizations in the country are quite reputable and very efficient, paying competitive salaries. Phil had assumed, from previous work in the same country, that his clients would have high expectations for his work and would want him to meet those expectations, but in hindsight he learned that the people who had contracted him were not even aware of what they were asking for and what his role would be. This information is something that Phil could have elicited if he had asked some questions during the contracting phase to gauge the organization's climate and dynamics beyond the perceived need for training that he had been hired to fill. So there wasn't much Phil could do to salvage all the effort he put into planning and preparing for this engagement except to be better prepared the next time.

At the end of the week, Phil met with the senior people with whom he had initially contracted for this engagement. His clients seemed to be happy and pleased with his work. But Phil wasn't. He pointed out clearly that he did not think the whole process had been a good use of their time or his own: 'They did not get the full benefit; I was paid but I did not just want to be paid, I wanted to provide a service for them.' Phil's clients seemed a little uncomfortable about what he said, perhaps because they realized that they had not performed their role in the process very well. Phil could have chosen to avoid this discomfort and just go away, having received his payment. But he truly cares about learning, so it was important for him to emphasize with his client that the right conditions for learning were among his expectations.

## What are the HRD approaches to learning and change in the global workplace?

To really make human resource development happen, HRD professionals need to combine a number of practices and processes that will create the organizational culture that best supports a global workplace. HRD professionals need to be change agents, and that can be accomplished only through strategic partnership with other leaders in the organization. There are several ways in which HRD professionals can build capacity for the global workplace. Here are just a few:

- identifying the organization's needs regarding systems and processes to engage a global workforce, and being an advocate for the implementation of such systems and processes when they are not in place;
- creating a multicultural and multilingual organizational culture, for example by ensuring the organization's communication is conducted in different languages when not all employees speak the same language, ensuring that opportunities and resources are made available to people in all places where the organization operates as opposed to mainly at the headquarters, and creating spaces and events that encourage people from diverse backgrounds to gather formally and informally;
- facilitating the collaborative creation of and adherence to organization-wide values, operating agreements or ground rules through which people commit to norms that facilitate inclusion, respect and appreciation of diverse worldviews;
- serving as role models by demonstrating the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that are needed in the global workplace;
- promoting continuous learning through reflection on daily practices with the intent of tuning organizational practices to the needs of a global workforce;
- identifying a network of cultural informants that can support people in their understanding of different cultures;
- creating communication channels that allow employees to bring up aspects of local cultures that need to inform the organization's business strategy.

### ***Implementing change in the global workplace***

When change is to be implemented across cultures, languages and geographic boundaries, a few important aspects need to be taken into account:

- Clear agreements should be attained at the beginning on what is negotiable and what can be adjusted and made flexible in the scope of work to account for local technical, cultural and linguistic contexts.
- Needs assessments/organizational diagnosis need to include data from a sample that is representative of the organization's diversity.
- Conditions of infrastructure in different countries need to be taken into account. For example: Does everybody have the access to the technology that will be required for that specific change? Is the quality of the access, such as internet bandwidth, the same everywhere?
- Interventions need to be vetted with cultural informants.
- Logistics need to be planned to take into account local cultural business practices.
- Expectations and desired outcomes need to be adjusted to local conditions.

### ***Addressing ethical conflicts***

Professional and personal values and beliefs can get in the way of working together across cultures and languages. HRD professionals can play a crucial role in preventing and/or managing ethical conflicts by:

- Bringing awareness of the tension between global and local, facilitating the balance between maintaining the core values of the organization and at the same time making space for local adaptation, and fine tuning as much as possible.
- Facilitating the collaborative creation and implementation of an organizational code of conduct that contains guidelines to make the work environment a safe place for all. The code of conduct should address issues such as religion, gender and sexual harassment in the workplace. In order to ensure that the code of conduct is understood and applied by all, continuous reinforcement and training is needed.
- Creating forums that will allow different voices to be heard about decisions that might have strong cultural dimensions and implications in order to avoid ethical conflicts, or serve as areas to which ethical conflicts can be brought for resolution.
- Helping shed light on the causes of conflict that may have cultural or linguistic components.

### ***Cross-cultural training for the global workforce***

The role of the HRD professional is often closely associated with training, a valuable and important function in organizations that can significantly build awareness of the complexities of the global workplace. Training on different cultural expectations, practices and values can help members of a global workforce become more effective by better understanding their own cultural biases and the biases of others, and by developing skills to work with a diverse group of people. However, it is not enough to understand general cultural descriptions for at least two reasons. First, individuals often digress from cultural norms, and stereotyping – assuming that everyone from a particular culture will react in the same way to the same situation – can lead to significant mistakes in the prediction and interpretation of the other's behaviour. Second, cultures are very rich and complex phenomena, making it difficult to develop a sufficiently deep understanding of the variety of cultures likely to be encountered in the global workplace. Thus, cross-cultural training should focus on essential skills that are applicable in a wide range of multicultural contexts:

- Creating a safe environment in which people from different cultural backgrounds are comfortable expressing themselves.
- Suspending judgment and avoiding jumping to conclusions in order to be able to listen with as little interference as possible from personal frames of reference.
- Recognizing the signs that miscommunication is occurring.
- Asking questions to check assumptions and bring cultural values or frames of reference to light.
- Checking processes: observing and asking questions to ensure all participants in change initiatives, meetings or training are being included and heard, and that the process is being conducted in ways acceptable to all as much as the circumstances allow for it.

- Asking questions to identify common ground, shared goals and alternative courses of action that are acceptable to all.
- Apologizing and forgiving: no matter how much training someone may go through regarding what to do or not to do in working with people from diverse cultures, there will be plenty of opportunity to make mistakes. The ‘street savvy’ in the global workplace are attentive, curious, mindful and humble enough to apologize, forgive and adjust when necessary.

## Conclusion

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Paradigms or world views that are informed by deeply seated values are difficult to change. This is evidenced by the endeavours of scholars and practitioners over the past 20 years to change the paradigm of the human resource development profession from a transaction-based practice (referred to commonly as personnel) to a holistic, systems-theory-based practice of support for development of all organizational members – that is, support for the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities that include learning in formal (training, classroom education) and informal (everyday workplace) settings that leads to creativity, innovation and thus, change. In order to enact this paradigm in organizations, HRD professionals need to have business acumen combined with a humanistic belief in the potential of people and the approaches and tools that will support their practice.

Since HRD professionals are called to attend to both employee needs and the organization’s business needs, the education of HRD professionals needs to be multi-disciplinary. Foundational knowledge in finance and economics should be a part of HRD higher education programmes so that they can understand the life of organizations and the context in which organizations work. Programmes should also include organizational psychology, sociology and anthropology, to provide a strong grasp of human potential and how humans behave in groups, teams, organizations and societies. In envisioning the career path for HRD professionals, the goal is for them to become strategic partners and to cultivate a global mindset that allows for this partnership.

By establishing a strong relationship with leaders of the organization and understanding their vision and priorities, and the business challenges with which they are dealing, HRD professionals can make better choices about what HRD programmes to implement and how. A close alignment and integration of these programmes with the organization’s strategy is more likely to gain necessary support from the leadership. At the same time, a strong appreciation of the needs and interests of employees is required so that HRD practices can be made valuable and relevant to those who will be directly affected by them. In the global workplace, this appreciation embraces a deep insight into employees’ cultural values and how they influence expectations about the content, approach and structure of HRD programmes. In summary, HRD professionals are effective when they address the needs of both the employees and the business. This is not always easy to do because it requires thoughtful and reflective practice and time. Another potential obstacle is that, in the world of radically and quickly changing strategies that may involve outsourcing, downsizing, mergers and

acquisitions, there will be decisions that do not directly benefit employees. These are trying circumstances for HRD professionals, particularly because their work is centred on humanistic values. Even in such difficult times, strategic partners can advocate and provide expertise for the best approach to conducting these processes, in which the employee is respected and supported.

## Questions for reflection

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- How would you adapt your working practices to successfully operate in another culture?
- You are promised by the training manager of a client organization that your tender for a training contract will be successful if you pay him/her 10 per cent of the cost. What will you do?
- What are the key elements you would include in a training programme for managers who are to be sent on a foreign assignment?

## Further information sources

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Academy of Human Resource Development website [www.ahrd.org](http://www.ahrd.org)

University Forum for Human Resource Development [www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress](http://www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress)

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PART FOUR C  
**Delivery**

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# 15

# Delivering training

**JOHN KIRKHAM and JACQUELINE PATTISON**

*The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you. (BB KING, BLUES GUITARIST)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the competencies of effective trainers and facilitators;
- plan learning events that are tailored to the needs, competence and confidence levels of participants;
- plan and organize the infrastructure, equipment and learning materials in readiness to deliver a learning event;
- engage participants in clarifying their learning objectives;
- deliver effective learning events using a variety of methodologies;
- be sensitive to cultural differences and group dynamics;
- maintain motivation.

## Introduction

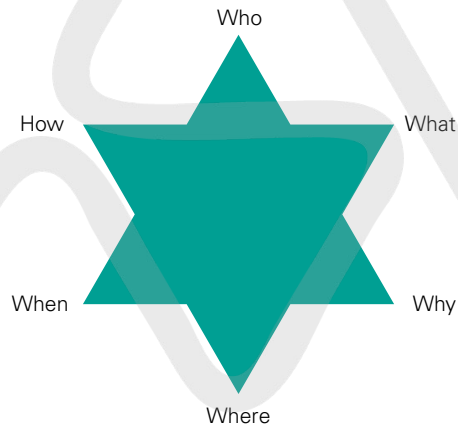
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There has been an extensive discussion about the importance of integrating theory and practice in this book and many of the chapters address the theoretical and conceptual aspects of learning and training. This chapter is a little different in that it is designed to address the practical aspects of delivering of training and it focuses on practical advice that works.

## Where to begin

As trainers with many years' experience we have found that reminding ourselves of the purpose of what we are doing before we start is a useful mantra, and common sense! To do this we use the planning star (Figure 15.1).

**FIGURE 15.1** The planning star



|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Why   | The purpose of the learning intervention, particularly if we have not been part of the design phase – what are the outcomes/deliverables' for which the organization is investing its resource?   |
| What  | Needs to be linked to individual and organizational learning objectives.  |
| Who   | The 'audience': needs, level of experience, results required and participants confidence level (both generally and in the subject area) will influence the 'what' and the 'how'.  |
| When  | Timing for the programme: hours, days, weeks etc, but also how timely in terms of events inside and outside the organization; also there may be budgetary, practical or operational constraints on the choice of time, venue and methodology. |
| Where | Location of learning space, conducive to learning, and also practical in terms of logistics.  |
| How   | Trainer style required, materials.  |

The terms: training, education, learning, facilitation and coaching are commonly used and are discussed in detail in Chapter 1, International human resource development, and Chapter 17, Coaching and mentoring.

## Setting the learning environment

### Starting off and getting commitment

'First impressions count!' is an old saying but it is still valid. Impressions will include:

- the welcoming environment;
- how the training room looks, and how it affects senses such as smell, sight, hearing;
- the appearance of the trainer;
- the attitude of the trainer: for example a warm smile and firm friendly handshake – or a harassed voice from underneath a table saying: 'I'll be with you as soon as I have this cable sorted.'

Table 15.1 provides a checklist of points to consider.

**TABLE 15.1** Pre-event checklist

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Pre-event actions and materials</b><br/><i>With every item, ensure that you have a contingency – either more time or a 'plan B'.</i></p>   | ✓ |
| <p>Ensure all printed materials and stationery are ordered, printed and collected or dispatched to the venue.</p>  |   |
| <p>Have venue address, contact details and travel arrangements in advance.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Do your research! Organization.</b><br/>If working for your training team inside your organization, ensure you know as much as possible about the team's culture and approach to training. Check out their team objectives, and make sure your learning content reflects these objectives where possible.<br/>If working for an external organization, check out their website: look at their vision, mission and five-year plan. Find out about their organizational culture, and think about how you will adapt your style and content to reflect these.<br/>Check with your sponsor how the learning content/training intervention reflects the organizational objectives. (See Chapter 22, HRD and consultancy.)</p> |   |
| <p><b>Do your research! Participants.</b><br/>Check out where possible the intercultural mix within your trainees, and think about whether your learning content/training intervention will be interpreted in the way you intend. Think about your welcome and greeting; for example, general courtesy is to shake hands, but in some situations this is not acceptable.<br/>(See Chapter 14, Working in multicultural and multilingual environments.)</p>   |   |

**TABLE 15.1** *continued*

| <b>Your on-site pre-participant-arrival checklist</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| Turn up at least an hour and ideally 1.5 to 2 hours before the event is due to start, to give yourself time to run through your checklist. You will then be relaxed and able to focus your attention on participants, individually, as they arrive.   |  |
| On arrival check the room is laid out as you requested it, and if not, get the furniture moved around.  |  |
| Ensure your flip-chart/s are correctly positioned with clean paper and pens that work.  |  |
| Ensure your laptop connects to display equipment and is displayed correctly, with sound if required.  |  |
| Check that any other audio-visual equipment is ready to use.  |  |
| Check the room, including switches for lights, heating, air conditioning and window blinds.   |  |
| Ensure name cards and any documentation are placed in front of each participant's seat and that each has a felt-tip pen to write on their name card.  |  |
| If you have background music or a DVD playing, switch it on and adjust the volume now – remember that it is background and should not interfere with people's ability to talk at a natural volume. It should also be appropriate – not your favourite cantata or heavy metal band!  |  |
| <b>Your participant arrival and opening checklist – your introduction is key to setting the tone for the event</b>  |  |
| Be ready to welcome people with a warm smile, a firm handshake and directions to the toilets and refreshments.  |  |
| As people arrive ask them to put their names on their 'tent card' – this helps people who do not know one another to get introduced (no hesitation about the other person's name). Also it is good practice to get people to write their names on <i>both</i> sides of the card (often people can read the name cards on the opposite side of the table, but not the person sat next to them!). |  |
| Open with a welcome from you – who you are, your experience, and why you are with them today / this week.   |  |
| Health and safety arrangements, eg fire alarm, exits, where to meet, security for personal bags etc.  |  |



**TABLE 15.1** *continued*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mobile phone etiquette for this event.   |  |
| Timings and arrangements for breaks and refreshments.  |  |
| Explain about handouts/workbooks/note-taking.  |  |
| You may want to explain whether overheads or other materials will be made available via web or intranet.   |  |
| Confidentiality and if there is any assessment or report back.   |  |
| <b>Ground rules for the day</b>  |  |
| <p>Follow the tried and tested format:<br/>Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you have told them. Because it works! Also, specify ground rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● mobiles and messagers off or on silent;</li> <li>● respect for each other and each other's opinions;</li> <li>● listen before speaking;</li> <li>● participate and share views;</li> <li>● confidentiality for each other and words in the classroom.</li> </ul> |  |

## Learning contract and guidelines

What is a learning contract? It is an agreement reached between the instructor(s) and students/participants regarding the objectives to be reached in a particular learning period or activity and what the outcomes will be, such as action plans (Boak, 1998).

## Pre-event learning material

We need to be realistic about how much preparatory work participants will do prior to attending a learning event. Getting to the venue on time will be enough of a challenge for some! However, that should not stop us from rewarding those who want to make the most of the learning experience, by providing material that will engage their thinking in readiness to maximize their learning. Consider:

- disseminating handouts or workbooks prior to attending;
- well-chosen news items or other thought-provoking articles, provided they are not too long or overly academic, together with one or two well-chosen questions to focus thinking;
- some potential scenarios that participants could face at work, with an invitation to come prepared with a recommended course of action to resolve the issue(s);

- questions to focus thinking on the topic area;
- one question: ‘What do you want to achieve as a result of attending this event?’

At the very least people should have a copy of the programme that includes the objectives of the event.

## **Establishing learning commitment and engagement**

‘Ground rules’ may be particularly appropriate where participants may be nervous that what they say will be reported elsewhere. Typical ground rules for a learning event could be:

- Confidentiality: Chatham House rules or ‘what goes on tour stays on tour’.
- Openness/honesty: Without being hurtful.
- Positive attitude: This should be exemplified by the event leader!
- Participation: You get what you put in.
- Constructive feedback: If asking participants to give feedback on practice sessions/role-play exercises, there needs to be specific guidance on how to give feedback.
- Good time management: Be respectful of other people’s time.
- Take risks: This is a learning opportunity, a safe environment in which to practise something new.
- Supportive and caring: If people ‘fall over’, we will pick them up and encourage them to have another go.
- Think creatively/challenge: Ask ‘why not?’
- Equality: We are all here to learn, everyone’s experience is valuable; rank or seniority does not count here.

## **Working with learning objectives and session plans**

If there has been a pre-event diagnostic, now is the time to share the summary of the findings with participants, and to provide an opportunity for people to qualify, clarify or elaborate on their learning and development needs.

If we are establishing learning needs on the day, we need to ensure that expectations are realistic. For example, someone attending a communications skills course may have a very specific need, such as an important presentation to make, which may be beyond the scope of the event they are attending.

Individual learning objectives can be captured for the group and not attributed to individuals, or we can identify individual learning and development needs – the approach needs to be sensitive to the group dynamics. If the participants are unlikely to meet again after the event, they may be open to identifying individual learning

needs; however, if there are peers present in whom they would rather not confide, any issues identified are likely to be anodyne at best, and at worst misleading.

Methodologies for capturing learning needs include:

- Post-it notes (one objective per Post-it), posted onto a flip-chart/whiteboard headed 'Objectives' or 'Expectations'.
- Include objectives during the introduction; the facilitator writes them up on a flip-chart.
- 'Buzz groups' share learning objectives in twos or threes and then the facilitator goes around the room capturing unattributable learning needs until all have been captured.

### **Ice-breaker exercises**

If participants do not know one another, an ice-breaker can be an excellent means of getting people to engage with each other and the learning event. There are many ice-breaker activities, typically:

- People introduce one another and then introduce someone else to the group.
- 'Cocktail party' type melee where participants swap personal details or learning needs, or successes (which gets us off to a positive start).
- Others are more complex and include 'people bingo' and similar activities, where we have to make a judgement about some characteristic or experience of other participants, and then reveal the truth.

### **Learning activities**

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We need to choose learning activities that meet the need to:

- disseminate knowledge;
- improve skill;
- exercise judgement;
- build confidence.

So, we may need to tell people things. The more interactive method is to provide the information and set an exercise where participants need to find the facts for themselves, then make their judgement, and then receive feedback on the validity of the judgement. For example, setting a scenario involving an accident at work, leaving participants with well-chosen Health and Safety Executive publications and law books, and setting them the task of assessing the legal implications for all the parties involved: for example, what should happen next; and what should be done to prevent a recurrence? However, this takes a lot longer and absorbs more resource than just 'telling people things', so we have to make judgements about the cost effectiveness of the learning methodologies we employ.

## Knowledge dissemination

If we have to ‘just tell people stuff’, let’s make it as pain-free and digestible as possible (remember that the brain can only absorb for as long as the participant can sit comfortably):

- Use mnemonics and acronyms to aid memory (eg to get people to buy or to do something we need to gain their AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action); and if we fail to do so in a retail environment, we may need to resort to a BOGOF (Buy One, Get One Free) – you get the idea!
- Make relevant connections to other learning points and to desired outcomes.
- Tell stories that add interest and illustrate relevant learning points from the experience of others – but not ‘war stories’ for their own sake; this is about ‘infotainment’, giving information in an entertaining manner, not just entertainment!

## Group discussion/syndicate exercise

This is one of the most well tried and tested learning methodologies, because it works on three levels:

- It engages participants.
- It facilitates exploration of the topic.
- It enables participants to learn from each other’s experience.

To be effective the exercise has to be well briefed, so that all participants know what is expected of them, how the outcomes from the discussion will be captured, and, most importantly, the purpose of the exercise. Be aware that there needs to be some understanding and experience within the group to share if this is to be of any value.

## Quizzes and ‘tests’

The purpose of any ‘quiz’ should be:

- to assess the level of knowledge in the room, so that the trainer will neither ‘teach grandmother to suck eggs’ nor assume too high a level of knowledge so that participants are unable to understand or relate to the content that follows;
- to build confidence – to demonstrate to participants that they already have a working knowledge of the subject;
- to ‘get people thinking’ about the topic;
- to enhance learning by posing questions that get participants relating their knowledge to practical applications or specific cases.

Quizzes should never be used to enable trainers to ‘show off’ their superior knowledge, or to ‘frighten’ participants by exposing their appalling ignorance!

## Use of visual slides

PowerPoint or a similar package is the quality standard, but needs to be used responsibly. All too often it is clear that more time has been expended on creating snazzy overheads than on planning the learning that is intended to take place. Also one should be able to deliver a sound learning event if all the technology fails!

Most illustrations in publications are not suitable for projection, and most overheads would not work in a publication. There are some simple guidelines for ensuring effective overheads:

- Every word should be easily readable.
- The amount of information should match the time spent speaking about it.
- Maximum 10 lines of type using sizes between 22pt and 30pt – 18pt is too small.
- Two or three consistent colours are ample, reserving additional colours, such as red, for maximum spot impact.
- Keep the background plain – avoid distracting decorations.
- Keep PowerPoint effects (such as slide fading) to a minimum and keep them consistent.
- Use only specifically recorded sound or dialogue that is relevant – do not use standard PowerPoint sound effects.

## Using DVD/video and other media

Well-chosen DVD/video footage may be the most effective means of disseminating knowledge, illustrating behaviours or providing a context for learning. It can be very effective in providing case study material for group discussion; for example, ‘how would you handle this situation?’ Video should never be used as a substitute for planned learning – as in showing a video starring John Cleese or other well-known celebrities for entertainment and amusement!

## Practice exercises versus role-play exercises

There is only one way to develop a skill in any activity – whether learning a technical task, or learning to deal with difficult human behaviour – and that is to practise. The practice needs to be supported by feedback from ‘someone who knows what they are doing’ to both give correction and positive encouragement (see ‘Feedback’ below).

We distinguish between ‘to practise’, the ‘practice’ and ‘role play’ on the basis that the individual who is using the skill being developed, say interviewing, is ‘practising’; whereas the person who may be ‘acting’ as the individual being interviewed is indeed ‘role playing’.

Putting an *individual* in a practice situation may be challenging, particularly if the skill or the situation is a new one to him or her. Hence the ‘theatre forum technique’ provides a more supportive environment for practising skills and behaviours.

## Camera/Video recording of practice exercises

Whilst participants may express concern over recording practice sessions, in most cases people quickly forget that the camera is there once they get into the exercise. However, for the sake of those who are genuinely affected, and for whom the learning experience will be impaired, it is important that all participants are given the opportunity to refrain from being video recorded if it is such a significant issue.

We must also be clear about the purpose of the recording. It should not be a substitute for feedback (see below) from ‘someone who knows what they are doing’: that is, one of the learning event leaders who has experience and is able to provide valuable learning to the participant. We should not just send people home with the recording to learn on their own, as they may not be looking for the most appropriate or relevant things, and may draw unhelpful conclusions. By all means send people home with the recording to watch again, but with expert guidance on the things to look for and how to improve their level of skill.

Playing back recordings to the group may be helpful if the leader has time to select relevant ‘highlights’; however, playing back the whole of any practice exercise is unlikely to be an efficient use of precious learning time.

## Theatre forum

This approach sometimes uses specialist actors, because they can get each forum off to a flying start by demonstrating the technique and showing how to support others when they practise. However, they are not essential. The forum can provide a ‘safe’ environment in which participants can watch and listen, intervene when they have sufficient confidence, and then with more confidence practise the relevant skills or behaviours themselves.

The ‘forum’ is set up with ideally around six to eight participants, who are briefed that they are there only to support the person who is practising the skill – so they can intervene and ask questions or make suggestions; the person practising can ask them for advice, or just ask ‘How am I doing?’, or say, ‘Help, I’m stuck, I don’t know what to do next!’ So we create a fun and supportive environment in which people can ‘have a go’ and learn both through their own experience and that of other participants.

## Delivery styles

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The delivery style you adopt for the training/classroom should be dependent on the learners’ needs, training facilities, organizational culture and so on, and not on your personal preferences. Moreover, you should also consider a range of alternative approaches to support learning (see Chapter 16). However, delivery generally involves a continuum ranging from completely trainer-centred to totally learner-centred styles. Trainer-centred training might involve a lecture, while a learner-centred approach might involve the learners choosing the subject and the approach to support their own learning.

## Feedback

The ability to give and receive feedback is an important one, and is especially necessary in coaching. There are subtle but important differences between ‘criticism’, ‘critique’ and ‘*feedback*’. And there is no such thing as ‘good’ feedback or ‘positive’ feedback; there is just feedback – and it is a gift.

*Feedback* is like holding up a mirror – and it is for the recipient to decide what to do with it; they can choose to ignore it, or they may want to explore further. For example:

- Feedback: You assumed in your presentation that environmental issues were important to me.
- Recipient: Was that not a reasonable assumption?
- Feedback: I am not saying that it was or was not a reasonable assumption – but I would question the basis of your assumption. You may legitimately argue that if I am not environmentally aware you do not want to do business with me. I am feeding back that I was very aware that you assumed I should be influenced by your environmental arguments.
- Recipient: Thank you.

### Guidelines for effective feedback

- Raise awareness: Avoid subjective, judgemental and pejorative comments.
- Be specific: ‘When you said/did... *I* felt that.../it sounded to *me* like.../I was concerned that...’ (always use the ‘I’ statement – avoid ‘you’ statements).
- If something was particularly outstanding in your view, couch it in an ‘I statement’ and be lavish in your praise!
- Be sensitive to the recipient’s ‘capacity’ to take feedback; some people are ‘thimbles’, some are ‘buckets’. Check that they understand your intention and ask how they are feeling.

There are other models for giving feedback, such as the ‘after-action report’:

- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- What would you do differently next time?

Or this model:

- Do more of...
- Stop doing/do less of...
- Start doing...

There is a time and a place for *critique*. It is absolutely appropriate for you to share your experience and identify what worked for you, and what did not. You may well



recall the ‘praise sandwich’ model: give praise, then identify scope for improvement, then end on a positive. This is a good model for critiquing a presentation (but it is not feedback!).

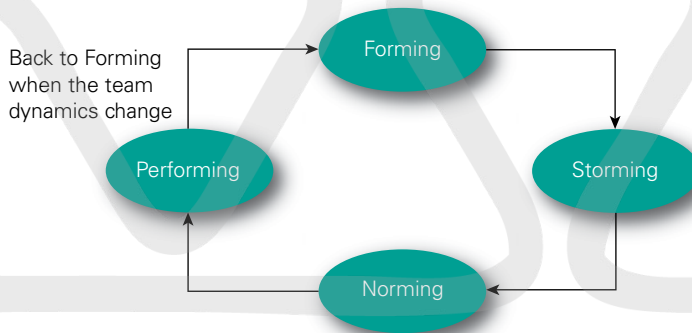
## Coaching during the workshop

The trainer, instead of directing, uses appropriate questioning techniques to encourage the trainee/learner’s thought processes to identify actions and answers. Observation and listening activities help the trainer to understand the trainee’s position, and asking questions helps to clarify uncertainties. By using a coaching style the trainer can help develop the trainee/learner’s responsibility for and ownership of his/her own action plan. (See Chapter 17: Coaching and mentoring.)

## Team building in the classroom

As the participants in a training event begin to know each other they may go through a series of four stages described in Tuckman’s (1965) model of team development.

**FIGURE 15.2** Stages of team development



### Stage 1: Forming

Here there are high expectations and a reliance on the trainer for guidance and direction. There is little agreement on how to work together in the training room, and individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. Therefore, there is a requirement for the trainer to set out the purpose of the learning intervention and give a ‘road map’ for the day. The trainer must be ready to answer lots of questions about purpose and to check out individual objectives. Trainees/learners may test

the lenience of the trainer and each other. Direction and ground rules are required. The percentage of trainer/trainees talking/listening is probably trainer 80 per cent and trainees 20 per cent.

### **Stage 2: Storming**

In this stage there are anxieties and misconceptions, and the trainees/learners are still unsure and not easily able to make decisions. There may be some striving/competing or standing back among the trainees as they try to find out how they fit in to the group. The trainer needs to focus on the reasons for the training programme and avoid being distracted by cliques and/or 'red herrings'. Using a coaching style may help to move the group forward. The percentage of trainer/trainees talking/listening is probably trainer 60 per cent and trainees 40 per cent.

### **Stage 3: Norming**

As the trainees/learners become clear about their roles and responsibilities and gain understanding, they form into a team and show strong engagement and cooperation between one another and the trainer. They have respect for everyone's opinion and willingness to share ideas and experience, and may use appropriate humour and 'team-speak'. The percentage of trainer/trainees talking/listening is probably trainer 40 per cent, trainees 60 per cent.

### **Stage 4: Performing**

At this stage the team of trainees/learners are more strategically mindful about what they should be achieving in the training room and have a shared vision. Any disagreements are handled sensitively and appropriately within the trainee team, and suggestions are made on how to move forward. The team works constructively with the (leader) trainer to achieve the learning intervention objectives, and develop their relationships. The learners/trainees do not need as much detailed instruction as in the 'forming' stage; they work through the role plays or exercises with diligence and are achievement focused. The percentage of trainer/trainees talking/listening is probably trainer 30 per cent, trainees 70 per cent.

## **Motivation to learn**

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Without motivation there will be no engagement and no learning! There will only be compliance by participants, who may consider the process 'remedial'. This is why it is essential in the first instance to engage participants in establishing their learning commitment. Sharing our learning needs at the commencement of any initiative assists in building the motivational factor and the social cohesion of the group. Social cohesion is an essential element in motivating the group to learn together.

Another key motivator throughout any learning activity is to keep focused on outcomes and the relevance of the learning to achieving the desired results. In short, in order to establish and maintain the motivation to learn:

- Establish the desired results from the learning.
- Build group cohesion from sharing learning needs and sharing experiences.
- Include a variety of learning methodologies, activities and pace changes.
- Apply learning to shared practical experience.
- Make regular linkages to desired results.
- Use mini-breaks to prevent fatigue.
- Make future-focused references to the application of learning and perceived benefits.

Finally, let us remember that learning is an innate human characteristic that has made us the most successful creature on the planet! In his groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman (1995: 93) refers to the human state of 'flow', which 'represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performance and learning'. Goleman goes on to say that 'if a task is too simple, it is boring; if too challenging, the result is anxiety rather than flow... mastery in a craft or skill is spurred on by the experience of flow – the motivation to get better and better at something... is at least in part to stay in flow while doing it.' So it is our challenge as trainer or facilitator to create the environment in which people can experience the joy of learning.

## Principles of self-development

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The following guidelines may form part of a programme of guided learning, together with workshops, or part of a stand-alone self-development package:

- Set targets for yourself, dividing them into:
  - those you can achieve immediately or within the next year (short term);
  - those that may take up to three years to complete (medium term);
  - those you would like to achieve in the next 3–10 years (long term).
- Review your performance regularly and honestly to see whether you have successfully met those targets. Enter the dates of such reviews in your diary.
- Write a detailed career history to identify areas of interest and preference, and strengths and weaknesses. Take steps to strengthen the areas of weakness.
- Leadership has to be learned through experience. To help in the learning process, take on jobs that are likely to stretch your capabilities and add to your experience. See Andrew Forrest's '50 ways to organizational development' (in Forrest, 1999) and *have a go!*
- Be prepared to seek external help and guidance if it is needed; for example, talk to your family, friends, colleagues etc.

- Find a mentor who has the necessary expertise and with whom you can discuss your plans. Find out if you are being vague, over-ambitious or too modest.
- Consider taking courses with the Open University, Open Tech or Colleges of Further Education.
- Get involved in community activities at a responsible level.
- Be flexible in certain situations that might arise.
- Don't be too self-critical. Be optimistic and positive!

## 'Joint learning' for management, staff and staff representatives

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Joint learning and development involving senior managers/more junior staff or management/staff/union representatives has the potential to build mutual trust and understanding – which can be particularly valuable during difficult/contentious times. However, putting potential 'adversaries' or junior staff with directors into a 'learning environment', and expecting there to be open sharing and learning is clearly naïve and beckons problems.

The participants themselves must be comfortable with the principle of learning with senior managers/more junior staff or management/staff/union representatives. So 'joint learning' is only appropriate where the relationship is one that is strong enough to support learning together, and where individuals are able to cope with the vulnerability of exposing their lack of knowledge or skill in order to learn and improve.

## Legislation and the learning environment

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There are a number of common law and statutory issues from which the learning environment is not immune. All involved in a learning event, whether in the same room or on a computer attending a distance learning programme, have a 'duty of care' to one another – any act or omission that can reasonably be foreseen as likely to cause harm to another participant is an act of negligence for which an injured party can seek redress. For example, behaviour that amounts to harassment or incitement of racial intolerance may be grounds for individual or criminal action. Moreover, employers need to be sure that they do not discriminate in access to learning and development opportunities.

There are also the health and safety issues for participants: safe access and egress, fire and emergency procedures, electrical equipment, food and drink, hygiene, toilet and washing facilities and so on. In addition, trainers/facilitators have rights and duties in relation to their own health, safety and welfare: working alone, manual handling, using portable electrical equipment, and working hours.

In essence, there needs to be a suitable and sufficient risk assessment undertaken by any organization that undertakes learning events, covering:

- travel arrangements;
- the venue;
- facilities;
- equipment;
- participant behaviours;
- trainer/facilitator safety.

## Dealing with difficult scenarios

---

One of the key skills of a trainer is to be well organized; however, there can be occasions when things do not run smoothly. What will you do to keep yourself focused, avoid stressing yourself, and get on with the job in hand of delivering training, if one or more of the following happens?

- More participants arrive from another classroom because their learning facilitator has been taken ill.
- A late arrival rushes in saying ‘I don’t want to be here, but the boss says I have to...’
- Your materials have not arrived/the projector is not working.
- Noisy building works are happening nearby, and there is no other venue to move to.
- There are clear demarcations between managers and staff.
- A person persists in using a laptop and/or mobile telephone during the training.
- A person does not want to take part in discussion/role play/exercises.
- There is a person who likes to be always in control/always right.

### *Possible approaches*

Sometimes improvisation may be the only option, but good, experienced trainers nearly always have some strategy to fall back on. Also, it is essential to establish ‘ground rules’/‘how we would like to behave together in this training room’. These rules can be printed on the back of name-cards/tent cards. This is useful so that you can refer back to the ‘rules’ when difficult behaviour arises in the classroom. For example:

- Mobile telephones and messages are off or on silent.
- Show respect for each other and each other’s opinions.
- Listen before speaking.
- Participate and share views.
- Confidentiality for each other and words in the classroom.

It is also beneficial to develop an assertive style to challenge behaviour:

- Keep calm, feel in control, breathe naturally.
- Listen actively – demonstrate that you are listening, with appropriate eye contact.
- Reflect back, where appropriate, their words and feelings you have heard and noticed.
- Accept responsibility, and use ‘I’ sentences, such as I think, I am, I would like.
- Ask open questions to get more information about the facts.
- Use closed questions to confirm facts.
- Show respect to others’ views and actions, even when you do not agree.
- Express your feelings, both positive and negative.
- Be confident with yourself and your style.
- Be willing to admit to yourself that you may not be liked by everyone, but remember your role is to enable people’s learning, not to be their friend.
- Deal with things as they happen.
- Don’t blame people or the situation.
- Don’t scheme or conspire with others to isolate a trouble-maker.
- Try to build relationships with common interests.
- Give breathing space, suggest discussing outside the training room or in the break time.
- Set time limits.
- It is not always possible to solve the whole situation immediately, so look for a compromise you both can agree with.
- Ensure your communication is always clear, particularly when asking people to take part in a training activity, and set clearly defined tasks and roles.
- Finally, in the last resort: ensure in your employment contract that you have agreement from your training sponsor – for example your team manager or organizational contact – that you have the authority to ask an individual, whose behaviour is not acceptable (and therefore detrimental to the rest of the participants’ learning) to leave the training programme/workshop.

## Conclusion

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Delivering training can be one of the most rewarding of occupations, particularly where you can observe progress being made. With good preparation, a thorough knowledge of the subject and the flexibility to respond to the unpredictable events that may arise, you ‘make a difference’. As Nelson Mandela said: ‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’

## Questions for reflection

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- You know that there will be an aggressive trainee in a future training class. What plans do you put in place to handle the situation?
- Which learning theories do you think would be most suitable for delivering training? Explain your reasons.
- What elements would you include in a learning contract?

## Further information sources

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BBC: [www.bbc.co.uk/learning/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/)

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Glasstap (Trainer's Library): [www.glasstap.com](http://www.glasstap.com)

Institute of Training and Occupational Learning: [www.itol.org](http://www.itol.org)

Management Learning Resources: [www.mlruk.com](http://www.mlruk.com)

Training materials: [www.businessballs.com](http://www.businessballs.com)

Trainers' Library: [www.trainerslibrary.com](http://www.trainerslibrary.com)

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## 16

# Informal, non-formal and work-based methods of learning

**JACQUELINE PATTISON, JOHN KIRKHAM and  
MARIANA GABRIELA HUDREA**

*Learning takes place everywhere on a college campus. In fact, learning arguably happens everywhere – on city sidewalks, in airplanes, in restaurants, in bookstores and on playgrounds. Human beings – wherever they are – have the capacity to learn through their experiences and reflections. (CHISM, 2006: 2.2)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand about the limited impact of formal learning mechanisms;
- be aware of and be able to use or recommend alternative approaches to learning;
- understand the differences between formal, informal and non-formal learning;
- understand the nature of lifelong and lifewide learning;
- be familiar with and be able to guide and support learners in a wide range of situations that encourage learning.

## Introduction

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The literature of pedagogic sciences invests the teacher/trainer with a very complex and very demanding role: that of organizer/manager of the learning situations. The training process thus becomes a real cognitive and emotional process directed towards obtaining certain changes/modifications in the learners' behaviour at many levels. In this way learning means change and the acceptance of change.

The management and direction of learning is a complex one and learning is a personal act that requires personal involvement (Cerghit, 2006). The acquisition, the processing and the utilization of knowledge acquires a note of uniqueness for and from the perspective of each individual. And, this personal involvement is nothing but the cradle of creativity.

Clearly, human beings have the potential to learn in a wide range of circumstances, as the quotation at the start of this chapter illustrates. This can be in our personal or professional lives, and it does not stop when we leave formal education and training but continues and pervades all aspects of our lives. With learning being an essential part of our existence there is a strong argument that we should not consider it solely from an organized and formal delivery perspective. Indeed, the amount of formal learning versus informal learning that we use in work is relatively small; therefore, instead, we also should look at many of the broader ways of learning. Chapter 3 describes the theories of learning and in this chapter we will consider some of the many alternative ways in which people learn, and how they might be used by teachers, trainers and developers.

## Is investment in formal learning worthwhile?

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This book is predominantly focused on the theoretical and practical considerations involved with the identification of learning needs, and the design, delivery and evaluation of learning provided in formal learning environments such as organization learning/training centres, schools, colleges, universities and the like. However, the amount of learning that occurs as a result of formal education and training would appear, in some respects, relatively low. For example, Cunningham, Dawes and Bennett (2004: 8) refer to their own research, and that of Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) and Eraut (1998), and conclude that:

Most learning that is of relevance to work is not achieved through education or training. The figure that comes out as a general average from all the research studies is that at most 10–20 per cent of what makes a person effective comes from education and training.

Most work based learning is opportunistic and unplanned. People learn from things as they happen (2004: 9).

These figures may be somewhat disturbing for some teachers and trainers if their focus is purely on formal learning and development methods. They may suggest that the value of teachers, trainers and developers is relatively marginal to the overall learning process.

The situation becomes even more concerning if we consider the limited extent of learning transfer. With formal education and training the trainees must take what they have learned in the classroom or training room and transfer this to the workplace. Drawing from a collection of papers by Detterman and Sternberg (1993), Cunningham, Dawes and Bennett (2004: 12) warned:

The useful transfer of training to work may be as low as 10 per cent. In other words, billions of dollars a year could be wasted on the model of taking people out of their work contexts and exposing them to information, ideas and new skills that are not used at all, ever.

The American Society for Training and Development (2010) *2010 State of the Industry Report* stated that \$125.88 billion was spent on employee learning and development in 2009. Of this, approximately two-thirds (\$78.61 billion) was allocated to the internal learning provision, and the remainder (\$47.27 billion) was spent on external services. If we use the 10 per cent transfer level it might be argued that 90 per cent, or \$112.6 billion, is wasted. Of course, it is not as simple as that but the figures should make us reflect on the need to achieve value for money from these investments in learning.

## Formal, informal and non-formal learning

Given that much of the learning that occurs in organizations and in life comes in ways that are not formally structured, it is important to consider the other means of learning and make them more efficient and effective. Determining what formal and informal learning are would appear relatively straightforward; however, on closer examination this does not appear to be the case. Take, for example, someone in a training room who is distracted from the formal activities and is thinking about a work-based problem. He/she may come up with a solution that has nothing to do with the training that is formally taking place. Similarly, we may be watching television and see something that can be used in the workplace – is this relaxation or work?

In an attempt to clarify the situation a number of organizations have compiled glossaries and thesauri (Cedefop, 2008; European Training Foundation, 1997; International Labour Organization, 1998; Manpower Services Commission, 1981; UNESCO, 2011). Below, are the definitions provided by Cedefop of formal, informal and non-formal learning:

*Formal learning:* ‘Learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment (eg in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time and resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification’.

(Cedefop, 2008: 85)

*Informal learning:* ‘Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not intended or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner’s perspective... informal learning outcomes do not usually lead to certification but may be validated and certified in the framework of recognition of prior learning schemes; informal learning is also referred to as experiential or incidental/random learning’.

(Cedefop, 2008: 93)

*Non-formal learning:* ‘Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view... non-formal learning outcomes may be validated and lead to certification – non-formal learning is sometimes described as semi-structured learning’.

(Cedefop, 2008: 133)

## Lifelong learning and lifewide learning

Learning does not finish when one leaves compulsory education or training. As we have discussed elsewhere, learning is an innate skill that happens to us much of the time and that can occur in many situations. In fact we learn throughout our lives and this concept of lifelong learning has been harnessed for wider advantages by the Council of the European Union (European Union, 2002: 2), which stated:

Lifelong learning must cover learning from the pre-school age to that of post-retirement, including the entire spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, lifelong learning must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.

Recognizing the economic and social importance of lifelong learning, the European Commission (2007: 3) identified eight key competences ‘that citizens require for their personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in our knowledge based society’. The key competences are:

- communication in the mother tongue;
- communication in foreign languages;
- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;
- social and civic competences;
- a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- cultural awareness and expression.

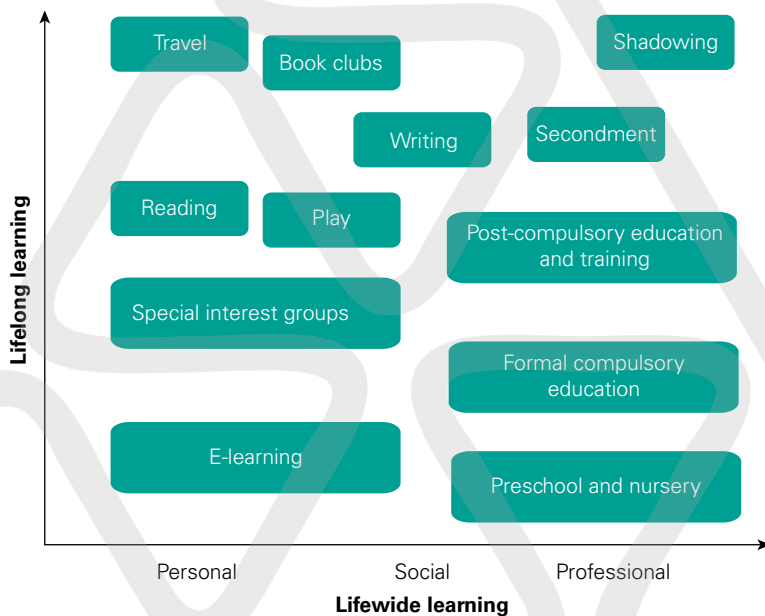
Not only do we learn throughout our lives, we also learn across the spectrum of our lives: what is sometimes known as lifewide learning. This includes the formal, informal and non-formal aspects of learning. Cedefop (2008: 124) defined lifewide learning as, ‘Learning, either formal, non-formal or informal, that takes place across the full range of life activities (personal, social or professional) and at any stage... lifewide learning is a dimension of lifelong learning.’

The recognition of the value of learning in a wide range of contexts was acknowledged in *The Learning Revolution* White Paper, produced by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (2009), which endorsed the value of informal adult learning. The White Paper described a wide landscape of informal learning: arts and sports broadcasts, community organizations, libraries, healthy living centres,

museums, online communities, colleges, universities and schools. It also included in the list of opportunities for learning: adult education classes, book clubs, blogging, cookery skills learnt in a community centre, guided visits to a stately home or nature reserve, museums, online research, public lectures or a volunteer project recording a community's living history. It continued (2009: 4):

The boom in book clubs, on-line research and blogging, together with the continuing popularity of museums, public lectures and adult education classes, all demonstrate that people in this country have a passion for learning. They may not call it education, but this informal adult learning makes a huge contribution to the well-being of the nation.

**FIGURE 16.1** Lifelong learning and lifewide learning



## A–Z of learning, training and development methods

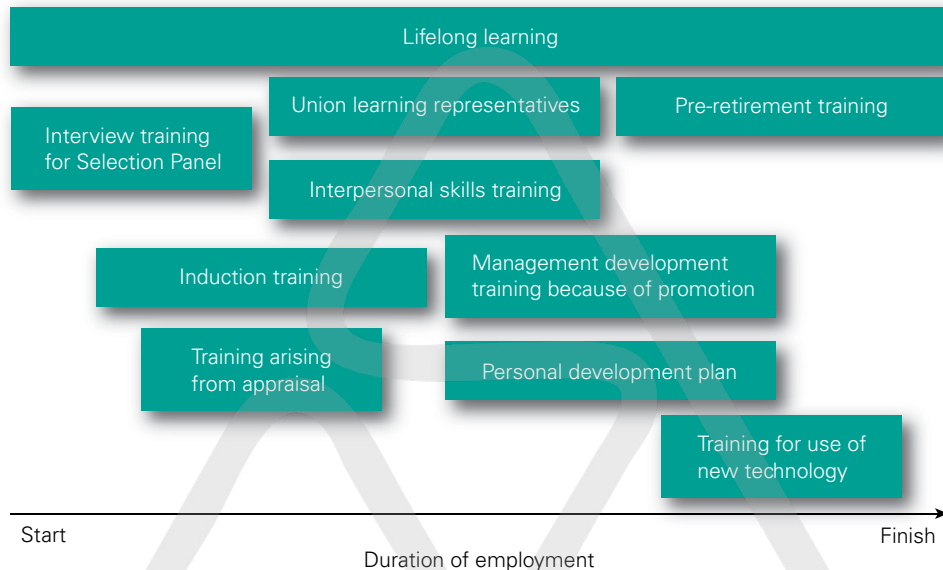
Earlier in the chapter we discussed the fact that learning is possible in a wide range of situations, and not just formal ones. Below we list an extensive number of approaches drawing from our own research and that of others, including Cunningham, Dawes and Bennett (2004), and Forrest (1999):

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>E-learning</b>             | Critical friend                           |
| Blogging                      | Discussion                                |
| Bulletin boards               | Feedback                                  |
| Computer-based training       | Instruction                               |
| Distance learning             | Learning community                        |
| E-learning                    | Mentoring                                 |
| Films and videos              | Networks                                  |
| Mobile learning               | Study groups                              |
| Multimedia – audio, video etc | Syndicate                                 |
| Networked learning            | User groups                               |
| Video conference              |   |
| Video feedback                | <b>Informal learning</b>                  |
| Virtual-learning environment  | Book clubs                                |
| Virtual reality learning      | Community projects                        |
| Web-based learning            | Libraries                                 |
| Webcam/Teleconference         | Museums                                   |
|                               | Special interest groups                   |
| <b>Group-based learning</b>   | Support groups                            |
| Buddying                      |   |
| Coaching                      | <b>Individual learning</b>                |
| Collaborative learning        | Attachment to other organizations         |
| Community of practice         | Attending training courses                |
| Counselling                   | Continuing professional development (CPD) |

|                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Learning logs                 | Radio and TV/online broadcasts     |
| Lectures                      | Witnessing                         |
| Mistakes                      |                                    |
| New responsibilities          | <b>Organization-based learning</b> |
| Personal education            | 360°, 270°, 180° and 90° feedback  |
| Professional qualifications   | Action-learning sets learning      |
| Questioning                   | Action reviews                     |
| Reading                       | Adopting another organization      |
| Real play                     | Appraisal and performance reviews  |
| Reflective learning           | Assessment and inspection          |
| Research                      | Benchmarking                       |
| Response to guidance          | Delegation                         |
| Sabbatical                    | Deputizing                         |
| Self-managed learning         | Development centres                |
| Travel                        | Induction                          |
| Visits to other organizations | Industry–education links           |
| Volunteering                  | Interviewing                       |
|                               | In-tray methods                    |
| <b>Observation</b>            | Job rotation and job swaps         |
| Fish-bowl exercise            | Learning resource centres          |
| Management by walking about   | Meetings                           |
| Observation/listening         | On-the-job learning                |
| Observing effective people    | Peer review                        |



|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Personal development plans              | Brainstorming                  |
| Post-implementation review              | Business game                  |
| Presentations                           | Business game simulations      |
| Project-based learning                  | Buzz groups                    |
| Psychometric tests                      | Case study                     |
| Representing staff, union, organization | Checklists                     |
| Secondments and related approaches      | Discovery learning             |
| Shadowing – work shadowing              | Exercise                       |
| Steering groups                         | Experiential learning          |
| Work groups                             | Language laboratory            |
| Write a report                          | Open forum                     |
| Writing                                 | Open space                     |
|   | Outdoor development programmes |
| <b>Training approaches</b>              | Problem-based learning         |
| Accelerated learning                    | Role play                      |
| Action maze                             | Role reversal                  |
| Activity-based learning                 | Simulations                    |

**FIGURE 16.2** Learning alternatives in the workplace

## Conclusion

We have explored how much of what we learn does not happen through formal training and development. Furthermore, much of the learning that does occur during training sessions does not get transferred to the worksite or desk. Therefore, we need to pay more attention to informal and non-formal ways of learning, of which there are many to be found.

Not only is learning beneficial from an economic and social perspective, it is also highly beneficial to our health. A Government Office for Science (2008) report found that keeping learning was an effective way of maintaining positive mental health and well-being. Moreover, the other four steps – connect with the people around you, be physically active, take note of the world around you and give to others – are also strongly associated with learning activities. The message is clear: learning should be lifewide and lifelong.

## Questions for reflection

- Your CEO tells you she has found research evidence that suggests the impact of the training department is limited. How would you respond?
- How would you encourage formal and informal learning across the organization?
- How might you use your organization's learning and development budget more effectively?

## Further information sources

Cedefop – *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy*:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4064\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4064_en.pdf)

UNESCO Thesaurus: <http://databases.unesco.org/thesaurus/>

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# 17

# Coaching and mentoring

**STEPHANIE T STURGES**

*What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.* (OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand some of the main types of coaching and mentoring;
- be able to apply some coaching and mentoring practices;
- know about the key skills and qualities of a coach or mentor;
- be able to reflect on your own practice;
- understand the relationship of coaching and mentoring to HRD.

## Introduction

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The expansion of coaching and mentoring over recent years means that it is now more common for them to form part of learning and development strategies within organizations. They have now become part of the ongoing formal and informal development approaches that managers can provide as a part of their contribution to HR development (Gold, Thorpe and Mumford, 2010). Research demonstrates that 82 per cent of UK organizations use coaching (CIPD, 2010) and respondents from 64 per cent of international businesses see learning and talent development as a key business driver, with 83 per cent using coaching and mentoring as a specific approach (CIPD, 2010).

As coaching and mentoring is an expanding field it will not be possible to cover the whole range of skills, types, approaches, models and the like within a single chapter. Therefore, we will cover a few of the key areas within this emerging profession (Hamlin, 2009) and hope it will stimulate you to want to explore more.

## Coaching and mentoring

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Whilst there is an expanding use of the terms coaching and mentoring there is no single definition of either. To throw some light on this we will initially reflect on the historical connections associated with them. De Hann (2008: 206) suggests the roots of coaching and mentoring may have originated in ancient Greece, citing Athena from Homer's *Odyssey* as a coach/mentor and Plato as a leading coach of his time who would also 'reflect on his profession and pose questions which are still open, profound and fresh now as they were then' (we will find later that definitions of coaching and mentoring tend not to include 'reflective practice'; however, it is considered a critical aspect of coach/mentor activity to facilitate learning of both coach/mentor and coachee/mentee. It is also formalized through the use of supervision, which is not covered in this chapter). This historical view is shared by Garvey, Stokes and Megginson (2009) citing 'coaching' used in Thackeray's novel *Pendennis*, and by Parsloe, who refers to the meaning of coach in 1600 as 'to transport a valuable person from one place to another' (2008: 1). Garvey, Stokes and Megginson (2009) also suggest the meaning of 'mentor' from Indo-European being 'to think' and from Ancient Greek being 'advisor'. This historical review suggests coaching and mentoring are about helping another and are likely to involve the process of thinking, reflecting on practice and potentially advising. It also suggests that coaching and mentoring are not new activities; however, what is new is that they are recent additions to the manager and leader's repertoire of development approaches.

In relation to other influences, it is widely noted that coaching is still a dominant practice in sport. Tim Gallwey (2000), who wrote the *Inner Game* series, and Sir John Whitmore were both key influences in moving coaching and mentoring from the world of sport into mainstream work-based practice. In addition Peltier (2001, 2010) notes the influence of psychology and therapy on the practice of coaching and mentoring. This influence creates debate within the profession and between practitioners as to where the line is drawn between, for example, coaching and counselling, and coach and therapist. Added to this is the ongoing debate within and outside the profession as to whether the two activities are separate, with distinct features attributed to each, or whether they have such significant similarities that the terms can be interchanged.

This does start to highlight some of the complexity and confusion around this emerging field due to the variety of applications, contexts, perceptions and practical considerations around their theory and practice (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009). As a result we will explore some definitions from just a few contributors to the field of coaching and mentoring, who themselves potentially use a variety of approaches, to assist with some further insight.

## Definitions

In the context of a leader providing coaching or mentoring, Rosinski (2003: 5) cites clear differences between the terms or types of provision suggesting that:

Although leaders can act as coaches, I have often found that this role is often confused with mentoring. Coaches act as facilitators. Mentors give advice and expert recommendations. Coaches listen, ask questions, and enable coachees to discover for themselves what is right for them. Mentors talk about their own personal experience, assuming this is relevant for the mentee.

This definition is useful in that it starts to raise some of the challenges of separating or combining the terms. It also seems to suggest that skills, qualities, techniques and approaches differ, although both are provided in the context of development.

In contrast leading authors and practitioners of coaching and mentoring Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995: 13) define mentoring as ‘off line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge and thinking’. This definition promotes the ‘challenge of thinking’ rather than ‘telling’, as suggested by Rosinski; however, it may include provision of expertise or advice in the building of knowledge and the need to understand the process of change or transition. As transitions are part of the psychological process rather than a situational change (Bridges, 2009), this definition may allude to the need for a coach and mentor to be psychologically minded (Bluckert, 2006), which it could be argued requires some of the skills and qualities Rosinski relates to coaching. Some definitions of coaching offered by leaders in the field of learning, development, coaching and mentoring are:

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful coach requires a knowledge and understanding of the process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching take place.

(Parsloe, 2008: 8)

[Coaching is a] process in which a manager, through direct discussion and guided activity, helps a colleague to solve a problem, or do a task better than would otherwise have been the case.

(Megginson and Boydell, 1979: 5)

[Coaching is a] process by which one individual, the coach, creates enabling relationships with others that make it easier for them to learn.

(Mink, Owen and Mink, 1993)

Whilst these are just a very few of many definitions, they do draw to the surface some central aspects of coaching and mentoring: that it is a relational activity; part of a process; requiring skills and qualities; set within a context; may be differing in type; and is related to learning, development, transition and change.

One separating characteristic of the two activities is suggested in that coaching tends toward performance improvement and ROI for the organization and is primarily provided in an online relationship (online in this context relating to some form of line management relationship). Mentoring, in contrast, is associated with longer-term development and is more likely to be associated with offline, often voluntary, relationships (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009). In addition, leadership coaching

is usually a paid-for, offline activity, provided by an external coach (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009) that benefits from an underpinning psychological mindedness (Bluckert, 2006).

In this chapter we will use the terms interchangeably in recognition of the similarities mentioned above, noting the differentiations when necessary, and leave you to continue to explore the issue of separateness and sameness.

## Types of coaching and mentoring

A number of coaching typologies exist to set out different approaches to coaching. Hawkins and Smith (2006) differentiate the types as skills, performance, development and transformation. This places skills and performance normally within the domain of manager, and development and transformation within the domain of offline executive coach or mentor.

Brockbank (2008) offers ‘functional’, ‘engagement’ and ‘evolutionary’ forms, and the impact of the power-horizon dynamics that will influence the type of coaching provision. Functionalist coaching maintains the status quo and power balance whilst evolutionary coaching challenges the individual’s sense of self and work, and thus also challenges the status quo and power balance to create change. Functionalist coaching is associated with skills, engagement with performance, and evolutionary with developmental or transformational coaching and mentoring.

Because coaching and mentoring take place within the organizational context it is necessary to consider the power dynamics within that context along with any espoused theory versus theory-in-use (Argyris and Schon, 1974) to understand the underlying challenges and/or support a manager, coach or mentor may have in relation to the types and provision required to be enabled.

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and proposals...

- Q:** What are the power dynamics you recognize in your organization and in your role as leader, manager, coach or mentor?
- Q:** What are the implications of this for coaching and mentoring, the challenges and support factors?
- Q:** What needs to be considered and addressed in relation to enabling coaching or mentoring to take place?



## Qualities and skills of coaching and mentoring

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The type of coaching/mentoring provision may impact on the type of skills required, the level of development of the coach/mentor and the qualities required to develop and maintain the relationships. Learning is a key part of the process and there is benefit in understanding learning and motivation theories (Gallwey, 2000), individual and organizational change and development theories, and an understanding of some of the core psychological and therapeutic influences (Peltier, 2001, 2010). As the relationship is often viewed as more important than tools and techniques when it comes to helping another through a change process (Mearns and Thorne, 2007; Holmes, 2001; Rogers, 2004; De Hann, 2008), it is valuable to consider some key qualities along with skills, tools, models and techniques that can be brought to the relationship and session. Whilst we will look specifically at the coach/mentor, we accept that the coachee/mentee will also bring skills and qualities to the relationship.

### Qualities

Maintaining trust and confidentiality is an essential quality of all coaching and mentoring relationships. Without these it is unlikely there will be a relationship, and without a relationship there will be no change (Rogers, 2004). This can present challenges for manager coach/mentors as the relationship is set within a multi-party context. Trust is hard earned and easily lost (Galford and Drapeau, 2003); therefore it is essential that the first session explores the challenges and requirements of all interested parties when constructing and agreeing ground rules. The maintenance and renegotiation of these ground rules will help to maintain the trust and relationship; an idle comment will be costly, so it is essential to be clear about who needs to know what and when, adhere to this or renegotiate.

Qualities such as trust help to build and maintain the relationship and rapport between coach/mentor and coachee/mentee. Rapport is based on sameness (Schimmel et al, 2000) in that we are more likely to feel close to someone we perceive as similar to ourselves, and distant from those perceived as dissimilar. Rapport can be gained by seeking to understand another's disposition and behaviours, and by applying the qualities that form the basis of person-centred therapy (Rogers, 2004) such as empathy, genuineness, authenticity, and being non-judgemental, trustworthy and respectful, which have been widely adopted into coaching and mentoring practice.

### Skills

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) provides a detailed set of coaching and mentoring competencies to be demonstrated in order to gain accreditation. Downey (2003) provides a spectrum of directive through to non-directive skills, citing 'listening' at the peak of non-directive coaching and 'instructions' at the directive end of the spectrum. Table 17.1 covers some of the key skills.

**TABLE 17.1** Key mentoring and coaching skills

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Listening</b>                    | <p>What are you hearing when you listen – your story or theirs?</p> <p>Listening happens at different levels (Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl, 1998). We have the capacity to listen internally (we focus on our thoughts etc), by focusing on another or by embracing the whole environment in relation to the individual.</p> <p>When we listen we filter information, sometimes apply our own value judgements, beliefs, opinions and comparisons, all of which get in the way of understanding. Sometimes we interrupt because we think we have something more important to say; maybe we even want to score points.</p> <p>Listening in coaching and mentoring requires at least focused listening (Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl, 1998) with the intention of seeking to understand (Covey, 1989); by providing the gift of listening attentively we 'ignite the human mind' (Kline, 1999: 36) and give the mind 'time to think' (Kline, 1999).</p> |
| <b>Questioning</b>                  | Open, closed, presupposition, incisive, probing, exploratory, challenging, powerful.  |
| <b>Giving feedback</b>              | Help the clients to understand themselves and the situation, constructive rather than destructive.  |
| <b>Reflecting back</b>              | Holding up the mirror to help the client hear themselves and assess what they mean, and help them understand themselves and the situation.  |
| <b>Summarizing and paraphrasing</b> | Recap and review where you are so far by summarizing what has been said. This helps to test both parties' understanding of the situation and review where you are and what the situation is. It also helps to pull things together for the client.  |
| <b>Observation</b>                  | Notice what is happening for the client, explore what is important. Notice the changes and test out what these mean.  |
| <b>Re-framing</b>                   | Provide another perspective for the client by reframing their situation; for example it may involve moving the perspective from negative to positive.   |
| <b>Metaphors</b>                    | You can create a picture for the client by the use of metaphors; this helps create a different perspective or make a particular point.  |
| <b>Intuition</b>                    | Use your own and encourage their use of intuition for insights.   |
| <b>Telling stories</b>              | Helps the client to view things from other perspectives.  |

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** In what way does the type of coaching/mentoring influence the type of skills and qualities required?
- Q:** What are the benefits, limitations and implications for the manager coach/mentor in the development and maintenance of coaching and mentoring skills and qualities?
- Q:** Where are the organizational culture and power dynamic that challenge and support these considerations?
- Q:** How can you maintain and monitor the development of your coaching/mentoring skills and qualities?

## Models of coaching

Within the practice of coaching and mentoring there are both explicit and implicit models (Barner and Higgins, 2007) that will be brought to the session. Both will potentially be influenced by the level of understanding, development, practice and expertise of the coach and mentor, and both will guide the process. The implicit models suggested by Barner and Higgins include the clinical model, behavioural model, systems model and the social constructivist model. As it will be useful to consider the implicit as well as the explicit models used in the coaching and mentoring process of development and change, we will touch on two of these, the behavioural model (aimed at the coach helping the client change some problematic area of behaviours) and the clinical model, aimed at enabling change ‘from the inside out’ (Barner and Higgins, 2007: 150), the internal change of self-perception and personality.

### *The behavioural model*

The behavioural model assumes that coaches can best help their clients by making them aware of the impact of their behaviours on self and others, and then supporting them through a process of behaviour change. This can be seen as a structured, process-driven relationship, designed to remove blockages to achieving change (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, 2005). Advocates of this approach indicate it can lead to sustained change; however, it is useful to be aware that this may lead to a directive approach or may focus on behaviour shortfalls, which Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005: 37) suggest is limiting ‘as it focuses on the deficiencies in performance’. It may also narrow the focus of attention to specific behaviours and exclude a view of the whole person (Barner and Higgins, 2006). However, this model is one of the most widely used approaches to coaching within organizations. The most commonly used explicit model in behavioural coaching is the GROW model (Whitmore, 2002), which is associated with performance coaching.

## Performance coaching

If either the quality of a performance or learning from experience is important, coaching is a must. If neither is, then tell – if you must.

(Whitmore, 2002: 95)

Performance coaching is a widely used term coined by John Whitmore. As part of a performance coaching approach, the GROW model is probably the one most widely used by managers in their role as online coaches, where coaching forms part of their approach to developing and building long-term strength in organizations (Gold, Thorpe and Mumford, 2010; Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002; Passmore, 2005). The GROW model is a straightforward goal-focused model. It provides a useful framework to navigate through a structured process of change. Whilst it does not focus on the relationship as being the mechanism for change, the quality of the relationship should not be underestimated when using this or any other model, as acknowledged by Passmore (2005) in his expansion of the model to incorporate his view of ‘The heart of coaching’.

As performance coaching and mentoring is associated with building self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which is said to be achieved through skills practice with feedback, role play, modelling, affirmations, empowering metaphors and visualization (Johnston, 2005), these are likely to feature within the coaching or mentoring process. When targeting performance, short-term initiatives for change are likely to be associated with coaching and longer-term change initiatives associated with mentoring (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009). However, in the wider context of performance in HR it includes the team, process and mission (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998). Therefore, as a manager coach or mentor within an organizational environment, it is necessary to consider the wider context of culture, organizational objectives and interpersonal relationships.

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** How does the wider organizational context of culture, objectives and interpersonal relationships undermine or enhance the coaching or mentoring process and outcomes?
- Q:** How do you balance the tension between individual performance development and organizational drive for ROI?
- Q:** What are the ethical considerations relating to the reason for change, and what do I need to do to address this?

## The GROW Model

The first point to mention is that whilst the model is represented here in a linear form, it would be restrictive of the coach or mentor to expect a conversation or

process to flow in a linear fashion. The coach takes responsibility for managing the process and helping the coachee explore the issue at hand. This will require developing the flexibility and familiarity with the model to move through the stage as the conversation requires whilst remaining alert to the overall direction and purpose of the conversations. The GROW model aims to generate responsibility within the coachee (Whitmore, 2002), encouraging ownership and motivation. The stages of the GROW model are: Goal, Reality, Options and Will/Way forward, and are described below:

## Goal

- This stage of the model is concerned with getting clarity around what the coachee wants to achieve/change and what the goal of the session is.
- Locke et al define goal as ‘what an individual is trying to achieve’ (1981: 126; cited in Johnston 2005).
- This may involve a short-term goal within a longer-term objective.
- Time invested at this stage of the model is worthwhile as experience has demonstrated that seldom do coachees have significant clarity about what they really want from the outset.
- The coach will ask questions to elicit the goal and check its integrity for the individual and the organization.

## Reality

It is at this stage that the coach will seek to enable coachees to explore as fully as possible the reality of where they are and what is happening now:

- What evidence do they have?
- What is their awareness of the current reality?
- What is their level of understanding of the situation?
- What have they already done towards achieving the goal?
- What resources do they already have access to?

This reality check can cause the goal to be re-formed. It may be too modest, too challenging or the wrong goal. The coach remains alert to the needs of coachees and helps them build their resourcefulness.

## Options

At this stage in the process coachees will be encouraged to identify ways they can address the performance goal. The role of the coach is to help them find as many options as possible:

- List the alternatives – there are always more than two!
- Keep going until you reach saturation point.
- Keep judgement to one side.
- Explore the pros and cons.

- Identify the resources needed and already available.
- Find the most suitable, motivating, appealing and achievable option.
- Provide balanced support, encouragement and challenge.
- Remain mindful of the context of individual performance requirements and the organizational objectives and context.

**Beware** There is a temptation for the coach to go with the first option or the option *s/he* thinks is best. Whilst it may be necessary on occasions for the coach manager to offer some direction, it is not the role of the manager coach to lead the coachee to choose the manager's preferred option or to select the option *s/he* would prefer for the coachee. This not only undermines the process, it undermines the development of the individuals involved. This is a mutual learning opportunity and coachees/mentees know more about themselves and their job than the coach/mentor.

### Will/Way forward

This is where the coach can explore the goal in terms of suitability to the individual, the situation and the motivation to achieve it:

- Motivation is thought to be enhanced through goal self-concordance (Burke and Linley, 2007).
- Goals are an aspect of self-efficacy and therefore benefit from structured activities with milestones to evaluate capability and demonstrate skill development (Bandura, 1986).
- The level of challenge within goal setting is an individual preference. Challenging goals will motivate some and demotivate others, according to their mindset (Dweck, 2006), as will small-step goals.
- Explore barriers and support requirements.

The skill of the coach/mentor is to balance support, challenge and encouragement through the whole process.

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** What are the strengths and limitations of using a model such as GROW?
- Q:** How will using a model such as GROW impact upon a manager's performance as coach/mentor?
- Q:** What needs to be in place to enable structured coaching/mentoring?

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Coaching for performance and culture change

#### Background

A private sector organization needed to address succession planning as a matter of urgency. Senior directors with a high level of professional technical expertise were retiring from this well-established, highly successful company, which had a respected reputation for professionalism. However, there had been a lack of planned and applied talent development that compounded the current performance and succession-planning challenge.

#### Approach

Through a planned approach, colleagues and I worked with the organization to introduce performance coaching. The planned approach was led by the HR Director, who took a considered step-by-step progressive approach to both uplift performance and enable a culture change. This approach started with the HR Director training as an internal offline executive coach/mentor. This was to demonstrate commitment and build internal capability.

This was followed by all directors receiving a series of one-to-one coaching sessions from an external executive coach. The key objective of the coaching was to improve the performance capability of directors to develop talent within their workforce.

The initiative then progressed to provide line managers with 'manager as coach' training. One key objective was to provide an internal pool of 'online' coach managers. A further key objective was to enable skilled internal coaches to promote ongoing performance uplift within their teams. The 'offline' executive coach provided support to the coach managers and ongoing performance coaching for directors, removing the need for external coaching provision.

The performance approach incorporated the GROW model and Solutions Focus principles (see below). This staged development of coaching enabled the progressive development of performance and talent at all levels in the organization.

One further key part of this process involved the encouragement of informal coaching. Coaching conversations and solution language were encouraged to take place 'any time, any place, anywhere'.

#### Outcome

This gradual, explicit approach of formal and progressive training supported by internal and external coaching moved the organization culture from nascent to embedded (Meggison and Clutterbuck, 1995). The performance and change programme reflected the dimensions of coaching and mentoring (Garvey, 1994, cited in Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009) by incorporating both formal and informal coaching and mentoring. The performance coaching and change programme were both in the open and public domain. There was an emphasis on both parties being active in the relationships and the coaching was structured to provide support to the online coach managers. However, it is necessary to consider how aspects of the dimensions framework moved and changed as time passed through the differing stages of progress towards embedding performance coaching as the way of working.



### Dimensions of coaching and mentoring

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Open.....   | Closed   |
| Public..... | Private  |
| Formal..... | Informal |
| Active..... | Passive  |
| Stable..... | Unstable |

All change through time

(Garvey, 1994, cited in Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009)

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** How might the dimensions in coaching and mentoring impact on the provision and development of a coaching relationship?
- Q:** What are some of the implications for an organization in the provision of support for coaching and mentoring activities?
- Q:** Where are some of the organizational implications of online and offline coach managers/directors/partners etc?

### **Solution Focus: performance coaching model**

Solution Focus coaching is another approach within performance coaching and mentoring. Milton Erickson and Steve De Shazer are both thought to be key founders of this approach, which is also influenced by Brief Therapy (Berg, 2005), which in turn influenced the development of Solution Focus coaching (Jackson and McKergow, 2002). The two main approaches within Solutions Focus are 'SIMPLE', referred to by Hawkins (2003) as a model and as underlying principles by Jackson and McKergow, and the OSKAR model (Jackson and McKergow, 2002). Applying a Solutions Focus approach does require the appreciation and application of the SIMPLE model or principles as an underpinning to the approach.

SIMPLE:

- S** Look for Solutions rather than problems and stay on the surface.
- I** The action is in the Interaction – doing something different to bring about a different outcome.

- M** Make use of what's there: what skills, abilities and resources do coachees already possess – find them. Where is the solution already happening?
- P** Possibilities in the past, present and future: what do they already know, what have they done in the past – if they knew how to, what would they do?
- L** Language: keep it simple to avoid misunderstanding and assumptions.
- E** Every case is different: every individual is different and should be looked at with beginner's eyes.

(Adapted from Jackson and McKergow, 2002)

The OSKAR model provides a structure to the coaching process. Whilst it is represented here in a linear form, it is beneficial to become sufficiently comfortable to move around the model as the conversation develops; however, it is structured to produce a purposeful and resourceful conversation.

OSKAR:

- O** Outcome: what do you want to happen?
- S** Scaling: on a scale of 0–10, where are you now? What's the first small step?
- K** Know-how: what skills, abilities etc do you already have?
- A** Affirm: compliment, compliment, compliment in a meaningful way!
- R** Review: what's different? This stage can also take place at the start of the next session in addition to the end of a session.

(Adapted from Jackson and McKergow, 2002)

One particular feature of the Solutions Focus approach is the 'miracle question' (Berg, 2005; Jackson and McKergow, 2002). This question originated from the last-ditch attempt of a therapist to help a client who was feeling overwhelmed and in a state of hopelessness. In desperation, the therapist asked the client what it would be like if a miracle occurred and the problems no longer existed; what would be happening instead? The client immediately seemed released from the state of hopelessness and moved to a place of resourcefulness and imagination. The miracle question is a technique used to identify the 'future perfect' at the 'Outcome' stage of the OSKAR model. This model has a focus on building resourcefulness with the use of positively stated future-orientated language similar to appreciative enquiry and neuro-linguistic processing.

This model is based on taking actions with a focus on 'the next small step to get you closer to the goal' (performance requirement or expectation). There is also a focus on creating sufficiently detailed goals to enable the client to notice when it starts happening. Whilst this model can also be seen as a deficit model, filling the gap between the present performance standard and the future desired or required one, it has a deliberate resourceful underpinning by focusing on the solutions rather than the problem and by building resourcefulness and momentum.

**CASE STUDY****In practice: Dealing with a 'difficult' underperforming team member****Background**

This coaching example involved a recently promoted nurse manager helped by an external coach. The manager had a great deal of experience in nursing and working as part of a team, but limited experience of acting as manager of a team.

She described the new team as including a 'difficult' member of staff who was negative, unhelpful and unwilling. The manager was of a mind to 'dismiss' the team member if things did not change. Being new to post she appeared to have some of the anxieties and uncertainties this can create but seemed open and willing to learn. However, whilst there were limited signs of resistance, there did appear to be a lack of understanding of her own behaviours and role in the relationship.

**Approach**

The coaching session explored the relationship from the perspective of the manager's behaviours towards and in response to the 'difficult' individual, the purpose being to explore what the manager was contributing to the relationship. This approach sought to raise her awareness of her own behaviours in this particular relationship, how she wanted to behave as a manager and her approach to developing others.

During one of these sessions a 'perceptual positioning' technique was used to help her identify a performance range of other perspectives about the situation and behaviours. This technique requires the coachee to take the position of others involved in the situation and try to understand the variety of perspectives relating to the situation. Whilst emotionally difficult at times, it enabled new insights to be gained about what others might want from her as a manager. She identified her approach as directive 'telling' (Downey, 2003) rather than listening for ideas and improvements.

As the sessions progressed she recognized the skill and art of listening, the difficulties of effective communication, particularly with the individual team member who was 'different' (previously termed 'difficult'), and the difficulty of gaining rapport. These insights helped her consider how she could change her behaviours to enhance her own performance and then hopefully the performance of other individuals, the team performance and team morale. She took responsibility for her actions and identified goals of creating rapport, trusting individuals and listening, and having conversations based on the SIMPLE principles.

**Outcome**

After just a few coaching sessions she recognized and accepted responsibility for her own actions and the changes she wanted to see happen. She reported back to the final session that she had experimented with using solution language, listening and questioning, rather than telling and affirming. She had noticed a huge difference in the previously 'difficult' relationship, now recognizing the individual as a 'star' member of the team. She perceived her own performance to have improved and as a result so had that of the team, and the team morale.

### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** What are the implications for performance management and online coach managers?
- Q:** What are the challenges for online managers/coaches in relation to their own performance within the relationship both as coaches and as managers?
- Q:** Can a manager coach?

## The clinical model

The clinical model underpins the approaches and techniques that tend to be associated with leadership and executive coaching or mentoring, and tend towards the developmental or transformational (Brockbank, 2008; Hawkins and Smith, 2006) approach to coaching or mentoring. They may also include psychometric instruments such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI). They work to help the clients understand themselves and make changes to enhance their performance. The clinical model is underpinned by the psychological and therapeutic approaches to change. This approach is appropriate in the context of coaching or mentoring healthy functioning individuals where ‘Coaching is generally more orientated towards concrete results and specific actions rather than therapy’ (De Hann, 2008: 47). This starts to differentiate coaching and mentoring; however, this approach will require the provider to be psychologically minded (Bluckert, 2006; Peltier, 2001, 2010).

## Developmental or transformational coaching and mentoring

The developmental or transformational approach to coaching and mentoring includes raising awareness of the unconscious (the unconscious being recognized as influencing feelings, thoughts and patterns of behaviour, decisions and the actions an individual will take). Bringing the unconscious into awareness will assist an individual’s movement towards progress, productivity and improved performance (Neale, Spencer-Arnell and Wilson, 2009).

This approach promotes the ‘relationship’ between the coach/mentor and client as the vehicle or crucible for change (Rogers, 2004; De Hann, 2008; Kilburg, 2006). This requires the provision of conditions such as those related to Rogers’ (2004) ‘core conditions’ of empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard and congruence. This involves emotional support ‘for the processes of exploration and change’ (Kilburg, 2006: 117).

This relational approach is influenced by the coach or mentor having an understanding of individual change theories, managing transitions (Bridges, 2009) and

theories relating to individual stages of development. These may include the Jungian theory of personal development, which influenced the research and development of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator as suggested earlier, rather than standard coaching tools and techniques.

A leading model of individual change was developed by Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente (2006). The model illustrates the stages an individual experiences in relation to change. It reflects the nature of undertaking change or not; the challenges each stage of a change process presents; and the particular actions required at each stage. The model is an effective approach to assisting an individual through a process of change in therapy and development or transformation coaching. It has also been adapted in the development of the Motivational Interviewing Technique (Passmore, 2007) as an approach to addressing deficit performance.

### *Individual Change Model*

The Spiral Model of Change (Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente, 2006) illustrates the various stages an individual will pass through when involved in a change process. The term 'spiral' reflects the non-linear nature of the process of change (Table 17.2).

#### Moment to reflect, consider the implications and make proposals...

- Q:** What might be some of the challenges of developing coaches and mentors using an approach that is underpinned by the implicit clinical model?
- Q:** How might the environmental context impact on the use and application of the various implicit and explicit models?
- Q:** What do you need to do to bring awareness of the implicit and explicit models to your coaching and mentoring practice?

**TABLE 17.2** The spiral model of change

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Pre-contemplation:</b><br>The client will lack awareness that change is required | This stage requires the process of raising awareness that change is required. Clients will be required to reflect on their behaviour. This will bring into awareness that which was previously unconscious.  |
| <b>Contemplation</b>  | This is the stage to 'think' about making a change. Clients will be encouraged to think about the impact of their performance on themselves, others and the environment.   |
| <b>Preparation and Planning</b>   | This is the stage to prepare the ground in readiness for action. This is an important part of the process as poor preparation may lead to no action and therefore no change. There is likely to be resistance and barriers that need to be understood, explored and addressed.   |
| <b>Action</b>   | This is the stage when clients start to put into practice the actions they have been preparing and planning. They will require encouragement and support. This requires attention to milestones, recognition and celebration of achievements. If no action is taking place or improvements are happening or being noticed, that will need to be challenged. This is the balance between support and challenge that is so important in any coaching or mentoring relationship. Is this the right course of action? What is causing the inaction? It may require an earlier stage in the process to be revisited.  |
| <b>Maintenance</b>  | This is the stage where you keep the actions going to make the changes permanent. Feedback, encouragement, recognition of performance changes, addressing and challenging any lack of continued performance improvement. If the change or improvement cannot be maintained, it may be necessary to revisit an earlier stage and explore the reasons, barriers etc.   |
| <b>Exit or relapse</b>  | If there is a change in performance, continuing learning is likely to have occurred (learning tends to focus on the 'internal' process seen in the externality of performance) and you can proceed to the next stage of development. However if there is a ' <b>relapse</b> ', which is not uncommon, the learning will not have been internalized and there will be a reversion to old ways. The process will need to return to an early stage in the model. There are any number of reasons why the client may be unable to maintain the change and it will be necessary to explore these as fully as possible before moving on; 'most people "relapse" in their attempt to change and the average successful self-changer recycles several times' (Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente, 2006: 47). |

**SOURCE:** adapted from Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente, 2006.

## Conclusion

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This chapter has set out some of the definitions applied to the terms coaching and mentoring. It has presented some of the skills and qualities required of the coach or mentor, and explored some of the implicit and explicit models associated with and applied to the practice of coaching and mentoring. Throughout the chapter there has been the opportunity to reflect and consider implications associated with the introduction, provision, development, use of and support of coaching and mentoring in an individual and organizational context. Evidence suggests coaching and mentoring are an emerging profession and make a significant contribution to ongoing HR development. They contribute through providing a learning and development opportunity for individuals, teams and the organization. The chapter has presented just a few of the multiplicity of approaches, models, techniques, skills and qualities in the hope of assisting you in their exploration and application into practice, and in understanding their role in HR Development.

## Questions for reflection

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- How would you coach yourself?
- How would you apply the GROW model to support one of your work colleagues who has problems coping with the demands of the job?
- Explain the differences between coaching and mentoring.

## Further information sources

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European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC): [www.emccouncil.org/](http://www.emccouncil.org/)

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PART FOUR D  
**Evaluation**

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# 18

# Assessment and evaluation

TANUJA AGARWALA

*It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest may err.*

(MAHATAMA GANDHI)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- define training evaluation;
- understand the significance of evaluation;
- have a perspective on approaches and models of training evaluation;
- have an insight on choosing evaluation criteria;
- appreciate the special challenges of evaluating e-training.

## Introduction

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Human resource managers frequently assume that the training conducted by their departments is effective. While the costs of training are often computed, managers are seldom aware of its probable value. Increasing global competition has led to intense pressure on managers to demonstrate the contribution of training programmes to the bottom line of their organizations (Holton, 1995). This trend towards measuring the outcomes of training is, in turn, the result of an increasingly demanding top management who seek evidence that the money spent pays off in real terms. Organizations, therefore, are beginning to more seriously question their return on investment (ROI)

on training (Rowden, 2005) and are keen to analyse the financial costs and benefits of training programmes (Parsons, 1995). There is also the need to align training with the strategic future goals of the organization and also with other human resource management programmes.

Though measurement is of increasing importance in modern management (Toplis, 1992), relatively little attention has been paid to evaluating training until more recently. One reason is that it is assumed that training, like education, is naturally good and beneficial. Second, training is believed to be of value even though it may not be directed to improve short-term performance. Thus, training may be offered to help an individual decide his or her next career move or to prepare for a new job, in which case the value of training is not related to immediate job performance. Third, and importantly, there is a lack of clarity and consensus on how training effectiveness may be measured.

The present chapter discusses the significance, objectives and benefits of evaluating training programmes. Various approaches and methods of evaluation are also highlighted.

## Definition

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The meaning of the term 'evaluation' is 'to determine the value of'. Training evaluation refers to the process of determining the value of the training programme: that is, whether the training programme has successfully achieved what it was designed to accomplish. Evaluation may be defined as 'the systematic collection of descriptive and judgmental information necessary to make effective decisions related to the selection, adoption, value and modification of various training activities' (Goldstein and Ford, 2001: 138).

## Significance

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Training is a key human resource practice and clearly requires systematic monitoring and evaluation (Rebora, 2005; Owens, 2006) since valuable time and resources of the organization and participants are devoted to training programmes. In today's economy, with downsizing and worldwide global competition among public and private organizations, it is very important to be able to justify training expenses as well as all other expenses. The significance of training evaluation emerges from the growing emphasis on gaining competitive advantage through core competencies and employee capabilities that cannot be easily imitated by competitors (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Stalk, Evans and Shulman, 1992). Increasing global competition has made it almost fashionable today to analyse the financial costs and benefits of all human resource development programmes (Parsons, 1995). However, organizational decision makers seem to hold very different views regarding the value of training as a management practice. For some, training is a universal panacea for all problems

(Chaudron, 1996; Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy, 2004), while others view it as merely a cost for the organization in terms of both time and money (Costa and Giannecchini, 2005).

World over, businesses invest heavily in training. The pharmaceutical firm Pfizer is rated as one of the most enthusiastic about staff training and reportedly allocates 20 per cent of its annual budget to it. The firm's revenue in 2009 was US\$50 billion and its training budget was worth US\$10 billion. This may be a bit unusual because most firms spend approximately 1 per cent of their revenue annually on training. India's two biggest IT firms, TCS and Infosys Technologies, spend approximately 4 per cent of their total revenues on training. Infosys Technologies, India's second largest technology firm, had a US\$125 million annual outlay for training and development in 2006 and increased its training budget to about US\$230 million in the year 2010. HDFC Bank gives upwards of 35,000 hours of formal training to its employees, which works out at about six to seven days of training a year per person.

Since substantial financial costs are attached to training programmes, organizations are beginning to address their ability to evaluate the impact of training. Most HR professionals agree that 'training doesn't cost – it pays and that training is an investment, not an expense' (Parry, 1996: 72). All of these expenses must relate to organizational performance: growth, profit or market share.

Top management support for training and its evaluation is essential to successful training programmes. Evaluation is recognized as an important managerial responsibility, yet there is a lack of rigour in assessing the business contribution of training in several organizations for various reasons (see Box 18.1). Even though evaluating training can be difficult (Lechner, 2000; Patrick, 2000), it is unquestionably necessary and an integral part of any training programme. The evaluation process may be greatly simplified by ensuring that training objectives are clearly spelt out in measurable terms before the training, and that these are agreed upon by the organization, trainers and participants.

### Box 18.1: Barriers to training evaluation

- 1 Lack of emphasis by top management on training evaluation. Mostly the results of training programmes are accepted on the basis of faith in their value.
- 2 Training personnel often lack the skill to conduct training evaluation.
- 3 Human resource personnel are often not clear about what (criteria) should be evaluated and the questions that evaluation needs to answer. Evaluation is not possible without a clear idea of the objectives of the training programme.
- 4 Evaluation is also seen as risky and expensive, particularly because training managers fear evaluation will indicate that a particular training programme is not meeting its objectives.

**SOURCE:** Grove and Ostroff (1991).



## Objectives

Evaluation of training is designed to determine whether learning has occurred, whether new knowledge gained through training is transferred to the job, and whether the value of the participants' improved performance meets or exceeds the cost of training. Underlying objectives of training are also to improve the training programme, provide feedback to programme planners, participants and managers, and assess employee skill levels (Swierczek and Carmichael, 1985). All stakeholders – that is, trainers, participants and the organizations – have different but equally important interests in evaluating a programme. For instance, *training managers* are interested in finding out whether the programme was successful in meeting its stated goals, identifying the difficulties in the implementation of the programme and the improvements that need to be made to make it more effective, and in assessing the relevance of the programme for trainees. The *organization* seeks information on the benefits derived by the organization due to the training programme. The *participants* seek feedback to ensure continued motivation for undertaking training.

The evaluation process involves four steps (Box 18.2).

### Box 18.2: The four steps of training evaluation process (Bushnell, 1990)

- 1 Identifying evaluation goals:** This stage determines the overall structure of the evaluation effort. Evaluation goals may differ from each other. For example, some goals may relate simply to measuring participants' reactions subjectively, while others may be concerned with measuring changes in trainee performance on the job.
- 2 Developing an evaluation design and strategy:** The next step is to select an appropriate design, develop a data collection strategy, allocate data-collection resources and identify appropriate data sources.
- 3 Selecting and constructing measurement tools:** At this stage, there is a need to select or construct the measurement tools such as questionnaires, tests, performance assessments, structured interviews and the like. The type of data collection tool selected will vary according to the type of evaluation that one needs to carry out.
- 4 Analysing data:** The results of the data-gathering effort are assessed against the original goals of evaluation. After analysing the data, one needs to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Unfortunately evaluation is seen as an activity that is undertaken on the completion of the training programme and is rarely given the attention it deserves at the time of planning and designing. In reality, evaluation is a *continuous process* and must be designed concurrently with the design of the programme. The evaluation process (see Box 18.2) suggests that planning of training evaluation must begin at the time that training needs and training goals are being stated/identified. Training also needs

to be monitored while it is being conducted to assess whether it is appropriately directed or whether some modifications need to be introduced. Evaluation is essentially a front-end process, for two reasons:

- It is often desirable to gather baseline data about the trainees as well as about the business need addressed. For example, if one wants to determine whether participants gained new knowledge as a result of a training programme, it is important to determine what the participants knew beforehand.
- The process of evaluation by itself makes it imperative to determine the training outcomes: that is, what the trainees are expected to learn and be able to do as a result of training. Determining outcomes before carrying out the programme helps identify those aspects of course design that are not aligned with programme outcomes. By identifying these gaps before the training design is finalized, the trainers have the opportunity to take corrective action.

Hence, evaluation is concerned with the effect of training as a whole and includes two broad areas: the training *programme output* and the training *process*. When the objective is to assist the trainer in improving the programme, evaluation is mainly concerned with the *training process*. When conducted some time after the programme has been completed and with the objective of determining how well the training met stakeholder needs and what the results of training have been, evaluation focuses on the *training output*.

## Evaluation approaches

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A training programme may be examined from a variety of perspectives. Contemporary models incorporate evaluation throughout the training process: from training needs assessment, training design and conduction to training outcomes. The following two evaluation approaches encompass the range of evaluation activities:

- *Formative evaluation*: The purpose of formative evaluation (also referred to as process evaluation) is to improve the training process. The focus is on the *process criteria*. It takes place during the design and delivery of the training programme. The information is gathered to:
  - determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the programme's learning activities and content;
  - ensure that the programme meets the needs of the participants and stakeholders.This type of evaluation is useful since it helps improve or modify an ongoing or planned training programme in order to reach the original objectives.
- *Summative evaluation*: This evaluation is conducted to determine the extent to which participants and organization have changed as a result of participating in the programme. That is, it measures the impact of the training programme on individuals and on the organization and is typically concerned with determining how effective the training programme is. The focus is on *outcome criteria* like learning and performance that represent various levels of achievement. Therefore, it is also referred to as outcome evaluation.

## Choosing criterion measures

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Friend to Marx: 'Life is difficult!'

Marx to friend: 'Compared to what?'

One of the most significant choices facing those responsible for developing training programmes is to determine the measures (criteria) against which the training programme will be evaluated. The criteria provide information on how well the training programme did in teaching the trainees the behaviour, skills or attitudes that are necessary for job success. Choosing adequate criteria is the most important factor in the design of training evaluation. For instance, if a training programme is designed to lead to success on the job, the evaluator should seek to establish the relationship between performance in the training programme and performance on the job. Finding adequate criteria for the success of the training programme begins with the specification of objectives.

Unfortunately, evaluation criteria are often selected just because they can be measured. This may be easily understood by referring to McNamara's Fallacy according to which:

The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is OK as far as it goes. The second step is to disregard that which can't be easily measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading. The third step is to presume that what can't be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness. The fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide.

(Handy, 1994: 219)

It is very misleading to assess the value of training programme by measuring the wrong things. Hence, the choice of evaluation criteria needs careful consideration to make it possible to assess the impact of the programme. Evaluation criteria are multi-dimensional since training programmes must be examined with a multitude of measures.

## Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation

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Kirkpatrick (1959) classified training outcomes into four levels: reaction, learning, behaviour change and results, and proposed that training can be evaluated at these four main levels (see Table 18.1).

### **Reaction (Level I)**

Evaluations at this level provide information about the degree to which the participants liked a particular programme with respect to its design and delivery. They assess the participants' immediate reactions to the programme content, learning activities and level of instruction, and to the training itself. Therefore, these can help the trainer in improving the programme. Participant reactions may be categorized into two types (Alliger et al, 1997):

**TABLE 18.1** Snapshot view of levels of evaluation

| Aspects of evaluation  | LEVELS OF EVALUATION  |  |  |   |
|------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|                        | REACTIONS   | LEARNING   | BEHAVIOUR  | RESULTS   |
| Objectives             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess degree to which trainees liked the programme</li> <li>To get information for improving the programme</li> </ul>                | Degree to which trainees have gained new knowledge, skill, attitude  | Whether learning from training has improved on-the-job behaviour   | Whether individual and organizational performance has improved  |
| Relevant questions     | Did the participants like the training?   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What knowledge was learned?</li> <li>What skills were developed or improved?</li> <li>What attitudes were changed?</li> </ul> | Did the training help the trainee do the job better and improve performance?   | Did the company or department increase profits, customer satisfaction, etc as a result of the training?                         |
| When to evaluate       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-training (before)</li> <li>Intermediate (during, when training is in progress)</li> <li>Post-training (immediately after)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermediate (during)</li> <li>Post-training (immediately and some time after the programme)</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-training (shortly after and considerable time after the programme)</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-training (considerable time after the programme)</li> </ul>                         |
| Criteria measures      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate</li> <li>Proximal</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximal</li> <li>Distal</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distal</li> </ul>  |
| Evaluation design      | Experimental group  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control and experimental group pre/post measurement</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control and experimental group pre/post measurement</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control and experimental group pre/post measurement</li> </ul>                           |
| Data-collection method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation</li> <li>Questionnaires</li> <li>Rating scales</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tests such as multiple-choice tests</li> <li>Questionnaires</li> <li>Observation</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation</li> <li>Activity sampling</li> <li>Performance assessment</li> <li>Self-diaries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An index of functioning related to training objectives, like absenteeism, etc</li> </ul> |

TABLE 18.1 *continued*

| Aspects of evaluation | LEVELS OF EVALUATION  |   |           |           |
|-----------------------|---|---|-----------|-----------|
|                       | REACTIONS   | LEARNING  | BEHAVIOUR | RESULTS   |
| Evaluation approach   | <p><b>Formative:</b> purpose of evaluation is programme modification, redesign of content, course design and presentation changes</p> <p><b>Summative:</b> purpose is to make decisions concerning programme continuation, expansion, termination, efficiency/ effectiveness of the programme</p> | <p><b>Formative:</b> primary purpose of evaluation is to provide information on the design of the programme</p> <p><b>Summative:</b> primary purpose is to determine the degree to which learning has resulted from the programme</p> | Summative | Summative |

- *Affective:* whether the participant found the programme enjoyable.
- *Utility:* whether the training was viewed by the participants as being relevant and having practical value: that is, it was instrumental in improving trainees' ability to perform their job.

It is possible for both affective and utility reactions to be present simultaneously. Reaction evaluation may take place while the programme is being conducted as well as at the end of a course. Since these measures are available during the training programme, they constitute *immediate criteria*.

Positive reactions of participants are an important first step to learning – participants will not be motivated to learn what they do not like. However, a programme that has been received well may lead to *openness* to learning but does not necessarily lead to high levels of learning. Similarly, it is entirely possible for participants to enjoy the training but not to produce the desired behaviour on the job. But if trainees did not like the programme or believe that it was not useful for them, they may not apply what they learned from it. It is also quite possible for participants to learn from a programme even though they may not have liked it.

Reactions are by far the most popular and, very often, the only form of evaluation that is undertaken by organizations (Swanson and Sleezer, 1987; Arthur et al, 2003).

## Learning (Level II)

Learning evaluation refers to the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge and/or increase skills as a result of attending the programme (Brown and Seidner, 1998: 101). To the extent that trainees learn knowledge/skills in a training programme, a change in behaviour can be expected. Kraiger, Ford and Salas (1993) divided learning outcomes into three types:

- cognitive learning (knowledge);
- skill-based outcomes;
- affective learning (attitudinal or motivational aspects).

The primary objectives of these measures are: 1) to determine the degree to which learners have actually learned what was intended (immediate post-training evaluation); 2) to determine how a number of factors such as course content, course materials, instructional aids, the instructor's competence and style, the learners' motivation and the physical environment influenced learning; 3) to assess what has been learned some time after the training programme (knowledge retention); and 4) to assess the extent to which behaviours learned during training are remembered at a later point of time (behaviour/skill retention).

Level II evaluation can be conducted while the training is still in progress and provides opportunities for mid-course corrections. Learning measures can be obtained immediately after the training (immediate criteria) or some time after the end of the initial training programme (proximal criteria).

It is more difficult and time consuming to measure learning as compared with trainee reactions. It is therefore important to evaluate knowledge, skills and/or attitudes both before and after the programme. The learning of skills is no guarantee that they will be transferred to the work situation and/or that these skills will be used in actual job performance.

## Behaviour change (Level III)

Evaluation at this level relates to measurement of job performance: that is, whether participants are applying on the job what was learned in training. Just as favourable reaction does not necessarily mean that learning occurs in the training programme, superior training performance does not always result in similar behaviour in the transfer setting. For a job behaviour change to occur, the person must have a desire to change, work in the right climate and be rewarded for changing. Level III evaluation is much more difficult and time consuming than Levels I and II. Measuring whether training has transferred to the job requires evaluation to be conducted before and after the training programme. Behaviour change information may be obtained shortly after the initial training programme (*proximal criteria*) or a considerable time after the transfer, in the actual work setting (*distal criteria*). A large number of measures can be employed to assess on-the-job performance. It is important to ensure that these measures are related to the objectives of the training programme. Several methods are used to measure behaviour change, the most popular being *performance analysis*. When determining how well participant learning has transferred

to the job, it is likely that even though participants show they are proficient in a skill or possess an acceptable amount of knowledge at the end of training, not much performance change has taken place on the job. If this is the case, a performance analysis approach may also be used to determine what might be preventing expected changes (Salinger and Deming, 1982).

Change in job behaviour resulting from training is an important part of determining the ultimate impact that training has on the organization.

### Results (Level IV)

The ultimate goal of training and development programmes is to be able to demonstrate that a training programme has resulted in monetary return on investment to the organization. Though training cannot be solely responsible for 'bottom-line impact' it can certainly contribute to such an impact on business. Results measure the extent to which the new job behaviour result in improved individual and organizational performance (see Box 18.3). To determine the impact of a training programme at results level, the costs and benefits of training are calculated and compared (cost–benefit analysis).

Measures of results include increased production, improved quality, decreased costs, reduced frequency and/or severity of accidents, increased sales, reduced turnover, and higher profits and return on investment (Parry, 1996: 74). Information on these measures is available post-training and after a considerable time in the transfer setting (*distal criteria*). The term 'return on investment' (ROI) is also used to describe this criterion.

#### Box 18.3 On transfer of training: not everyone uses training

An aspect of training programmes that is easily overlooked is that a percentage of people are not able to – or don't try to – use their training at all. On the other hand, some people put their training to use and generate valuable results, such as increased sales or improved quality. There are others who fall in between the two extremes: trying to apply their new learning on the job, but eventually gravitating back to their old behaviour due to factors such as lack of supervisory support. A typical quantitative methods approach (measure everyone and divide by the total number of participants) inevitably underestimates the impact of training. Therefore, training investment should be considered worthwhile if it works for some people who help produce valuable results. This justifies a business case for investing time and resources to extend the programme to others.

**SOURCE:** Brinkerhoff (2006).

Participant reaction is still the most commonly evaluated dimension of training in organizations. Estimates of the proportion of companies doing full training evaluations (outcome/result) vary considerably from one study to the next, but tend on the whole to be rather low. The evaluation method chosen should meet the informational needs



of all stakeholders. The goals/objectives of the training programme should guide the choice of evaluation method.

Kirkpatrick's (1959) hierarchical model of training outcomes inspired most subsequent training evaluation models proposed in the literature (eg Warr, Bird and Rackham, 1970; Hamblin, 1974; Phillips, 1993; Kaufman, Keller and Watkins, 1995; Molenda, Pershing and Reigeluth, 1996). The four-level evaluation model has been widely acknowledged (Alliger and Janak, 1989) and has been successfully used in the training evaluation field for nearly 50 years. However, the model has come under criticism from Holton (1996). In place of the four-level framework, Holton proposed a model comprising *elements* (ability, transfer design and linkage to organizational goals), *outcomes* (learning, individual performance and organizational results), *motivational elements* (motivation to learn, motivation to transfer and expected utility/ROI) and *environmental elements* (reaction, transfer climate and external events). Theoretically and logically the Holton approach may be regarded as an elaboration of the Kirkpatrick framework: the levels are there but they are set in the context of a causal model (Sadler-Smith, Down and Field, 1999).

Phillips (1997a, 1997b) suggested a number of modifications including the addition of a fifth level to the four-level evaluation developed by Kirkpatrick: that is, the return on investment level. According to Phillips (1996a: 42), 'return on investment has been a critical issue for trainers and top executives in recent years.'

## Return on investment (ROI)

ROI compares training costs with monetary benefits. ROI shows the monetary value of the benefits of training over its cost. For example, if the total cost of the training programme was \$20,000 and the total benefits were \$50,000, then the cost-benefit ratio would be 2:5, and the ROI would be 2:5. The costs of training are the investments and the benefits are the returns. Training is seen as useful to the extent that returns are greater than investment (See Box 18.4).

The calculation of training costs is fairly easy, though what is difficult is to determine which cost items to include in the final projection. The determination of training benefits is considerably more difficult because the method for computing benefits varies across situations. For example, a change in sales volume may be a valid measure in a sales training programme, but may not have value in assessing personal development training. Sometimes the benefits of a training programme cannot be easily expressed in dollar/monetary value, as in determining the impact of training on employee turnover since it would also be necessary to identify the cost of hiring and training new employees to replace those who have left. Calculating ROI is easier for hard-data items such as productivity, quality and time than for soft-data items such as customer satisfaction, employee turnover and job satisfaction (Phillips, 1996a).

Some professionals argue that it is not possible to calculate the ROI of training, while others proceed to develop measures and ROI calculations (Phillips, 1997b; Rowden, 1998). Due to the reluctance of HR managers to discuss internal practices it is difficult to find case studies that specifically list the strategies used by training departments in determining ROI.

**Box 18.4: Importance of ROI**

Four distinct and important benefits can be derived from the implementation of ROI in an organization (Phillips, 1997b):

- It measures the contribution the training programme made to the organization and helps determine whether it was a good investment.
- It determines which programmes contribute the most to the organization and allows priorities to be established for high-impact training programmes.
- The ROI calculation brings a focus upon the results of all programmes, not just those targeted for the financial evaluation.
- This process can help convince management that training is an investment and not an expense.

## Training evaluation: monetary benefits

Several methods have been used to demonstrate the monetary benefits of training. A snapshot view of some of these is presented in Table 18.2.

Many HR practitioners believe that the ROI shows the true contribution of training and that the evaluation process is not complete 'until the results have been converted to monetary values and compared with the cost of the programme' (Phillips, 1996b: 20). Whichever methods are used to calculate the benefit of training, they are probably tacit admissions that performance improvement efforts are very important to business, and that the improvements show, or do not show, what should be considered seriously.

After benefits have been calculated two things still need to be considered.

### *The time-value of money*

A thorough consideration of performance improvement through training should also include an appreciation of the time-value of the money that is saved or made. This concept takes into consideration the present value of future dollars and the future value of present dollars. In calculating ROI, firms examine the savings (in monetary terms) the company will be able to make after a period (say three years) as a result of the training intervention. The firm should also calculate the net present value of those future savings, keeping the rate of inflation in view. The question to be asked is: Are the future savings as a result of training programme worth or not worth the present value of the saving? This should be taken into consideration when calculating the value of training. For example, suppose you know you have to invest \$100,000 now for a programme that will break even in three years. You want to know the future value of those present dollars that you are spending. If we had not

**TABLE 18.2** Methods for calculating monetary benefits of training

| Method                                    | What it means  | How it is calculated   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Cost–benefit ratio</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculates training costs</li> <li>Assesses some performance value (productivity measures such as number of items produced per shift) that occurred as a result of training</li> <li>Computes an index of benefits</li> <li>If more items are produced after training (performance), the ‘gain’ can be calculated by subtracting training cost to show benefit</li> <li>Costs of training are usually measured in terms of money</li> </ul> | <p>C/B ratio = total benefits of training / training cost</p> <p>Example: In a training programme, if benefits = \$321,600<br/>Cost = \$38,233<br/>C/B ratio is 8.4; that is, for every \$1 invested, \$8.4 in benefits is returned<br/>Net benefits = \$283,367<br/>(\$321,600 – \$38,233)<br/>ROI = net benefits / training cost<br/>That is, \$283,367 / \$38,233 = 741<br/>Using the ROI formula, for every \$1 invested in the programme, there was a return of \$7.4 in net benefits</p> |
| <b>‘Compact’ cost–benefit analysis</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures job performance after training</li> <li>Result is a dollar amount that describes what the training is worth to the organization in terms of the performance of the workers who have participated in the training</li> <li>The results do not answer the question, ‘Did you train for the RIGHT skills?’</li> </ul>   | <p>Five steps to determine the benefits of training;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the effect of the training</li> <li>Determine the money value of the effect</li> <li>Find out how many people have been trained</li> <li>Determine the training cost per person</li> <li>Put the information in the formula</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Training benefit forecasting model</b> | <p>Includes methods for determining monetary values for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the performance value to result from training</li> <li>the cost of training</li> <li>the benefit resulting from the training programme</li> <li><i>Performance value</i> is the financial worth of the number of performance units that result from training</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits = performance value minus cost</li> <li>Performance Value = (total number of units expected to result from the programme) x (the dollar amount of one unit)</li> <li>‘Cost’ = the outlay that is incurred in the operation of training programmes</li> </ul> <p>Cost in one organization may not necessarily be considered as a training (HRD) cost in another</p>   |

**TABLE 18.2** *continued*

| Method                                | What it means  | How it is calculated  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Critical outcome technique</b>     | Means of assessing programme effectiveness in a systematic, post-hoc manner  | Contains five steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Outcome definition</i>: 'What are we trying to do?'</li> <li>• <i>Outcome inquiry</i>: Identifying the actual outcomes of the programme</li> <li>• <i>Outcome verification</i>: 'Did the outcomes really occur as reported by the participant?', and 'Could the outcomes have occurred without the programme?'</li> <li>• <i>Outcome valuation</i>: 'How much are these outcomes worth?'</li> <li>• <i>Outcome report</i>: summarizes the outcomes in an abbreviated and narrative form</li> </ul> |
| <b>Core financial analysis method</b> | Composed of three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance value resulting from the training programme</li> <li>• Cost of the training programme</li> <li>• Benefit from training programme</li> </ul> | Benefits = (performance value of the programme) – (cost of the training programme)  |

**SOURCE:** Rowden, 2005.

invested those dollars in training, in three years they would have been worth, say, \$133,100, so the value of the training programme after three years must exceed \$133,100, or there has really been no gain.

### **Isolating the effects of training**

Training alone is never the sole cause of a company's success or failure. Improvements in job performance are only partially due to training programmes. Variables other than the training itself, such as trainee characteristics, seasonal sales patterns, environmental and economic changes, shifts in managerial styles, contextual factors such as equipment breakdowns, and customer attitudes may influence the outcomes, making it difficult to determine the actual effect of training upon ROI results. Brinkerhoff (2006) stated that about 80 per cent of training failures are not caused

by flawed interventions but by contextual and performance system factors that were not aligned with the intended performance outcomes. One way to measure the effects of extraneous factors is to compare the results of a control group with the results of the trainee group. Phillips (1996c: 30) states that ‘the experimental group receives training; the control group does not.’

## Experimental designs

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The purpose of evaluation is to determine:

- whether a real change has occurred;
- whether the change is attributable to a training programme;
- whether the change is likely to occur again with a new sample of subjects.

To answer the first question, it is important to know the level of knowledge, attitude, job performance and so on that existed prior to the training programme (pre-test) as well as after exposure to the training (post-test). A post-test measure may be obtained immediately after the training (proximal) or a few months later (distal). When a post-test is conducted at the conclusion of the training programme, it provides a measure of learning that has occurred during the programme, but it does not give any indication of the transfer of the learning to actual job performance. Hence, a post-test measure should also be applied after the trainee has been in the transfer situation (on the job) for a reasonably long time period after the training.

In order to determine the change associated with the training programme, the expected changes as a result of training should be specified so that statistically reliable differences between pre-test and post-test performance can confirm the degree to which change has occurred. However, the amount of change is only one consideration. It is also important to know whether the change is due to the training programme or to experience, high motivation and similar factors. To isolate the contribution of training, it is important to use a control group (that does not undergo training, but is similar to an experimental group on all other counts) to eliminate the possibility of other explanations for the changes between pre-test and post-test.

## E-training evaluation

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Web-based or e-learning can be defined as training or educational initiatives that provide learning material in online repositories, where course interaction and communication, course content and delivery are technology mediated (Johnson, Hornik and Salas, 2008; Eddy and Tannenbaum, 2003). In the past a major cost of training programmes occurred at the delivery stage. Today, design and development costs are rising rapidly as technology takes more responsibility for training delivery. Estimates have suggested that organizations are spending nearly \$40 billion annually on e-learning and other technology-based training initiatives (American Society for Training and Development, 2004, 2007).

The satisfaction of trainees with e-learning is related to social presence. Within an e-learning environment, social presence is 'the degree of feeling, perception, and reaction of being connected by CMC [computer-mediated communication] to another intellectual entity' (Tu and McIsaac, 2002: 140). The trainees' perception of increased social presence should lead them to experience deeper connectedness and active engagement in the learning process. This should contribute to both greater learning and perceptions of course utility. However, one of the most common complaints about – and a major challenge to – the success of e-learning is that it can be isolating (Moore, 1989; Stonebraker and Hazeltine, 2004). Although trainees interact with content, peers and the instructor, the technological mediation of interaction and communication creates an additional layer of mediation through which learners must interact (Hillman, Willis and Gunawardena, 1994), making it more difficult for trainees to feel connected. This isolation has greatly contributed to attrition rates, which typically range from 25 to 40 per cent (Levy, 2007).

In light of these issues, concerns have been expressed about examining how to most effectively design e-learning initiatives (Johnson, Hornik and Salas, 2008). Piccoli, Ahmad and Ives (2001) and Johnson, Hornik and Salas (2008) emphasize the importance of the following design factors for e-learning effectiveness:

- individual trainee characteristics such as maturity and computer experience;
- technology/design characteristics such as the reliability of technology and peer interactions;
- creating a shared, peer-connected learning environment.

Although there are multiple approaches to assessing the effectiveness of e-learning, researchers often assess learning and affective reactions (eg satisfaction) to the e-learning environment (Arbaugh, 2001; Piccoli, Ahmad and Ives, 2001) because they have been identified by Kirkpatrick (1976) as appropriate criteria for assessing training effectiveness. For e-learning initiatives, satisfaction (reaction) may play a more important role because individuals who are less satisfied with their experiences are less likely to enrol in future e-learning courses (Carswell, Agarwal and Sambamurthy, 2001). A third criterion that should also be investigated is utility judgments. Utility judgments reflect the trainee's judgment that the training provides knowledge or skills that can be transferred into work and the motivation to do so. Meta-analytic work has found that utility judgments were often more effective indicators of learning transfer than was course performance (Alliger et al, 1997).

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Macey's sanctuary

Macey's is a chain of gourmet coffee and pastry shops started by a mother-and-son team in New Delhi, India, in 2006. The vision for starting the chain came after the son despaired of finding cakes and pies 'just like mom makes' when he had to travel on business to other cities. Within four years, the company had shops in 30 states of India and was considering opening shops in a couple of foreign countries also. The company plans to continue expanding by adding at least two new shops each quarter for the next three years. Each shop has one shop manager and six to ten associates.



Average employee turnover in the industry hovers around 22 per cent, but Macey's has managed to keep its turnover as low as 12 per cent.

Providing the highest-quality products and the highest level of customer service are two of the core values of Macey's. The management team, which includes the training manager, has evolved a training and development programme for its shop managers and shop associates. The aim is to position the training programme as the best in the industry and one that will be offered around the globe. The training at Macey's is conducted both on and off the job. The shop managers as well as the associates go through a one-day off-the-job course designed around company values, business, vision and growth plans. Most of the training is conducted on the job. The company is ISO certified and places great emphasis on customer-service and product-quality training for all employees. The company recognizes the need to ensure that training in quality and service is delivered consistently across all operations. The owners consider this training as a key ingredient in achieving their vision of 'being the favourite place to meet for coffee and cake'. Further, Macey's has a programme for current shop managers on coaching and mentoring skills, and they are encouraged to develop future shop managers. Associates typically have fewer educational qualifications and are mostly college students and retirees. The company encourages these employees to enrol for part-time educational programmes to acquire new skills. However, the owners are concerned that the associates do not seem to acquire the competence required to be a shop manager. A survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the training programmes offered at all levels.

**SOURCE:** Lepak, D and Gowan, M (2009) *Human Resource Management: Managing employees for the competitive advantage*, India, Pearson Education (adapted).

## Questions

- 1 Based on the core values of Macey's, what will be the most appropriate criteria for evaluating the training programme?

Answer: The core values of Macey's are: 1) highest-quality products; and 2) the highest level of customer service. Hence, the most appropriate criteria for evaluating training programmes would be the quality of coffee and cakes, revenues, market share and the degree of customer satisfaction with the product quality, service, ambience and the like.

- 2 With respect to the information provided, would you consider training at Macey's effective and/or successful?

Answer: The employees are highly satisfied with the training programmes. If the evaluation is limited to reaction level, the training may be viewed as successful. However, it is possible for participants to enjoy the training programme but not to produce the desired behaviour on the job. At Macey's the associates do not seem to acquire the competence required to be a shop manager. Since the company has definite expansion plans, it is important to evaluate the adequacy of the content and design of the training programmes to ensure that training leads to learning of key skills required for associates to move to the position of shop managers. The lower-than-average employee turnover at Macey's may be due to factors other than training, given that the associates were largely college students and/or retirees.

- 3 How should the owners evaluate training effectiveness?

Answer: Assuming that training objectives are clearly stated and aligned with company values, the effectiveness of training needs to be evaluated at learning, behaviour and results level through a pre-test and post-test experimental and control group design. The results (sales, customer satisfaction, market capitalization, revenues, etc) of shops where training is imparted may be compared with those that have not imparted training. The return on investment should be calculated to determine the value of the training programme.



## Conclusion

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To sum up, given the rapid pace of knowledge development, organizations confront the challenge of maintaining the skill sets of their employees. It has become crucial for organizations to effectively and efficiently deliver training to employees.

## Questions for reflection

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- How would you assess and evaluate your own performance during the past year?
- Kirkpatrick's model has been criticized by numerous writers. To what extent are the criticisms justified?
- To what extent is it possible to measure the return on investment of training?

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PART FIVE  
**Managing HRD**

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## 19

# Leadership and management development

**RONAN CARBERY and THOMAS N GARAVAN**

*Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. (SHAKESPEARE, TWELFTH NIGHT)*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand why organizations invest in leadership and management development and the differences between the approaches;
- understand the dynamic context in which leadership and management development takes place;
- describe the issues that organizations need to consider when designing leadership and management development activities;
- understand the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of approaches to leadership and management development;
- understand the issues involved in evaluating leadership and management development.

## Introduction

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Organizations are increasingly recognizing that to be competitive they must invest in leadership and management development. Over the last decade, organizations and their leaders have experienced major changes in the workplace, including rapid

technological change, increased globalization, changing organization structures and major changes in the dynamics of careers. Leaders and managers are considered a highly influential group in terms of creating high-performance organizations. Organizational capability at a management level in an organization is considered essential to improve competitiveness and ensure future growth. Organizations taking a proactive and systematic approach to management and leadership development generally produce more leadership talent, and best-practice firms are characterized by the intensity and quality of their management and leadership development interventions. They do as much of the same as other firms but perform it with greater rigour and consistency.

The chapter aims to provide an overview of the leadership and management development process. We begin with a consideration of how leadership and management development differ from each other. We then focus on the changing context of leadership and management development. We focus on the issue of whether leaders can be developed. The chapter discusses the value of leadership competency models and also considers the different organization-driven and leader-driven approaches that can be used to facilitate leadership and management development. We will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the issues that should be considered when evaluating leadership and management development.

## Management and leadership development: the same or different?

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Leaders and managers are increasingly studied in the context of human resource development (New, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998; Feldman, 2002), which reveals that they are expected to initiate development in the absence of organizational guidance. Moreover, managerial careers are progressively more market-based, with specialization considered to be a negative. Also, there is a risk to managers of becoming trapped in 'core rigidities' by over-investing in core competencies that are relevant to the organization but not of value to the marketplace. Leaders and managers need to participate in a variety of learning situations that provide them with both behavioural and cognitive complexity (Karaevli and Hall, 2006) and it is critical for them to be fast and adaptive learners (Hall, 2002) as well as strong performers. Leaders and managers are also expected to utilize self-directed career management strategies on a continual basis (McCall and Hollenbeck, 2007).

An important distinction is made between management, leader and leadership development (Day, 2000). Management development focuses on the manager getting to grips with the process or 'hard' aspects of managing such as planning, execution, prioritization and control processes. Leader development focuses on the development of a leader or manager's self-awareness and understanding of self as a leader. Leadership development focuses on the social dimensions of leadership and includes such issues as interpersonal awareness and skills, team development processes and the processes involved in gaining commitment for vision and strategy. For the purposes of this chapter, we will use the term 'leadership development' to include both leader and leadership development.

Leadership and management development in organizations can take a number of forms. It may be organization driven and consist of a variety of formal interventions such as coaching, mentoring, formal programmes and feedback-intensive programmes. These activities are directed by organizations and are usually built around competency models (Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell, 2008). However, organizations are recognizing that they must also promote and rely on their managers and leaders to engage in self-directed leadership development (DeRue and Ashford, 2010). Furthermore, in difficult economic times, formal programmes are both expensive and time consuming.

Cunningham (1986), for example, identifies three different viewpoints on the relationship between leadership and management. The first position assumes that leadership is one competence among a range required for effective management. A second position, advocated by Bennis and Nanus (2003), suggests that the two concepts are separate but related, whereas a third position sees both concepts to be partially overlapping. There is evidence amongst academics that there is a need to conceptually distinguish leadership from management, often at the expense of the latter. Management as an activity and concept is often viewed as a 'second-class citizen', something that is very transactional in nature.

Kotter (1988) has argued that leaders and managers are distinct in their roles and functions. He considers management to be concerned with planning and organizing whereas leadership is concerned with creating, coping with change and helping organizations to adapt in turbulent times. Two other recent contributions have similarly emphasized that the two concepts are different. Boydell, Burgoyne and Pedler (2004) consider management to be about implementation, order, efficiency and effectiveness. They define leadership as concerned with future directions in times of uncertainty, and argue that management may be sufficient in times of stability but is insufficient when organizational conditions are characterized by complexity, unpredictability and rapid change.

It is increasingly recognized that all managers, including first-line supervisors, need at some level to be leaders and to understand the concept of leadership, albeit the higher the organizational level, the more complex leadership becomes and the more it is concerned with broader and long-term aims. In some organizations people may be senior professionals such as doctors or scientists but not defined as managers (at least in terms of the formal organizational hierarchy). It would be naive, however, not to think of them as leaders or potential leaders.

It is therefore not surprising that there are contradictory interpretations of management and leadership development. Wexley and Baldwin (1986) argue that management development remains the most 'ill-defined and variously interpreted' concept in the management literature. HRD has broadened our thinking about the purposes and methods of management and leadership development. The majority of early definitions focused on the formal dimensions and considered both management and leadership development to be systematic and structured processes. Cullen and Turnbull (2005) argue that the majority of definitions view managers as resources and consider that management development is driven by a functional performance rationale. Similarly many of the definitions emphasize management development driven by organizational rather than individual needs.

In practice, the terms management and leadership development are used interchangeably and they both represent a set of processes that organizations and

individuals use to enhance effectiveness in a variety of management and leadership roles. Increasingly the distinction between the two sets of terms has become blurred, with 'management development' being associated with the UK and Ireland, while in the United States, 'leadership development' is preferred.

## The context of management and leadership development

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The context within which management and leadership development occurs is both complex and dynamic. We focus here on four dimensions of context: globalization, structural change, the knowledge-based economy and diversity.

### *Globalization*

Globalization is understood as growth in the functional integration of national economies, with the ties between countries becoming stronger. It is driven by powerful economic factors including market cost, and competitive market factors such as the growth of common customer preferences largely created by successful global branding. In terms of cost, globalization is said to offer the advantages of economies of scale and standardization, such as cost advantages in advertising, material sourcing and economies of scale due to larger market potential. Also, globalization has reduced the requirement for manual work and fostered new kinds of skills such as those found in customer service work and call centres. It has enabled managers to work across spatial boundaries with increased use of forms of virtual teamworking. Leadership and management development will focus less on gaining manager commitment and loyalty and more on manager engagement. It also requires that managers are skilled to take decisive action, and in some cases to take tough decisions.

### *Structural change*

Changes to the organizational structure such as downsizing and delayering bring significant demands for managers. They are expected to be able to respond rapidly to changing conditions, to ensure that customer expectations are met while at the same time matching the supply and quality of labour with demand cycles, and recognize and reward work in order to gain productivity increases. Organization structures are also changing as a result of advances in information technology. One consequence is that the distinctions between management and other employee categories have become blurred. The evidence indicates that employees have become more empowered; they have to share information in team settings, and structures have become much less hierarchical.

### *The knowledge-based economy*

The growth in the knowledge-based economy and knowledge-management initiatives has major implications for managers and leaders. Managers have a key role to play

in creating and supporting an organization culture that is conducive to knowledge sharing, use and development. The provision of appropriate management development interventions is most appropriate when the knowledge-management strategy is focused on building the social capital of its managers and knowledge employees. Garvey and Williamson (2002) point out that the most valuable management training and development initiatives are those designed to encourage reflexivity, learning through experimentation and skills in conducting critical dialogues with others. Knowledge workers also need to be managed in distinctive ways. Horwitz, Heng and Quazi (2003) suggest that there are distinctive bundles of HR practices that are effective in motivating and retaining knowledge workers. These HR practices make significant demands on managers and require that managers allow high levels of autonomy, provide interesting work tasks, and ensure significant opportunities for self-development.

## Diversity

The diversity of the leadership pool in organizations has become a major issue and it has long been recognized that gender and racial inequality is a problem (Ayman and Korabik, 2010) for many organizations when it comes to their leadership populations. Women and ethnic minorities are significantly under-represented in senior management positions. Eagly and Chin (2010) argue that discrimination remains commonplace in organizations, primarily in more subtle, covert and unintentional forms, and that the majority of managerial roles have become infused with masculinity. This has the effect of excluding particular groups from leadership roles, including women and minority groups on the basis of race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Individuals from these categories have fewer networking, mentoring and leadership development opportunities (Ardichvili and Manderscheid, 2008).

This challenging context has important implications for management and leadership development practices:

- It requires managers who are skilled in operating and managing a global business.
- Managers are expected to have skills in managing subsidiaries, the transfer of knowledge and the development of marketing.
- Organizations that desire to be globally competitive will continually need to develop managers and leaders who have foreign operational experience.
- It requires leaders and managers who are comfortable working in organizations that regularly contract and expand in different directions.
- Leaders and managers will be expected to manage people during frequent periods of structural change and reorganization.
- Leaders and managers need to be confident and skilled to cope with situations of rapid growth and rapid decline.
- Leaders and managers will be increasingly expected to work in organizations or parts of organizations that are temporary in nature or project based.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Are Leaders Developable?

Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD), the global healthcare company, starts with the most basic of questions when it comes to selecting individuals for leadership development: How developable is the individual? Given the investment in resources required to develop a leader, this represents a fundamental question. It is answered by using a systematic leader assessment process that focuses on three key criteria:

- *Self-confidence*: It is well established that developable leaders possess strong self-confidence. They project confidence in their interactions with others. They are confident; however, they are not arrogant. Arrogance is considered a significant derailing factor.
- *Competence*: Competence is considered an essential prerequisite for consistent, strong performance. Competence typically focuses on assessing baseline competencies that can be further developed. These include drive for results, rapid and disciplined decision making, strategic thinking and tolerance of ambiguity.
- *Emotional intelligence*: Emotional intelligence consists of both self and social-awareness components and includes interpersonal, conflict management, influencing and relationship management components.

Careful attention to these characteristics when selecting leaders for development will significantly enhance the prospects of future leadership success.

## Management and leadership competency models

Many organizations now use competency or behavioural frameworks to develop managers and leaders. They are extremely popular in multinational organizations; however, they are not without problems and are often viewed as a one size fits all strategy.

Confusion exists concerning the differences in meaning between the words 'competence' and 'competency'. 'Competence' can be defined as the minimum acceptable standard of performance and relates to the aspects of the job that have to be performed efficiently. 'Competency' refers to what leaders and managers need to bring to their roles to perform effectively. It denotes ability and capability and addresses the behavioural repertoire underpinning excellent performance: that is, what managers actually demonstrate in performing their role.

Cheng, Dainty and Moore (2005) identify 12 competencies that distinguish superior from average managers:

- *Achievement orientation*: The manager's concern for working towards a particular standard of excellence.
- *Initiative*: Taking proactive actions to avert problems in order to enhance job results and avoid problems.
- *Information seeking*: An underlying curiosity or desire to know more about things, people, or issues.



- *Focus on clients' needs*: Focusing efforts on discovering and meeting their clients' requirements, coupled with a desire to help or serve others.
- *Impact and influence*: The intention to persuade, convince, influence or impress others in order to support their agenda, or the desire to have a specific impact or effect on others.
- *Directiveness/assertiveness*: Intentions to ensure that subordinates comply with their wishes. Directive behaviour has a theme or tone of 'telling people what to do'. The tone ranges from firm and directive to demanding.
- *Teamwork and cooperation*: The genuine intention to work collaboratively with others as opposed to separately or competitively.
- *Team leadership*: The intention to take a role as leader of a team or other group. Although it implies a desire to lead others and so can be manifested in the form of formal authority and responsibility, effective team leadership also requires the leader to know when not to act authoritatively if they are to extract the best out of the team.
- *Analytical thinking*: The ability to understand a situation by breaking it apart into smaller pieces, or tracing the implications of a situation in a step-by-step causal way.
- *Conceptual thinking*: Understanding a situation or problem by putting the pieces together, seeing the large picture. This includes identifying patterns or connections between situations that are not obviously related, and identifying key or underlying issues in complex situations.
- *Self-control*: The ability to keep emotions under control and to restrain negative actions when tempted, when faced with opposition or hostility from others, or when working under conditions of stress.
- *Flexibility*: The ability to adapt to and work effectively with a variety of situations, individuals, or groups.

Competency modelling has become widespread. The models describe the particular competencies that are needed by individuals to effectively perform their work. Organizations like them because they provide a consistent framework for integrating human capital management systems and can help align employee actions with common strategic organizational goals, and facilitate performance improvement through a competency-based development process. Competency models are based on the idea that every position requires the job incumbent to possess certain competencies in order to perform at his or her highest level.

Competency-based management and leadership development typically involves the following key activities:

- identification of the core competencies needed for high-level performance in a specific position;
- assessment of the extent to which a particular job incumbent possesses those core competencies;
- creation of specific developmental opportunities to match the requirements of the competency.



Competency models, while popular in organizations, are again adopted much as an act of faith rather than on the basis of their actual contribution to business performance. There is relatively little research that demonstrates a link between bottom-line business performance and competency-based approaches to management and leadership development. They do not necessarily lead to greater transfer of learning and enhanced leader effectiveness. Other problems associated with the use of competency-based approaches to leadership development include the following: they fail to account for context; they are often designed with limited research into the behaviours required for effective performance; they are considered to be static rather than dynamic concepts; there is a lack of clarity concerning competencies; and many competency frameworks contain overlap and lack of contract validity.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Designing leadership development initiatives at Genworth Financial

Genworth Financial is a leading worldwide financial services organization. It believes that good leadership makes a significant contribution to organizational success. All leadership development programmes within the organization are designed by using a process that answers the Why, Who, What, How and When questions. This process is very much driven by the senior executives of the organization in collaboration with the HR Function. The issues that are considered under each of these questions include, but are not confined to, the following issues:

- *Why leadership development?* This question seeks to establish the purpose of the leadership development intervention. Is it to develop first-line supervisors, enhance the middle management team or develop senior leadership capability? The intervention for leadership development needs to be clearly articulated. In Genworth this may involve a series of discussions and consultations with key stakeholders.
- *Who will be the focus of leadership development?* Like other organizations, Genworth has a limited resource pool and has to make difficult choices concerning who should participate in leadership development. Questions that are asked in Genworth Financial include: Who will have the greatest impact on the organization? Who is motivated to attend the leadership development programme? Where does the organization have critical gaps in leadership capability? Where will the areas of business growth occur in the future?
- *What are the objectives for the leadership development programme?* The answers to this question focus on what participants are expected to learn. In Genworth Financial the learning objectives are shaped by the competency framework, the outputs of the performance management process, the talent management framework and data derived from the employee engagement survey.
- *How will we develop our leaders?* Genworth Financial utilizes a broad spectrum of strategies, including structured feedback, formal MBA programmes, structured in-house programmes, and coaching and mentoring. There is a strong emphasis on promoting self-awareness, the mastery of management skills and the transfer of these skills to the workplace. The type of strategy chosen to develop leaders always comes back to the objectives set for leadership development in the organization.
- *When will we develop our leaders?* Genworth Financial focuses on a number of issues when making this decision. It recognizes that people learn and develop over time; therefore they require space to develop. Particular interventions have a definite endpoint and Genworth utilizes a blended approach where each element builds on what has gone before.

These questions are answered through the collection of data, the analysis of individual and organizational data, and careful consideration of the value of the investment to the organization.

**FIGURE 19.1** Management and Leadership units (with acknowledgement to the Council for Administration, [www.cfa.uk.com](http://www.cfa.uk.com))

The new standards for management and leadership consist of the following units:

#### A Managing self and personal skills

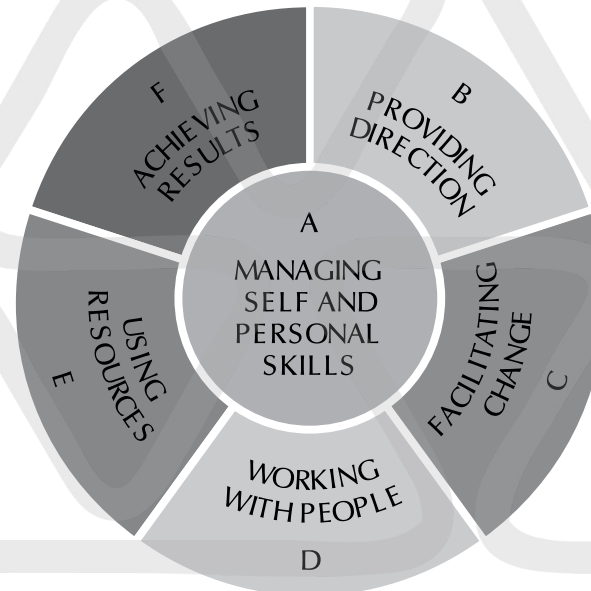
- A1 Manage your own resources
- A2 Manage your own resources and professional development
- A3 Develop your personal networks

#### B Providing direction

- B1 Develop and implement operational plans for your area of responsibility
- B2 Map the environment in which your organization operates
- B3 Develop a strategic business plan for your organization
- B4 Put the strategic business plan into action
- B5 Provide leadership for your team
- B6 Provide leadership in your area of responsibility
- B7 Provide leadership for your organization
- B8 Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements
- B9 Develop the culture of your organization
- B10 Manage risk
- B11 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your area of responsibility
- B12 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your organization

#### C Facilitating change

- C1 Encourage innovation in your team
- C2 Encourage innovation in your area of responsibility
- C3 Encourage innovation in your organization
- C4 Lead change
- C5 Plan change
- C6 Implement change



#### Working with people D

- Develop productive working relationships with colleagues D1
- Develop productive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders D2
- Recruit, select and keep colleagues D3
- Plan the workforce D4
- Allocate and check work in your team D5
- Allocate and monitor the progress and quality of work in your area of responsibility D6
- Provide learning opportunities for colleagues D7

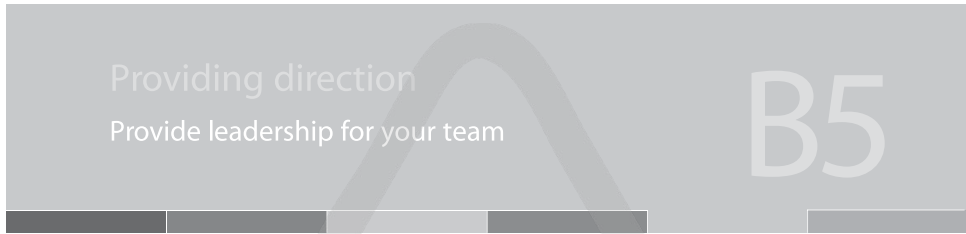
#### Using resources E

- Manage a budget E1
- Manage finance for your area of responsibility E2
- Obtain additional finance for the organization E3
- Promote the use of technology within your organization E4
- Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety E5
- Ensure health and safety requirements are met in your area of responsibility E6
- Ensure an effective organizational approach to health and safety E7

#### Achieving results F

- Manage a project F1
- Manage a programme of complementary projects F2
- Manage business processes F3
- Develop and review a framework for marketing F4
- Resolve customer service problems F5
- Monitor and solve customer service problems F6
- Support customer service improvements F7
- Work with others to improve customer service F8
- Build your organization's understanding of its market and customers F9
- Develop a customer focussed organization F10
- Manage the achievement of customer satisfaction F11
- Improve organizational performance F12

**FIGURE 19.2** Management Standards Unit 5 Providing direction: provide leadership for your team



### UNIT SUMMARY

#### What is the unit about?

This unit is about providing direction to the members of your team and motivating and supporting them to achieve the objectives of the team and their personal work objectives.

#### Who is the unit for?

The unit is recommended for team leaders.

#### Links with other units

This unit is linked to units D1 Develop productive working relationships with colleagues, B6 Provide leadership in your area of responsibility and D5 Allocate and check work in your team in the overall suite of National Occupational Standards for management and leadership.

#### Skills

Listed below are the main generic skills which need to be applied in providing leadership for your team. These skills are explicit/implicit in the detailed content of the unit and are listed here as additional information.

- Communicating
- Planning
- Team building
- Leading by example
- Providing feedback
- Setting objectives
- Motivating
- Consulting
- Problem solving
- Valuing and supporting others
- Monitoring
- Managing conflict
- Decision making
- Following

# Kogan Page

**FIGURE 19.2** *continued*

## Providing direction

### Provide leadership for your team

# B5

#### OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

You must be able to do the following:

- 1 Set out and positively communicate the purpose and objectives of the team to all members.
- 2 Involve members in planning how the team will achieve its objectives.
- 3 Ensure that each member of the team has personal work objectives and understands how achieving these will contribute to achievement of the team's objectives.
- 4 Encourage and support team members to achieve their personal work objectives and those of the team and provide recognition when objectives have been achieved.
- 5 Win, through your performance, the trust and support of the team for your leadership.
- 6 Steer the team successfully through difficulties and challenges, including conflict within the team.
- 7 Encourage and recognize creativity and innovation within the team.
- 8 Give team members support and advice when they need it especially during periods of setback and change.
- 9 Motivate team members to present their own ideas and listen to what they say.
- 10 Encourage team members to take the lead when they have the knowledge and expertise and show willingness to follow this lead.
- 11 Monitor activities and progress across the team without interfering.

#### BEHAVIOURS WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

- 1 You create a sense of common purpose.
- 2 You take personal responsibility for making things happen.
- 3 You encourage and support others to take decisions autonomously.
- 4 You act within the limits of your authority.
- 5 You make time available to support others.
- 6 You show integrity, fairness and consistency in decision making.
- 7 You seek to understand people's needs and motivations.
- 8 You model behaviour that shows respect, helpfulness and co-operation.

**FIGURE 19.2** *continued*

## Providing direction

Provide leadership for your team

# B5

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You need to know and understand the following:

#### General knowledge and understanding

- 1 Different ways of communicating effectively with members of a team.
- 2 How to set objectives which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).
- 3 How to plan the achievement of team objectives and the importance of involving team members in this process.
- 4 The importance of and being able to show team members how personal work objectives contribute to achievement of team objectives.
- 5 That different styles of leadership exist.
- 6 How to select and successfully apply a limited range of different methods for motivating, supporting and encouraging team members and recognizing their achievements.
- 7 Types of difficulties and challenges that may arise, including conflict within the team, and ways of identifying and overcoming them.
- 8 The importance of encouraging others to take the lead and ways in which this can be achieved.
- 9 The benefits of and how to encourage and recognize creativity and innovation within a team.

#### Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

- 1 Legal, regulatory and ethical requirements in the industry/sector.

#### Context specific knowledge and understanding

- 1 The members, purpose, objectives and plans of your team.
- 2 The personal work objectives of members of your team.
- 3 The types of support and advice that team members are likely to need and how to respond to these.
- 4 Standards of performance for the work of your team.

## Selecting management and leadership development strategies

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Organizations have a variety of choices when it comes to management and leadership development strategies. These range from the formal to the informal, and from those that are organization-directed to those that are self-directed. Table 19.1 provides a summary of management and leadership development strategies.

It is generally accepted that the majority of management and leadership development activities in organizations are both formal and organization-driven. It is assumed that these interventions will produce change in managers; however, there is strong evidence to suggest that most learning to manage actually occurs informally on the job (Dawes et al, 1996) in tacit, culturally embedded ways through people's work practices within organizations, groups and other communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Definitions of formal management and leadership development suggest that it: *is concerned with unambiguous objectives, highly structured interventions, where the locus of control is outside managers, and the learning may be real or disconnected, and artificial in nature*. Leaders and managers tend to perceive formal development opportunities as a mechanism to develop more transferable competencies and to remain marketable and employable (Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell, 2008). Managers do not necessarily view formal development interventions as a basis for advancement or progression. It is more about the manager maintaining his/her value in the labour market (Carbery and Garavan, 2007).

Formal learning and development interventions have the potential to enhance the development of organizational competencies. Specific aspects of competency that are increasingly valued by organizations include planning of work, organizing and reconfiguring resources, dealing with crises, taking risks, and problem-solving and decision-making skills. The possession of organizational competencies helps the organization to achieve competitive advantage. There is some evidence that manager recruitment and retention is a knock-on effect of the provision of formal learning and development opportunities, and managers are highly attracted to organizations that can offer formal development opportunities.

Informal and non-formal management and leadership development activities primarily tend to be self-directed. Such development occurs naturally through day-to-day work processes. The contemporary viewpoint is not to see formal and informal leadership and management development as competing paradigms, but to consider them as two sides of the same learning process. Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell (2008) suggest that, at the level of the manager, formal and informal learning activities are interrelated, contributing in different ways to the building of knowledge and competency.

Informal management and leadership development differs from formal activities in that it is incidental to everyday endeavours. Sometimes led by the learner, or assisted by friends or work colleagues, it occurs in the workplace, family, community, or among a network of colleagues. In these situations, learning is a side product of some other activity such as management meetings or project teamwork, and is

**TABLE 19.1** The spectrum of management and leadership development interventions

|   | Organization-directed   | Self-directed   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Formal approaches</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-source feedback</li> <li>• Action learning</li> <li>• Feedback intensive programmes</li> <li>• MBA programmes</li> <li>• Executive programmes</li> <li>• Outward bound programmes</li> <li>• Developmental assessment and accreditation centres</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual development plans</li> <li>• Individual career planning</li> <li>• Self-directed developmental counselling</li> </ul> |
| <b>Job-based approaches</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stretch assignments</li> <li>• Hardship experiences</li> <li>• Special projects</li> <li>• Secondments</li> <li>• International assignments</li> <li>• Acting up</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary activities</li> <li>• Participation in CSR activities</li> <li>• Shadowing</li> </ul>                                  |
| <b>Relationship-based approaches</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer coaching</li> <li>• Executive external or internal coaching</li> <li>• Peer mentoring</li> <li>• Hierarchical mentoring</li> <li>• Developmental relationships</li> <li>• Peer support groups</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback seeking</li> <li>• Career exploration</li> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>                          |
| <b>Informal and non-formal approaches</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from mistakes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities of practice</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Interaction with peers</li> <li>• Participation on networks</li> </ul>  |

SOURCE: Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell, 2008.



unplanned, unintentional or interdependent learning that derives from experience and is highly self-directed on the part of the individual. Informal learning is a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted concept that occurs in many different environments. The extent to which informal learning is effective in a leadership and management development context depends on the broader organizational, social, cultural and political context within which it is located, as well as the learning practices utilized.

The term 'experiential learning' is increasingly used to capture the informal or non-formal nature of learning that is based upon reflective experiences. This change in rubric has been driven by the move from 'instruction' to 'learning' (Margerison, 1991). One example includes Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, which emphasizes the interaction between individual learning, practice and everyday work tasks. Another example is Brown and Duguid's (1991) theory of communities of practice, which stresses the term community and social relationships around the learner. Drawing on Polanyi's (1966) distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge, the latter is often regarded as being the most valuable for a successful managerial career (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002) and is thought to be one of the most important factors distinguishing successful managers from others (Argyris, 1999; Wenger and Snyder, 2000). Tacit knowledge, which can only be derived from experience, is essentially knowledge that people don't know they have. Managers often use a variety of other non-formal strategies such as observation, reflection, questioning, interpersonal interactions and learning from mistakes.

## CASE STUDY

### **In practice: Aligning leadership development with global business strategy: the Bristol-Myers Squibb experience**

Bristol-Myers Squibb is a leading global company dedicated to the discovery, development and delivery of innovative medicines that help patients conquer serious diseases. One of its major strategic initiatives is called a 'String of Pearls' that combines strategic alliances, partnerships and acquisitions to achieve strategic growth. In 2010 it invested over US\$4 billion in research and development (R&D).

Within the corporate, general managers (GMs) are considered a vital strategic group. There are both commercial GMs who bring products to markets, and technical operations GMs who have responsibility for both the manufacturing and quality of products. General managers within BMS manage multiple functions, they focus on strategy creation and they have ultimate decision-making authority, in both contracts and technical operations. They work within matrix structures and are considered a vital component of the corporation's leadership pipeline. Global managers are expected to manage multiple paradoxes, including being both global and local, focusing on both strategy and execution, being decisive as well as emphasizing collaboration, and balancing innovation and risk.

The leadership development strategy within BMS, the Global Learning and Management Development function, implements a development approach that focuses on the unique needs of GMs. A number of unusual features of their approach include:

- comprehensive needs analysis based on a multi-source, multiple-perspective view of managers;
- careful leveraging of existing learning resources within BMS;
- the utilization of blended learning approaches such as social networking, leader-led development and e-learning;
- the establishment of a General Manager Advisory Council (GMAC) to provide input and guidance, and overcome organizational barriers to development;
- the implementation of an exclusive on-boarding process for newly promoted general managers;
- a peer-coaching process designed to leverage the skills that GMs will bring to their roles.

The leadership development strategy within BMS is based on the involvement of key stakeholders throughout the process, the leveraging of visible champions for development, the effective utilization of resources and the use of blended solutions. It views general managers as central to its strategic transformation process.

## Evaluating management and leadership development

There are a number of particular challenges encountered when evaluating management and leadership development activities (Chapter 18 provides a discussion of evaluation in general). A number of problems can be highlighted here. The generic nature of most evaluation models makes them difficult to apply to leadership and management development. The further up the organizational hierarchy, the more intangible the nature of development. The soft skills involved in developing leaders and managers are much more difficult to evaluate than hard skills. Given that most training and development evaluation models are geared towards highly structured formal events, they ignore the context in which leadership and management development takes place.

Defining learning objectives for leadership and management development programmes is generally more difficult than for more task-specific training and they tend to be vague and lack objective precision. They tend to be learning aims rather than objectives.

There are also significant challenges in establishing that management and leadership development impacts on the bottom line. The imprecise nature of leadership and management development, combined with the complex and dynamic context in which organizations operate, makes any causal links between leadership and management development and organizational performance particularly tenuous and difficult to establish.

Management and leadership development may have a limited direct effect on organizational performance; however, it may have a significant indirect effect on aspects of organizational culture such as improved morale, increased flexibility and

adaptability, and a more responsive management style. While evaluation models may find limited direct returns on investment from leadership and management development programmes, the activities may have a significant indirect effect on the workplace that many evaluation models overlook.

Increasingly organizations have begun to focus on 'return on expectation' rather than return on investment. Such an approach requires that various stakeholders articulate their expectations for management and leadership development. It is then the task of the evaluation process to gather evidence to determine whether those expectations have been met or not. Such an approach emphasizes a satisfying rather than optimizing approach to evaluation.

## Conclusion

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Management and leadership development represents an important HRD activity undertaken by organizations. Given the complex and dynamic external environment within which organizations operate, management and leadership development activities are considered vital to enhancing leadership capability and the leadership pipeline. Management strength represents an important source of competitive advantage, and organizations use a variety of management and leadership development strategies to develop this human resource pool. Investment in management and leadership development is driven by the belief that it confers significant benefits to both individual leaders and organizations. Individual benefits highlighted include enhanced leadership skills, increased self-awareness and confidence, enhanced interpersonal and emotional management skills, and broadened perspectives. Specific organizational benefits highlighted include productivity, financial performance and competitive advantage.

Increasingly managers are expected to take responsibility for their development; however, organizations also have responsibilities in this respect, and use a variety of development strategies to develop their managers. These organizational-driven strategies include: multi-source feedback, formal in-house programmes, coaching, mentoring, acceleration centres and a variety of planned job assignments. Self-directed methods include: reflection, observation, questioning and learning from mistakes.

The evaluation of management and leadership development is a difficult task. Traditional evaluation models prove difficult to apply to development activities that are more intangible, less clearly defined and lacking in clear learning objectives.

## Questions for reflection

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- Compare and contrast management and leadership. Support your argument with evidence.
- What impact does the knowledge-based economy have on the practice of leadership and management?
- Develop a management development programme; explain the reasoning for the structure and contents.

## Further information sources

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Management Standards Centre: [www.management-standards.org](http://www.management-standards.org)

Council for Administration: [www.cfa.uk.com](http://www.cfa.uk.com)

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## 20

# Managing human resource development functions and services

**BARNEY ERASMUS and PIETER LOEDOLFF**

*Management is, above all, a practice where art, science and craft meet.* (HENRY MINZBERG)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the place of the HRD function in the organization;
- describe the HRD function in relation to planning, organizing, leading and control;
- discuss the role of the training cycle in the management of HRD in the organization;
- discuss the importance and requirements of an HRD policy and an annual HRD plan;
- discuss the various coordination and administrative requirements of HRD with reference to HRD functions such as information systems and training, and development records and budgets;
- briefly discuss quality assurance, career development and organizational development in relation to HRD in the organization.

## Introduction and learning objectives

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The workplace is rapidly changing as a result of changes in value systems, increased local and international competition, new technologies, participative management and the changing socio-economic environment. The fruits we reap from not investing in human resources are low productivity, redundancy of older staff members, a high staff turnover, fear of technological advancement and an unskilled workforce.



Furthermore, in difficult economic times, the top management of organizations usually rationalize those departmental functions that do not have a direct bearing on the generation of income. We begin this chapter by describing the place of the HRD department and its function as a sub-system. This is followed by a discussion of various aspects of the management of human resource development (HRD) such as planning, organizing, leading and control. Other important aspects that are dealt with are HRD policy, the annual training and development plan, HRD information systems, HRD records and training and development budgets. The chapter ends with a brief description of quality assurance in HRD, career development and organizational development in relation to HRD.

## The importance of HRD

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The unrelenting pace of change in the world has many implications for HRD if organizations wish to prosper and gain rewards in terms of attracting and retaining talent, making a profit or achieving their goals (Martin and Jackson, 2008: 119). Key factors to ensure that organizations operate effectively and retain their competitive edge are the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people in the organization. The question therefore arises: Why do organizations educate, train and develop their employees?

Erasmus et al (2010: 30) cite the following reasons:

- to ensure the competitiveness of organizations;
- to improve the performance of employees who do not meet the required standards of performance, once their training and development needs have been identified;
- to prepare employees for future positions in the organization;
- to prepare employees for forthcoming organizational restructuring or for technological changes;
- to increase employees' literacy levels;
- to improve the skills of individual employees, by helping them, say, make better decisions and increase their job satisfaction, which in turn should benefit the organization;
- to improve interpersonal skills and make the organization a better place to work.

In view of the importance of HRD for the organization as a whole, it is crucial that the various HRD functions and activities be properly managed and coordinated (see the section on Educational assistance in the box at the end of the chapter).

## The place and role of the HRD function in the structure of the organization

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The purpose of HRD is to effect the changes necessary to enhance the organization through organizational and performance improvements. In short, it is the function

of HRD ‘to make a difference’ in the way an organization and its employees operate (Gilley et al, 2009: 74).

An organization consists of various sub-systems that pursue the achievement of organizational objectives by means of different organizational processes. These sub-systems are organized according to the unique needs of each organization and usually include sub-systems such as the marketing, production, financial and human resource functions. Each of these sub-systems can again be divided into smaller systems or sub-sub-systems, such as the planning, provision, maintenance, training and development of human resources, as well as labour relations. Figure 20.1 depicts the place of the HRD function in an organization.

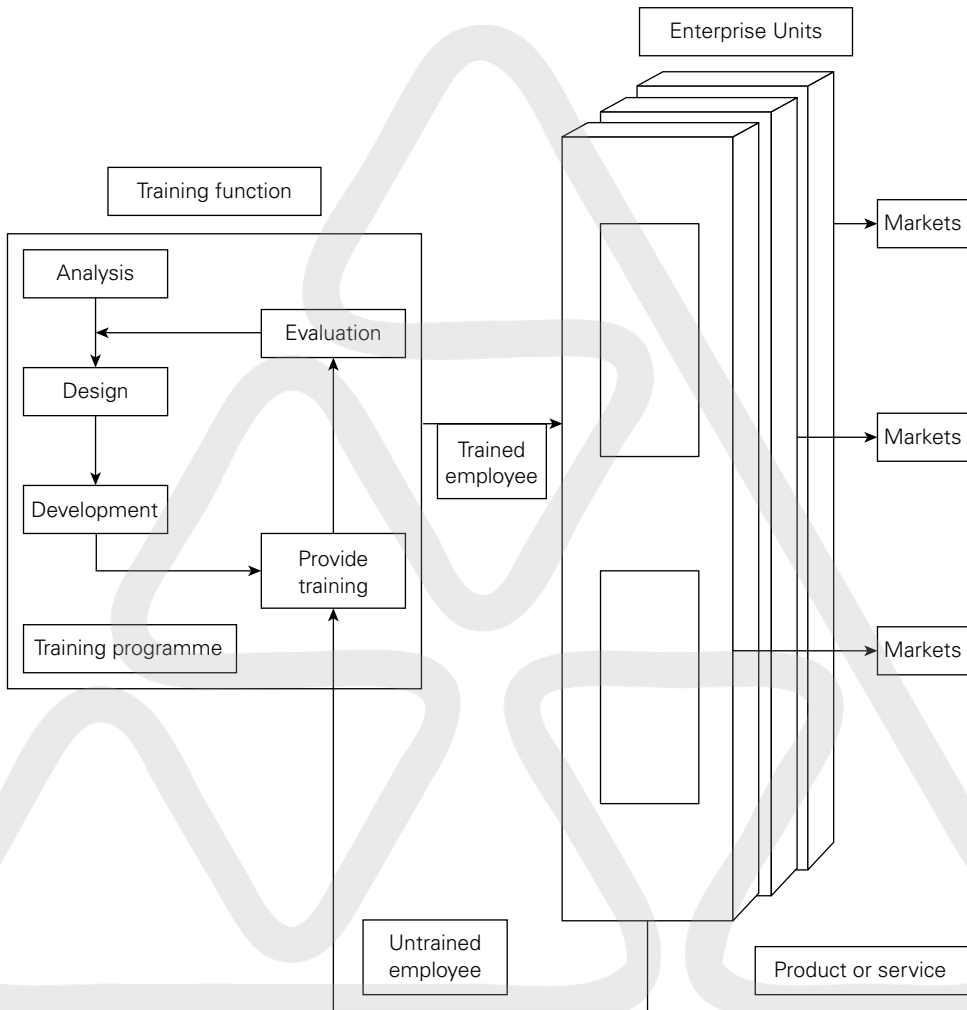
**FIGURE 20.1** The place of the HRD function in an organization

|                          |                   |                         |                        |                          |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|                          |                   | Chief Executive officer |                        |                          |  |
|                          |                   | Assistant CEO           |                        |                          |  |
| Marketing Manager        | Financial Manager | Human Resource Manager  | Production Manager     | R&D Manager              |  |
|                          |                   |                         |                        |                          |  |
| Recruitment              | Selection         | HRD                     | Labour Relations       | Career management        |  |
|                          |                   |                         |                        |                          |  |
| Training of new entrants | Adult learning    | Specialist training     | Management development | Organization development |  |

The HRD function is normally regarded as a sub-system of the human resource management function, and is based on the following assumptions (see Figure 20.2):

- The HRD function is a processing system that determines training needs, applies education and training technology and expertise, and transforms untrained employees into trained employees who are able to make productive contributions to the organizational objectives.
- The primary input into a training and development system – training needs and untrained employees – is transformed into an output (trained employees) by means of training processes such as analysis, design, development and the evaluation of training.
- As a sub-system of an organization, the HRD function is exposed to the same influences as the other systems in the organization. These influences include politics, the economy and legislation.

**FIGURE 20.2** The HRD function as an important sub-system of the organization



**SOURCE:** adapted from Rummler, 1987: 222.

The HRD function should be viewed as part of the human resource function as a whole, but should operate as a separate department, if this is affordable, because HRD occurs at various levels in an organization and renders a support service to the organization as a whole. A critical factor is that, in order to ensure success, HRD practitioners should continuously monitor the training and development input that is made available against the organizational objectives. This will increase the credibility of the HRD department in the organization.

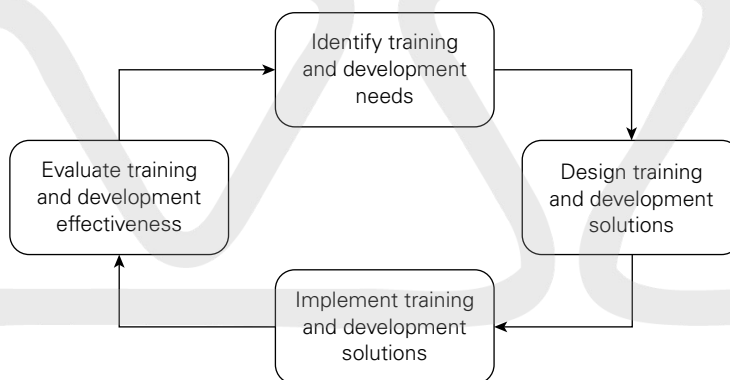
The following key functions and activities should be present in all HRD departments:

- management of the HRD function, which includes managing the organizational learning and performance management systems, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and coordinating the HRD function and providing strategic leadership;
- training and development needs analysis;
- design and development of curricula and programmes;
- development and acquisition of training resources;
- ensuring the delivery of education, training and development;
- evaluation of training and development and the total HRD effort;
- quality assurance of training and development initiatives;
- administrative management;
- career development;
- organization development.

### *The systems model of training and development*

Organizations have adopted various approaches to the management and delivery of training and development. Many of these approaches are quite diverse. However, one of the most frequently used approaches (or models) is the systems or systematic approach. This is a formal or planned approach to managing training and development that comprises four interrelated and connected steps, as illustrated in Figure 20.3.

**FIGURE 20.3** The systems model of training and development



**SOURCE:** Kavanagh and Thite, 2009: 313.

The model, which is deemed to be suitable for both training and development, highlights the cyclical and continuous nature of the process in much the same way as employee development is an ongoing activity. Since the various phases of training and development were discussed earlier in the book (see Part 4), it is unnecessary to further elaborate on these phases in this chapter. Suffice to say that the systems approach to training and development is an important point of departure for the effective management of HRD in any organization.

## Managing the HRD function

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### Introduction

The responsibility of the HRD professional, like that of any other manager, is to lead and to manage – in this case the HRD function – in such a way that the set objectives are achieved. One should bear in mind, however, that all managers should accept personal responsibility for the training and development of their subordinates. It should not be the responsibility of the HRD professional alone to fulfil this task. All managers should take an interest in the careers of employees and afford them opportunities to grow and develop in their jobs (job enrichment), be placed in other jobs (job rotation) and to be prepared to fulfil responsibilities at a higher level (promotion opportunities). Traditionally, managing implies planning, organizing, leading or directing and controlling the HRD function. Since the HRD department is normally a sub-department of the human resource department, the HRD function makes a contribution to the overall organizational objectives that have been formulated for the organization.

The HRD professional must also manage the HRD department with due consideration of the vision, mission, strategies and objectives of the organization (in particular the human resource management objectives).

### Planning

The primary responsibility of the HRD professional is to develop an HRD strategy and plan for the organization. Strategic HRD was discussed in Chapter 2 and its importance should be evident to the reader. However, it is necessary to reiterate that strategic HRD core capabilities make an organization more ready for and adaptable to change (McGuire and Jorgensen, 2011: 38). Strategic HRD has moved from HRD prescriptive practices to a more descriptive and holistic approach in order to achieve internal and external alignment and promote an organizational learning culture. In so doing, McGuire and Jorgensen (2011: 38) suggest that ‘HRD professionals must connect with customers both internally and externally through formulating solutions that deliver practical and measurable business results.’ This step is therefore crucial, not only to ensure that training and development are efficiently planned (ie identifying the correct types of training and development interventions), but also to ensure that other HRD interventions such as organizational and career development are implemented meaningfully in the organization.

Once this step has been finalized, it is of vital importance for training and development initiatives to be properly delivered or implemented. This would include determining training and development needs at macro, organizational and individual levels, followed by the analysis of tasks (see Chapter 12) and the formulation of learning objectives or outcomes. The ultimate goal of the formal planning process for the purpose of training and development delivery is to establish learning objectives and design relevant programmes (Chapter 13) and then plan the method of training and development and successful delivery of the training programme (see Chapters 15–17). Furthermore, the assessment of learning and the evaluation of

training and development require proper planning (Chapter 18). Finally, all resource requirements for HRD need to be planned, for example training staff, training venues and other infrastructure requirements as well as training and development budgetary requirements.

## Organizing

Overall, training and development initiatives, as identified by the strategic plan, and the required resources should be organized to ensure delivery structures. Resources (such as human and capital) and facilities should be organized and coordinated in such a way that training and development can occur effectively. All actions must be coordinated and communicated to establish a framework within which the training programme can be executed.

The following should be decided upon:

- a suitable education, training and development approach to achieve the strategy;
- suitable instructional facilities, media and resources;
- the correct target group and trainees/students;
- properly qualified trainers/facilitators;
- the programme content requirements, printing of manuals or other learning materials;
- accommodation and catering requirements;
- general administrative requirements such as pre and post-course administration, nomination of trainees or course delegates, record-keeping of training, payment of accounts and any reports required on a particular course or programme.

## Leading or directing

Leading refers to the steps taken to coordinate, lead and motivate staff, trainees and trainers/facilitators to enable them to voluntarily achieve the learning objectives. To this end, trainers or facilitators must be motivated and constantly supported to ensure that they perform at an optimal level. Motivational theories, such as those of Maslow and Herzberg, are not discussed in this book, but the basic concepts of these theories do apply to HRD.

The HRD professional also needs to be a leader who will ensure that the vision of the HRD department is clearly articulated and that line managers are motivated to support HRD initiatives. Ideally, line managers should be involved as 'strategic business partners' in any HRD endeavour in order to obtain commitment, buy-in and cooperation on HRD initiatives in the organization.

The person(s) in charge of HRD activities and the training and development process should endeavour to create an environment that is conducive to learning productivity. The leadership style should create a positive learning atmosphere in which trainees receive recognition, experience growth and autonomy, and achieve their personal objectives. The trainees should be excited about the opportunities they are afforded

to develop and grow in the organization and not be forced to attend training against their will. Employees need to be motivated and committed to undergo training and development.

Meyer (2007: 227) emphasizes the need for HRD managers to develop their own training and development staff in order to maintain a high level of morale and job satisfaction. They can do this by keeping staff informed of all developments at national, industry and organizational level, by affording them learning opportunities so that they can keep abreast of any new developments in the field, by developing career paths for them and by recognizing their achievements and contributions.

## Control

It is crucial that the achievement of goals in the short and medium term should be monitored to ensure that the HRD strategy is implemented and feedback is provided so as to enable the strategic direction to be adjusted. During the control phase at micro-level, the HRD professional must determine whether the organizing efforts and the guidance offered have resulted in the prescribed objectives being achieved. McGuire and Jorgensen (2011: 240) suggest that, in an increasingly competitive environment, organizations are looking to HRD programmes to add value and increase employee capability. If this is not happening, appropriate action should be taken to remedy the situation, but never at the expense of altering the strategic objectives.

Control is a continuous process in the sense that the process of determining training and development needs leads to the evaluation phase of the training cycle (see Chapter 18). The emphasis is on:

- evaluating the system as a whole;
- measuring the learning process;
- achieving the organizational objectives.

The management activities of planning, organizing, leading and control should be used as the point of departure for the management of the HRD function in organizations.

## The need for an HRD policy

The HRD policy should be one of the natural outcomes of an HRD strategy. Every organization needs policies and procedures in order to operate efficiently, avoid employee confusion and adhere to legal and regulatory guidelines (Du Toit, 2009: 1). A policy can be viewed as 'an expression of intent' for strategic execution and it gives general guidance on the conduct of affairs. The HR policy should promote the organization's vision and strategic objectives regarding standards of excellence, terms of employment and employee development and services (Du Toit, 2009: 60), while the HRD policy should be directly aligned with the HR policy and outline the relevant HRD-related policy requirements. Whereas the HR policies and procedures define the required behaviour and performance standards, the HRD policy should provide clear directions on what needs to be done to develop these behaviours and standards, by whom and why. The purpose of the HRD policy should therefore be to regulate, direct and control the actions and conduct of the HRD activities in the



organization. The HRD policy also establishes the organization's broad framework for its subsequent training plans, one of the next management requirements of HRD that will be addressed in this chapter.

The success of HRD efforts in organizations is dependent on the organization's official HRD policy, which will be linked to the organization's particular training and development philosophy and its operational plans.

It is essential for every organization to base its training and development philosophy on an integration of job content training as well as leadership training and management skills, in accordance with career levels.

HRD policies are formulated for the following four main reasons:

- to define the relationship between the objectives of the organization and its commitment to the HRD function;
- to provide operational guidelines for management;
- to provide information for employees;
- to enhance public relations.

HRD policy is more often determined by prevailing interests than principles, and as such tends to be impermanent and susceptible to change. This applies whether or not an organization has adopted planned training and development. If it has, top management decide what contribution they wish the HRD function to make towards achieving the organizational objectives. This decision provides the framework within which HRD policy and plans are determined. An example of the training and development policy of an organization is attached as an annex at the end of the chapter.

It should, however, be remembered that a human resource development policy is basically informed by the strategic training and development intent of the organization, and is closely related to practices and procedures that support the overall strategic direction of the organization.

### **Annual training and development plan**

The annual training and development plan of an organization should be a detailed statement of the training and development that will be implemented over a specific period. Martin and Jackson (2008: 127) suggest that the training and development plan requires a balancing act between available resources, which may be influenced by the benefits that have been estimated and the identified needs. The plan stems from a reconciliation of priority training needs in the strategic analysis process, the training and development policy and the resources available (budgets). The annual training and development plan is an integral part of the strategic HRD process. This annual plan is in fact the organization's short-term operational plan, based on strategic organization and human resource management goals.

The plan should therefore be formulated with extreme care. A typical plan would comprise the following elements (Coetzee et al, 2007: 328–36):

- a detailed time plan (monthly, quarterly or half-yearly) of the training and development requirements of each department, allocated according to job classification and the number of employees involved;

- a detailed time plan of the projected training and development for categories of staff not permanently allocated to a department;
- specifications in respect of each training item for the standard to be achieved, the person responsible for implementing it and the training strategy to be used;
- a summary of the budget allocation for training and development for each department and the organization as a whole – this may be divided into training and development that is already in progress and to which the organization is already committed (eg apprentice training programmes for trainees who have begun their apprenticeships) and other training and development.

The formats of annual training and development plans may differ in accordance with organizational needs.

## Coordinating HRD functions and services in the organization

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### *Introduction*

This section focuses on the coordination of certain functions and services (such as information systems, budgets, costs and HRD records) in the organization, which is crucial for success and which is viewed as an integral function of the HRD department. This is also directly applicable to the administration of HRD in an organization. Maintaining and improving administration systems by using the latest technology and having an integrated human resource information system in place will not only provide appropriate data for planning organizational interventions, but will also contribute to each employee's path to lifelong learning.

### *Information systems*

#### *Introduction*

Traditionally, training management information systems have been employed to record information primarily for training administration purposes. This has changed in recent years to the extent that organizations are now making greater demands on training applications in terms of compatibility with existing systems, analytical functionality and accessibility in order to meet business needs (Kavanagh and Thite, 2009: 326). Many organizations are currently in the process of systematically computerizing their training and development records, which were previously recorded on paper. A number of guidelines for the implementation of an information system are suggested here.

#### *System needs*

According to Kavanagh and Thite (2009: 326), a human resource information system for training and development should have three key characteristics:

- It should be presented in a user-friendly manner.
- It should be meaningful and appropriate.
- It should be used effectively in the decision-making process to support the organization's overall business strategy.

The following factors need to be considered when analysing the needs of the organization for a human resource information system for training and development:

- *Training and development volumes:* This involves determining the number of courses to be offered or the number of employees to be trained by other institutions, the number of students involved and the training facilities required.
- *Training and development record needs:* Records are required for a number of purposes (eg budgeting). Additional information that can be made available includes the cost per course and per student. The period required to establish a new product should also be taken into consideration. Work performance is a result of training and development, and training and development records can possibly be of use in projecting future performance. Training and development records are also required for career planning.
- *Cost-reduction needs:* Training and development are normally regarded as an expense only, and the budget is usually slashed during cost-cutting exercises. If adequate records exist, proper planning can be effected to reduce costs. Without such records, arbitrary decisions may be made about reductions, which could adversely affect the organization. Training and development costs can be justified by increasing training productivity and by training employees to reduce costs.
- *Legal requirements:* Legislation in some countries requires organizations to keep records of skills development plans, apprenticeships and learnerships, employment equity, levies paid and so forth.

## Selecting a system and system design

When the need for an information system has been determined, the next step is to select the system to satisfy that need. The selection of a system depends on a number of factors. For example, if only student attendance has to be recorded, an attendance register can be used or attendance can be recorded by means of computer records. The determining factors are the number of students involved, the number of rooms used, the duration of the course and the cost of the course. The number of employees in an organization usually determines the complexity of the system. Certain elements are always present in system design, regardless of the size and type of system. The number of elements (eg the number of attendance registers) determines the number of transactions and the selection of hardware and software (computer programmes).

## Training and development records

Keeping records of completed training and development interventions (eg pass percentages, student names, periods, etc) is not an end in itself, but should be only a means to achieving an end.

Since the HRD function is *an integrated part of the HR department* it is expected to keep training and development records, but the critical question is whether the records actually serve any purpose. The HRD professional must keep the correct type of records because these will help to determine whether or not employee performance can be improved. Trainers should direct their efforts to improving and developing employee performance, and this requires the planning of record systems in such a way that they serve as useful reporting sources. The availability of computers and the rapidly changing technological environment, particularly in the field of information technology, are factors that should be taken into consideration.

In addition to the records for internal use being maintained by the HRD department of an organization, there are certain additional requirements if the organization is involved with external bodies.

The unique nature of each organization will determine what records are kept. In general terms, training and development records are kept to:

- make strategic training decisions (as part of the planning process);
- keep track of the status of skills and competencies in an organization;
- enable employees to respond to enquiries from top management and outside institutions;
- guide employees to reach their full potential in the workplace by devising development plans that suit individual needs;
- comply with statutory and other regulations.

## Training and development budgets and cost analysis

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### Introduction

A key aspect of the HRD specialist's planning task is to present training and development in the most cost-effective manner possible. One method of planning for training and development expenses is to use a budget. This section focuses on the elements that should be addressed in a training and development budget, and also proposes steps to analyse the cost effectiveness of training and development.

### Budgets

Organizations commonly use budgets as financial control instruments. There are normally specific periods that have to be budgeted for, while organizations usually have their own unique financial management systems, of which the training budget (which may be prepared biannually or annually) forms part. Budgets are not only part of the planning process but also an essential control tool.

Training and development costs are not always clearly identifiable, which means that decisions are not always easy to make. For example, where does in-service training fit in? Is part of the salary of the supervisor who presents training allocated to the HRD department and, if so, who keeps records of such expenses?

Another view is that the training and development provided by the supervisor should be presented by his or her own department. Notwithstanding such vague areas, certain expenses are clearly identifiable, while others may be concealed in the various departmental budgets.

The role of accurate record-keeping in the budgeting process is of utmost importance, since some budget items are normally based on historical data.

There are various methods for establishing budgets, which indicate who is responsible for the training and development budget and for controlling it. The following three groups are proposed:

- a central budget by the HRD manager;
- individual budgets by line managers;
- a shared budget, where the HRD department budgets for generic items, and line managers for specific unique items.

One advantage of a central budget is that all training and development is based in one department and some measure of standardization is introduced. A disadvantage is that line managers do not assume responsibility for training and development in their sections. However, one possible approach is that the line manager assumes full responsibility for the training and development budget, and is therefore also responsible for training personnel. Such an approach implies the creation of a forum where the training priorities of the organization as a whole are determined before specific allocations are made.

The advantage of the third approach is that generic items such as general training and development expenses (say, expenses relating to classrooms and instructional media) devolve upon an HRD manager, while the line managers remain responsible for the training and development outputs by, for example, determining who must be trained and developed and by whom.

Training and development expenses should be justifiable in terms of the organization's overall business plans. The following items should receive attention in the preparation of a training and development budget:

- *Existing and future training and development needs*: Decide whether existing training and development interventions will be retained – for example, induction and supervisor training.
- *Facilities*: Determine whether facilities for presenting training are or will be available.
- *Suitable personnel*: Make provision for the recruitment or retraining of training personnel.
- *Salaries*: Make provision for the salaries of training personnel.
- *Personnel development*: Make adequate provision for expenses relating to personnel development.

- *Sundry costs*: These would include the following:
  - travelling expenses;
  - bursaries;
  - training material;
  - fees for consultants and guest speakers;
  - refreshments.

### **Cost-effectiveness analysis**

The issue of cost is a critical consideration when determining commitment to employee training and development programmes. According to Wright and Belcourt (McGuire and Jorgensen, 2011: 21), there has always been tension between those who regard training and development as a cost (input based) and those who regard it as a benefit (output based). A cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis is a method to determine the monetary benefit of a training and development programme, without comparing the programme with other programmes. Kavanagh and Thite (2009: 324) suggest that although it is relatively easy to establish the direct and indirect costs of training and development, 'the actual benefits to the firm may be more difficult to ascertain, as many of the benefits take a long time to materialize or can often be of an intangible nature.' Notwithstanding this concern, it is advised that organizations should analyse any post-training data and convert it into monetary values in order to establish return on investment (Kavanagh and Thite, 2009: 324).

The following steps would apply in this regard:

- Step 1: Determine the cost of training and development.
- Step 2: Calculate the training and development costs.
- Step 3: Determine the losses resulting from training.
- Step 4: Estimate the financial value of each person who has completed training and development.

### **Quality management and HRD**

Each organization should have a quality management system to manage the continuous improvement of all processes in the organization in order to meet client expectations. The HRD function is not excluded from this requirement. Singh (2008: 14) suggests that the management of quality in HRD has become a major consideration in recent years, 'to the extent that quality improvement through technological improvement and ISO 9000 certification and Total Quality Management (TQM) have become the central themes of HRD'.

Meyer (2007: 426) cites a number of principles of quality management that are interdependent and should be integrated holistically in order to optimize organizational performance:

- All processes should focus on providing quality products and services in order to meet client expectations.



- All processes and sub-processes should be continuously improved.
- The root causes of problems in the system should be actively sought.
- Decision making should be based on a proper data analysis.
- Everyone should be empowered and developed to play a key role in providing quality products and services.
- The organization should have a high performance culture that should stem from teamwork, interdepartmental cooperation and a flat organizational structure, as well as a strategy to actively pursue best practice, both locally and internationally.

The HRD professional must take cognisance of these quality management principles, promote quality in the organization and ensure that HRD strategies and activities are aligned with the principles of quality management and quality assurance. Quality management is therefore a key managerial function of HRD in the organization and should never be neglected.

### **Career development and HRD**

Nel et al (2011: 391) define career development as a 'formal approach taken by the organization to ensure that employees with proper qualifications and experience are available when they are needed by the organization'. Career development is a significant dimension of HRD because it provides the employee with knowledge and skills that can be used in the future. Gilley et al (2009) mention that within the system of career development, employees are responsible for career planning, while the organization is responsible for career management. The two separate but related processes stem from career development, a partnership between the organization and its individual employees (Gilley et al, 2009: 49). According to Pynes (2009: 325), career development should be used to improve the skills levels of and provide long-term opportunities for an organization's workforce. Career development programmes also provide incumbents with advancement opportunities in the organization so that they will not have to look for alternative opportunities elsewhere. Nel et al (2011: 390) suggest that career development should be executed in a strategic context if an organization wishes to achieve its objectives by maximizing its human resources. Since career management and development were discussed as an integral part of work-based learning in Chapter 16 we will not expand further on this subject here.

### **Organization development and HRD**

Since organization development could be one of the interventions that may flow from an HRD strategy, it is necessary to briefly deal with this concept in this chapter. According to Robbins et al (2009: 490), organization development (OD) is, 'a term used to encompass a collection of planned change interventions or actions built on humanistic-democratic values that seek to improve organizational effectiveness and employee well-being'. Waddell, Cummings and Worley (2007, cited in Nel et al,



2011: 432) regard OD as an effort that is planned, organization-wide and managed from the top, designed to increase organizational effectiveness and promote health through planned interventions in the organization's 'processes' using behavioural science knowledge. OD is therefore a strategy to effect constructive planned change, quality improvements and effectiveness (Robbins et al, 2009: 499).

OD requires a variety of skills and competencies in order to effectively manage and facilitate the change process and monitor and evaluate the change. Jones (Nel et al, 2011: 432) cites the following OD techniques that can help managers to 'unfreeze, change and refreeze' an organization to achieve its new desired state:

- *Education and communication:* Employees must receive information on the required change and how it would affect them.
- *Participation and empowerment:* Employees should be involved in the sense that they should participate in the change process and be allowed to contribute to its success.
- *Facilitation:* Since change may be stressful, trained consultants and facilitators should be used to help employees to manage the stress.
- *Bargaining and negotiation:* These techniques should be used to manage any conflict that may occur in the change process.
- *Counselling, sensitivity training and process consultation:* It is suggested that employees should be assisted in every way possible to understand their position and the situation.
- *Team building and intergroup training:* These techniques could be used to improve relationships in the group in order to improve the way the various functions or divisions in the organization work together.

From the above it should be evident that OD has major implications for HRD in the organization and that it requires competent and specialist expertise to manage and facilitate the process effectively.

## Conclusion

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This chapter started with a discussion of various concepts of education, training, development and HRD. This was followed by a discussion of the HRD function as a sub-system in an organization and its unique contribution to the success of the organization. The management aspects of HRD were dealt with next. Attention was specifically focused on the planning, organizing, guidance and control elements. This was followed by a discussion of the requirements of a HRD policy and an annual training plan. Some of the main coordination and administrative requirements of HRD were then elaborated on, including HRD information systems, HRD records and budgeting. The chapter concluded with a brief discussion of quality management, career development and organizational development in relation to HRD in the organization.

## Questions for reflection

- You have been invited to establish and direct a brand new HRD department. Which strategies and structures would you introduce?
- The CEO asks your advice on disbanding the HRD department and allocating all the responsibilities and financial support directly to operational departments. How do you respond?
- How would you market the HRD department and its services across the organization?

### CASE STUDY

#### In practice: Management of HRD

John Wilkinson has just been hired to set up an HRD department in a large bank, the World Cup Trust. World Cup Trust is over a hundred years old and employs 10,000 people in a large metropolitan area in Gauteng, South Africa. World Cup Trust's management have long been sceptical about planned learning activities of any kind. Although the bank is nationally renowned for its innovations in banking, its reputation for HRD is unsatisfactory (to say the least). The bank's senior officers have taken this initiative in HRD because of widespread complaints by middle management.

John previously worked at another large bank, where for 10 years he ran a comprehensive HRD programme. He now has a free hand at World Cup Trust to start up the HRD effort. His budget for the present year is negligible, but he has been informed that 'no reasonable request will be refused'. Company management are watching Wilkinson closely.

#### Questions

- 1 What aspects of training management should John Wilkinson address in order to put the management of HRD in World Cup Trust on a proper footing?
- 2 If you were in his position, what would you do during the first month? First year? Why? Explain your reasoning.

#### Guidelines on answering the questions

This case study affords you the opportunity to apply most of the theoretical elements discussed in this chapter, as well as some of the factors dealt with in earlier chapters.

In the first question you have to consider elements such as an organization structure and functions for HRD in World Cup Trust, setting up mechanisms to ensure the proper execution of the management aspects of HRD, the management of the training cycle, HRD policy and annual plans, budgeting, administration of HRD and so on.

In the second question you would have to deal with some of the strategic aspects of HRD to ensure that HRD can fulfil its proper role in support of the strategic aims and objectives of the organization.

**CASE STUDY****In practice: Employee training**

The Springbok General Insurance Company is an industry leader in South Africa. The training department at Springbok has just completed a needs assessment for a training course on customer relations. Company trainers conducted a survey on this issue among the managers, supervisors and wage-earning employees. The trainers then followed up the survey with intensive interviews of randomly selected supervisors and hourly paid employees. The results were as follows:

- Customers (policy holders and sales agents) are often bounced around from one department to another when they call in with questions, because nobody is sure who is supposed to deal with what.
- The telephone etiquette of wage-earning employees leaves much to be desired. Customers often complain that they feel as if they are actually bothering the person who is supposed to be helping them.
- Letters from customers are not always answered promptly. In some instances, more than two months elapse between the time a letter is received at the head office and a reply is mailed to the complainant.
- Supervisors feel that if a customer-relations 'problem' exists, its cause has less to do with training needs than with lean staffing.
- Older employees believe that younger employees are simply 'less polite'.

The company managers are concerned that employees need training in customer relations. Springbok's training staff are therefore planning to offer a one-day seminar on the topic for all employees, covering telephone etiquette, correspondence and other matters.

In the meantime, a task force of company executives is investigating the possible creation of a special customer service centre. All incoming calls and letters will be directed to the centre, which will be staffed by specially trained employees drawn from work units in the company. They will be required to deal with all problems until these have been resolved to the customer's satisfaction.

It was suggested that a training centre should be built to provide for all the training, which means that no learning would be outsourced.

**Questions**

- 1 In what ways would the creation of a special customer service centre impact on the training of employees in customer relations in future?
- 2 Should the training staff at the Springbok General Insurance Company handle the issue of customer relations training from a strategic perspective or not? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 What would be the impact on the administration of training, including budgets, costs, facilities and information systems, if a separate training centre were to be built for training employees in customer relations?

## Guidelines on answering the questions

This case study affords you an opportunity to apply most of the theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter as well as some of the concepts dealt with in earlier chapters.

In the first question you have to consider factors such as the advantages and disadvantages of a special customer service centre from an HRD perspective and how it would impact on the training and development function.

In the second question you would have to consider some of the strategic aspects of HRD and the systems or systematic approach to HRD to ensure that customer relations training would make a difference to the success of the organization.

In the third question you would have to deal with some of the practical administrative aspects of establishing a separate training centre for the company.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Training and development policy for Polokwane Mining House

#### Aim

Polokwane Mining House is committed to the education, training and development of its workforce in order to meet current and future skills needs by uplifting the general skills and abilities and education of its employees. We acknowledge the benefits of education, training and development to both employee development and company growth.

#### Objectives

Through education, training and development, Polokwane Mining House strives to:

- uplift the general level of education of all its employees, irrespective of race, gender or creed;
- prepare all its employees, where possible, for future promotion;
- equip all its employees with the skills and knowledge required to perform better than the expected standard;
- achieve excellence in customer care;
- improve productivity and profitability to the benefit of all its stakeholders;
- develop employees to the maximum of their potential within the organization's requirements and capabilities.

#### Values

We will endeavour to:

- develop employees who demonstrate their commitment to training and development;
- eliminate all forms of discrimination in terms of race, gender or creed;
- develop a career path for employees from all levels within the organization;

- fill vacancies from within the organization as far as possible, depending on the availability of skills and experience;
- promote employees on the basis of merit;
- develop employees who demonstrate the ability to meet specified performance standards.

## Purpose

In order to achieve our objectives, management has to evaluate the future and present needs of the organization, and assess the skills and potential of our workforce, thereby determining the need (current and future) for training in the organization.

## Educational assistance

### Introduction

We need to be actively involved in education and training in order to ensure the development and availability of educational qualifications that will make it possible to employ, train and develop employees in accordance with the needs of the organization.

### Types of education

#### Organizational requirements

The organization accepts responsibility for the payment for the education of employees where such education is approved and takes place in terms of the needs and requirements of the organization.

#### Self-improvement education

In exceptional cases the organization will subsidize self-improvement education, especially education up to the level of functional literacy and/or numeracy.

### Educational assistance

#### Needs-driven education

In instances where the need has been established for an employee to be developed laterally or for promotion in terms of the requirements of his or her present or future jobs, and in accordance with his or her potential, the organization may approve requests for educational assistance and refund 90 per cent on successful completion.

These needs will be established by means of the following:

- performance appraisals;
- employee potential assessments;
- succession planning.

The following criteria should be used:

- The qualification applied for should be relevant to the identified need.
- If the need refers to a future job, the employee should, as a minimum requirement, have the potential to reach such a position within three years.
- When the organization has identified a need for the general educational improvement of the workforce and implemented in-house educational programmes to uplift the training ability of the workforce, educational assistance should be 100 per cent (for literacy and numeracy improvement).

### Non-needs-driven education

Educational qualifications not identified as being related to the person's present job or future potential, nor related to the discipline in which he or she is working, can be classified as non-needs-driven education.

In general, educational assistance should not be provided. However, where it is felt that an individual's performance would improve, even if it is not in terms of the job profile or identified development needs, a non-refundable loan should be granted to the employee, subject to the approval of the managing director.

### Approval of loans

The following guidelines should be followed to determine the value of loans and terms of repayment:

- Employees wishing to participate in the scheme offered will be required to furnish proof of the course/modules to be undertaken. On receiving the application the personnel officer will complete the Education Assistance Checklist.
- The Request for Training Assistance must be completed by the personnel officer and signed by the line manager, for approval by the managing director.
- The employee will then be given a cheque, made out in favour of the institution where studies will be undertaken, and will sign an acknowledgement of debt form.
- The employee will be obliged to repay the total loan amount over a period of 12 months.
- After successful completion of his or her studies, and after providing proof of such, the employee will be refunded at a rate of 90 per cent of the total cost incurred (ie 90 per cent of the total loan granted).

### Study leave

Where educational assistance is granted in terms of needs-driven education, the employee may request study leave for the actual examination days, plus one day extra for each subject to be written, with full pay.

Employees studying of their own accord and at their own expense (non-needs-driven) will not be granted study leave. Requests for using accrued leave for study and examination purposes will, however, be considered on merit.

### Service agreement

After completion of each year of study and before reimbursement, the employee will be required to sign an agreement to the effect that he or she undertakes to work for the organization for a period at least equal to the duration of the course. Should the employee's service be terminated prior to working off the agreement period, the pro rata amount owing will be deducted in one lump sum. This agreement does not apply to literacy and numeracy improvement programmes.

Requests for educational assistance must be renewed and approved on a yearly basis.

Should the organization's needs or the employee's performance change, the organization has the right to withhold future assistance on a year-to-year basis.

### General comments

An employee who is granted educational assistance should be made aware that if his or her results are poor, or if he or she fails more than one or part of one subject per year, future assistance will be reviewed. Reimbursement of study expenses will only be in respect of course registration, tuition fees and prescribed textbooks.

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## 21

# HRD practice and research: investigating business issues through applied social science research

**K PETER KUCHINKE**

*Everything important in business and industry is measured.*

(SWANSON, 1989: 71)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain the importance of social science research skills as a key qualification for HRD practitioners;
- understand the characteristics of engaged scholarship in the context of organization-based research;
- describe the similarities of and differences between applied research in business settings and research conducted in academic environments;
- understand the importance of values and identify strategies to navigate the interest-driven environment when conducting applied research in business settings;
- explain the relationship between social science research and action learning/ action research.

## Introduction

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This chapter introduces the reader to the important role of HRD professionals as researchers. The ability of HRD staff to generate trustworthy knowledge on important business issues through applied social science research has come to be an employer expectation and a major value-added activity to the enterprise. Solid research provides the basis for decisions about resource allocations and forms the basis of core HRD functions, such as training design, organizational development and programme evaluation. Yet research in action-oriented and results-driven environments, with multiple stakeholders and complex goals, functions differently from research in academic and scholarly settings. It is important, therefore, to understand the similarities and differences between research primarily driven to inform business decisions and research whose primary intent is to add to the knowledge base in a field.

The importance of conducting research as part of HRD practice may seem, on first blush, to be exaggerated. Research, after all, is conducted in research and development centres of large organizations to create new products and technologies, by sales and marketing departments to understand consumer trends and patterns, and in operations management to improve the efficiency of organizational processes. HRD, on the other hand, is concerned with facilitating learning, developing people and helping the internal organization adjust to changing priorities and strategies. Certainly, there is research *about* HRD, published in prominent academic journals such as *Human Resource Development International*, but this is often done by academics and university-based scholars, and only rarely by those who practise the craft of HRD day in and day out. If HRD is about *doing* – about implementation and practice – what might be the role of *creating knowledge*: of research and scholarship?

To answer this question, consider the opening quote by Swanson (1989: 71): ‘Everything important in business and industry is measured.’ Measuring is at the heart of managing: today’s organizations are far too complex for managers to rely solely on experience or intuition when making important decisions. Managers and other decision makers need solid information in order to decide among different action strategies. Research, then, can be viewed as the process of obtaining such information in a way that is recognized as trustworthy. Research places great emphasis on the way it is done: its processes and methods. The ways by which information is obtained, analysed and reported need to be carefully considered and described so that users of research findings can judge for themselves whether to place trust in the results. Research, whether it is in the context of business organizations or for academic purposes, can be defined as the ‘methodical investigation into a subject in order to discover facts, to establish or revise a theory, or to develop a plan of action based on the facts discovered’ (Encarta, 2009).

While this definition applies to all types of research, for example in physics, chemistry and engineering, it is equally relevant to human resource development, where the body of knowledge about people and work organizations is drawn from the various social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and economics. The importance of research for HRD practitioners lies in the fact that organizations, even small ones with simple technologies and few employees, are

inherently complex social systems in which the answers to seemingly simple questions are rarely obvious. Consider the following concerns that are often raised by line managers and executives alike:

- How can the sense of responsibility and accountability among staff be increased?
- How can the quality of service delivered to customers be improved?
- How can the cycle time between order taking and delivery be shortened?
- How can staff members be kept motivated to do their best, and the best be prevented from being lured away by the competition?

These and many other pressing concerns raised by practising managers in organizations of all sizes, in all industries and in countries around the world appear to be perennial problems that elude easy answers (see, for example, Quinn, O'Neill and St Clair, 2000). It is the central role of human resource development to build, maintain and improve the human performance system through a variety of interventions (Stolovitch and Keeps, 1999), and therefore the onus on HRD is to address the effectiveness of individual, group and organization-level performance and effectiveness to enable the realization of strategic goals or provide strategic advantage.

But how to find effective solutions to these important issues? Certainly, a multitude of management books are written that promote the 'seven easy steps' to organizational success, just as there are many 'best practice' reports published in the popular business press. Experienced HRD practitioners and managers, however, treat these with care: what works in one organization and at one point in time can rarely be transferred or imported to another. Consider one of the most successful business texts of all times, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982), which provided insight into the practices of some of the most profitable US companies that had succeeded by building strong internal cultures, focused product strategies and an exclusive focus on customer needs. Closer investigation only a few years later, however, showed that the featured companies had, in fact, fared no better than the industry average when judged by common business metrics such as return on assets, return on equity, sales growth and market share; and several had even declared bankruptcy shortly after publication of the book (Aupperle, Acar and Booth, 1986).

Rather than copying what may have worked elsewhere, organizations are faced with the task of developing their own unique solutions, implementing their own strategies, creating and improving their own pathways to success. They try to gain competitive advantage by building human performance systems that are unique, hard to imitate by competitors, and fulfil the specific needs of their internal and external stakeholders (Barney, 1986). Such specific solutions can only be found through site-specific research that provides trustworthy information about the status quo, the likelihood of success of alternative solution strategies, and the success or failure of the selected set of interventions.

This understanding of research is, of course, a key contribution of external consultants, but also often used by HRD staff acting as internal consultants to their employing organizations. A case in point is a British government agency of about 8,000 employees that provides critical information services to the government and the public. In this organization, the central HRD unit includes some 30 internal consultants skilled in process improvement and social science research who, alone or

in small teams, assist the various units and centres around the country to identify, analyse, develop and evaluate solutions to performance-related concerns and improvement opportunities. Another example is a Fortune 50 US company headquartered in Minnesota in the United States, that has staffed an organization effectiveness unit with experts from the various business functions and a group of social scientists who guide the development of strategic initiatives that can improve the internal organization and enable the continued growth and development of the firm.

In earlier chapters of this book, many dimensions of learning and development in organizations have been addressed in detail. The purpose of this chapter is to argue that a critical foundation for these contributions is the art and craft of applied social science research that forms the basis of HRD work in practice. This includes the gathering of information, the evaluation of its relevance and trustworthiness, an examination of available evidence for different potential moves, and the evaluation of the results of the chosen solution set. This allows organizations to gauge the impact of these interventions, determine the need for potential modifications and decide on the likely merit of 'going to scale': that is, of broadening their scope to other parts of the organization or adopting them as a permanent part of the institutional repertoire. While the scope of this chapter does not allow an in-depth coverage of research methodology (readers are encouraged to take relevant course work in methods, statistics and research design), the chapter will provide a behind-the-scenes discussion of different aspects related to research that will enable the reader to better appreciate the role of research, understand the strengths and limitations of various approaches, and comprehend the role of research in managerial decision-making.

## Social science research, management and human resource development

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The application of research to solve important organizational problems is, of course, not a new phenomenon. A period of rapid industrialization and the growth of the social sciences in colleges and universities in many countries of North America and Europe around the beginning of the 20th century led to applied research in the factories and industrial firms of the day. A notable example was a joint project of the US National Research Council, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University that focused on group behaviour and worker attitudes at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. The Hawthorne Experiments conducted between 1925 and 1940 laid the foundation for the study of organizational behaviour and industrial psychology. It showed for the first time that organizational functioning is critically dependent on human behaviour, and not solely on work design as had been proposed by proponents of scientific management headed by Frederick Winslow Taylor (Taylor, 1911) and as implemented in the factories of the day, including Ford Motor Company and many others. As one of the Hawthorne researchers famously remarked, 'A human problem to be brought to a human solution requires human data and human tools' (Roethlisberger, 1941/1996: 35).

The scope and importance of social science research in work organization intensified, so that by mid-century the knowledge base of the applied field of management was firmly grounded in psychology, sociology and economics. Milestones along this path are the field theory of Kurt Lewin; the work of humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May and Carl Rogers; the applied work of social science researchers such as Wilfred Bion, Eric Trist and Fred Emery at the London Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (see Lynton, 1998, for an excellent summary); and the maturing of applied academic fields, such as vocational education, organizational behaviour, industrial psychology and human resources. Human resource development emerged as a formalized profession and focus of research during the 1960s and 1970s and draws heavily on these traditions, with major influences from systems theory, socio-technical systems design, adult learning, instructional design and educational technology. The importance of continuous learning and change, and the resultant importance of HRD, was reinforced and broadened when the forces of globalization, technological change and increased customer expectations led to the adoption of large-scale transformation and change initiatives, including total quality management (Deming, 2000), business process reengineering (Hammer and Champy, 2001) and the learning organization (Senge, 2006). As a result, the role of HRD changed from that of a support function to a more central and strategic one (Harrison, 1998; Torraco and Swanson, 1995; Walton, 1999), even though empirical research indicates that the tactical role still outweighs broader strategic involvement in many organizations (Kuchinke, 2003). In sum, today's organizations depend on HRD to provide in-depth research and analysis in order to stay competitive. The rate of change is such that organizations are continuously adapting, changing and innovating, both in terms of their products and services and in terms of their internal operations. To fulfil their strategic role, HRD practitioners must be able to act as organizational researchers and provide solutions and strategies to important problems and opportunities.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Evaluating an international management programme

Consider the following case from the author's practice: a large US multinational pharmaceutical company with physical locations in some 80 countries around the world and sales in twice as many, generating 60 per cent of its revenue internationally. The company has for many years provided training for those employees who aspire to become country-level managers (CMs). The CMs are responsible for directing all aspects of operations of the firm abroad, are expected to develop and execute business plans for their territory, and report directly to senior executives back at company headquarters. CMs are a small but illustrious group: only about 35 are in place at any given time, but the turn-over rate averages 40 per cent per year. Some CMs are promoted to regional manager level, supervising a number of countries, some are transferred back to headquarters, some are hired away by competitors, others retire, are re-assigned or are asked to resign because they fail to meet performance objectives. Becoming a CM is prestigious: it constitutes an important promotion, signals that the person is highly regarded in

the firm, and is accompanied by a significant raise in salary. The firm has a strict selection policy in place and moves some 20 individuals through CM training each year. Not everyone succeeds, but those who do receive their new appointment within a year or less.

Over time, the company has experimented with several formats for training delivery, alternating between relying heavily on external subject-matter experts, such as well-known business professors, and using in-house staff, including senior executives who have themselves been CMs in the past. Regardless of the format, however, each year between five and eight of the newly promoted CMs fail in their new assignments, most often by not meeting sales targets, not executing new product introductions on time, or not increasing target market share and market penetration.

The corporate HRD director has been asked to recommend improvements related to the high failure rate of its graduates and to assess the value of the programme in general. She has assigned a team of four HRD staff members assisted by an external consultant with expertise in global leader development to analyse the programme and suggest changes. Given a 10-week timeline, part-time use of an administrative assistant, a modest travel budget and access to key personnel, the team conducted a research project that resulted in a report to senior management on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and recommended key changes. Not all recommendations were implemented, but the record of newly appointed CMs 12 months after the research project showed that the success rate had increased by about 20 per cent, and this increase has held steady over the subsequent two years.

How did the team conduct its investigation and what lessons can be learned for the role of social science research in work settings? We will return to this example later on, but for now we hope that readers will understand the earlier points: solutions to organizational problems are rarely self-evident but require careful analysis. A number of possible improvements of the CM programme have been suggested and everyone involved appears to have an opinion. But not all suggestions can be implemented at once; and besides, how would the team decide whose recommendation might be promising? Implementing a wrong solution would be expensive in direct terms but also incur lost-opportunity costs. Recourse to the literature does not help much, either. While many texts are written about international management, these are not sufficiently fine-grained to guide this organization in pinpointing the shortcomings of its programme. Moreover, CMs are key assets to the organization, determining success or failure in countries around the world. The organization deems it important to develop its own programme signature and character and thus build a unique leadership culture that fits this particular organization but is difficult to copy or imitate by competitors.

## Approaches to applied research

Research, as we discussed earlier, is a way of conducting an investigation with the goal of gaining knowledge about an issue of importance. It is not the only way of gaining knowledge – traditions, experience, intuition and reference to authorities can also provide answers to problems of practice (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2006), but the scientific method has been given privileged status in academia and society at large. Research has resulted in dramatic advances in our world: think about the benefits of products and technologies in medicine, engineering, electronics and transportation



just in the last 20 years. Much of this progress is the result of careful scientific study at universities, in public and private research laboratories, even the military, and other institutions. The scientific method had its origin in the Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century and has been developed over the centuries, with recent increases in sophistication and power made possible through conceptual advances and the help of electronic data processing.

Careful and dispassionate observation, selection of random samples, replication of experiments, valid and reliable measurement and isolation of variables, however, prove to be more difficult in the social world than in the physical. Researchers find that the process of observing a group of employees, for example, influences their behaviour even before any measurements have been taken; employees may decide to withhold information; friendly interviewers get different answers from stern ones to the same questions; and even the attitudes of researchers towards a given topic plays a role as respondents try to meet their unstated expectations. These complexities in researching human behaviour and human or social institutions, such as work organizations, have led to vigorous debates among researchers and scholars about alternative approaches to obtaining knowledge about human affairs, and today a wide range of approaches is available, including quantitative types, many variations of qualitative types and even post-modern types of research. Readers are encouraged to seek deeper understanding about these important debates by reviewing the philosophy of science literature, for example a highly acclaimed book on sociological paradigms and organizational analysis by Burrell and Morgan (2007), two texts by Gibbons, Nowotny and colleagues (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001; Gibbons et al, 1994) and many others.

Two important contributions to this debate will be summarized here that are particularly important for understanding the role of research in applied settings such as work organizations, and were conducted by HRD practitioners rather than university-based researchers. The first is a book by Ernest Boyer, the past president of the Washington, DC-based Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Science, and education adviser and member of cabinet for three US presidents. Boyer was dedicated to improving education and research, and one of his priorities centred on the issue of increasing the relevance of social science research for practice. He observed, as had many others before him, that academic research published in respected scientific journals often fails to have an impact on practice, particularly in the social sciences and applied fields, such as management, education and social work. In one of his last books, *Scholarship Revisited* (Boyer, 1997), he sought to broaden our understanding of research and scholarship and argued that valuable new knowledge could be obtained not only in traditional, laboratory-based or experimental research projects but in many other ways as well. Specifically, knowledge that is useful for practice is often created when working in the field, in many formal and informal ways, and when solving real-life problems and issues. Rather than thinking of research as a privileged activity that requires long years of training and is reserved for an academic elite, Boyer suggested that the definition of research be expanded by allowing different types of knowledge-gaining activities to count as scholarship. Using the term 'engaged scholarship' to indicate its proximity to practice – as distinct from pure or basic research – Boyer thought of four ways of producing knowledge that is trustworthy and useful.



- The *scholarship of discovery* generates new and unique knowledge, and this kind is most similar to our notion of laboratory or university-based research.
- The *scholarship of teaching* builds bridges between the teacher's understanding and students' learning in creative and innovative ways. Here, knowledge is obtained in the social process of teaching, learning and discussion, similar to the method that Socrates in ancient Greece used with his pupils and that gave birth to the Socratic method of teaching.
- The *scholarship of application* emphasizes the opportunity to learn from addressing practical problems in context and gaining detailed insight into the situation by applying knowledge to solve an issue or problem.
- The *scholarship of integration*, finally, uses existing bodies of knowledge and combines them in novel ways to address existing problems and issues.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Evaluating an international management programme (continued)

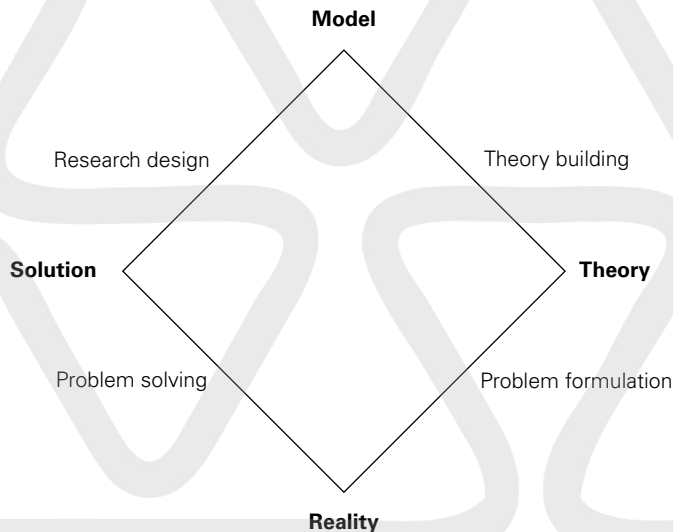
When HRD practitioners engage in research, several of Boyer's areas are typically addressed. Let us go back to the case example of the evaluation of CM training. Our research team made use of the scholarship of teaching by obtaining information and insight gained by the course facilitators about the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum materials, the teaching process, the needs and expectations of the participants, and the formal and informal training feedback. Interestingly, the facilitators were not fully aware how much knowledge they actually had pertaining to the programme until they were interviewed and asked to reflect on their teaching experience. Similarly, recent programme participants were able to offer key insights when asked to reflect on their experience during the CM training seminars. Both facilitators and participants had shared their experience with colleagues, friends and family, but this knowledge was private and not gathered systematically until the research team invited critical reflection and assessment. In addition to the scholarship of teaching, the research team made use of the scholarship of application by inviting the newly promoted CMs and also their peers, subordinates, supervisors, clients and colleagues to offer feedback about their performance as related to their new roles as Country Managers. Finally, the research team made use of the scholarship of integration by carefully reviewing academic research on leadership development, international assignments and expatriate performance in order to obtain an outside perspective by which to gauge how well the CM programme reflected the way other large international organizations were preparing their international managers.

The second framework of importance for understanding applied research in the context of HRD work is Andrew Van de Ven's recent work on applied scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007). Van de Ven, a business professor at the University of Minnesota and past president of the Academy of Management, uses Boyer's idea of engaged scholarship to develop a model that can result in research that is both relevant for practice and rigorous – and therefore trustworthy – from a methodological point of

view. Too often, Van de Ven observed, research studies and projects fulfil one but not the other criterion: academic studies may be sophisticated in their design and reflect all the rules for rigour, but ultimately have very little impact on practice. Applied research, on the other hand, is often criticized for not paying sufficient attention to the scientific process: for example through a lack of external validity and generalizability, failure to safeguard against threats to internal validity, and by collecting information in ways that are not reliable.

The Engaged Scholarship Diamond Model (Figure 21.1) is represented in the form of a baseball field in which the researcher, in order to score a home run (that is, achieve knowledge that is relevant and rigorous) must cover all four bases. Reality is captured through the formulation of a problem or improvement opportunity; a theory is used to make sense of the problem and speculate about possible causes and contributing factors; a model is developed that can be researched empirically; and a solution is achieved that must be tested anew against the problem.

**FIGURE 21.1** Diamond model for engaged scholarship



**SOURCE:** Van de Ven, 2007.

Van de Ven's model points to several important characteristics of applied research: first, organizational reality offers many different and complex features, and researchers must narrow the multitude of possible foci to gain a clear formulation of the problem. Often, numerous problems exist, and they may appear at different levels: individual, group, organization-wide or even societal. In order to conduct research, this multitude of facets must be focused, and often narrowed, in order to become researchable and actionable. This can mean making hard choices between equally desirable research goals. In the CM case, for example, the programme sponsors wanted to better understand and improve a host of outcomes, and it took long discussion and clarification to reach agreement on a smaller number of performance goals that

could be clearly measured and observed. Other areas would be left to subsequent studies – if this was still deemed important after the first round of research.

Second, the model points to the important role of theory. Our ability to comprehend the world is always mediated and never direct. Theories act as filters through which we process observations, evaluate information and assess data, and most of the time we are not aware of these filters or ‘theories-in-use’ (Argyris, 1993). In order to understand and eventually improve a complex behaviour such as leadership success, we need to select and apply theory to describe and predict. With most complex behaviours, multiple theories and explanatory frameworks exist, and these are often equally valid but allow us to view and understand different aspects of a complex phenomenon. Leadership theory is a case in point. Bass and Bass (2008), for example, devote 35 chapters to various facets of leadership and note that some 300 different definitions exist. Large organizations, like our pharmaceutical company, have developed and published their own list of managerial competencies: for example, ‘make difficult decisions’, ‘understand the business’ and ‘empower employees to do their best’. These are, of course, in themselves complex behaviours that often evade valid and reliable measures (a difficulty that makes annual performance appraisals an often contentious exercise). In our example, the team spent considerable time discussing among themselves and with key stakeholders, which aspect of international leadership performance they should focus on. In the end, the team decided – with support from the sponsors – to use a combination of indicators from internal frameworks and the research literature. While these measures did not capture all the relevant aspects of being a CM in our organization, there was agreement that a pragmatic compromise was reached between relevance and rigour, and it was agreed that future studies could broaden the scope of measures being taken if further improvements were targeted.

The objective to base the investigation on sound leadership theory was also reflected in the choice of instruments used to assess the capabilities of the Country Managers. The team decided to adopt a survey instrument that had been validated in cross-cultural contexts in previous research and with similar populations, one that had shown good internal validity, whose factor structure was established in multiple studies, and that could clearly discriminate between the leader behaviours and related non-leadership behaviours. Using a mixed method approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) by combining surveys, in-depth interviews, document reviews and observation of the CM training with multiple stakeholders and over several weeks, the team arrived at a detailed analysis of the strengths and limitations of the current way of preparing CMs, developed a set of recommendations for change, and presented their analysis to the corporate sponsors of the training. The presentation included both the substantive results of the research project and a brief summary about the methods used. For example, when asked by one engineer in the audience what the reliability indices of the survey were, the team was able to answer with precision. This demonstrated the research acumen of the team and helped to build trust among the audience in the results and recommendations.

Interestingly, while specific improvements in the CM training were recommended, such as differentiating the degree of difficulty of the curriculum to account for the different skill levels of participants, a large part of the poor performance after promotion was attributed to the lack of ongoing support, mentoring, feedback and

reflection opportunities during the first 90 days on the new assignments. In other words, the root cause of the CM performance lay not in a lack of pre-promotion preparation but in the failure to provide adequate post-assignment support.

Based on this brief example, we can point to some of the major similarities and differences between academic and applied research. Both must use care in the design of the study, the selection of participants, the ways of gathering information, and the analysis and presentation of data. The criteria used to judge academic research, for example a doctoral dissertation at a research university or a manuscript submitted to a major research journal, are equally important for applied research. They include the effort to ensure:

- external and internal validity;
- the representativeness of the sample;
- lack of bias in selection and data gathering;
- use of valid and reliable instruments;
- identification of confounding variables;
- clear articulation of the research questions;
- attention to the underlying theoretical framework;
- acknowledgement of the limitations of the study.

When HRD practitioners can demonstrate their awareness of these criteria, and design, conduct and analyse their research studies accordingly, the level of receptivity and trust of the sponsors and internal clients increases. While audiences such as corporate executives, engineers or physicians may not be expert in the social sciences, their training and daily work have often given them a strong preparation in the scientific method in their chosen field, allowing them to distinguish between well and poorly designed research studies.

In contrast to academic research, however, applied or organization-based research is often conducted by a team under much tighter timelines than in a university setting, and with much clearer results expectations in mind. The depth of theoretical discussion, a key requirement for academic research, is often limited, and so is the amount of time available to implement the study and present the results. In the case of the CM training, for example, the time allowed to present the findings at the highest level of the corporation was limited to 15 minutes at the end of an action-packed meeting of the executive team, with much of the detailed information left to be discussed and evaluated at the tactical levels of the organization.

## Applied research, values and interests

While traditional research views the development of theory as a primary goal and places great value on its ability to be free from predetermined notions about its outcomes (even though this ideal has been challenged by many, see Sabia and Wallulis, 1983), applied research in organizational, particularly corporate, settings is influenced to a far greater degree and more explicitly by values and interests. It is no exaggeration to say that organization-based research is most often viewed as a means

to an end, an investment in time, resources and opportunity costs that is expected to yield a return. This is certainly true for research into new product development, but also for research on the human systems conducted by HRD. While an academic study of international management development would aim at contributing to the larger body of literature and improving the theory on the topic (with improvements to practice as a secondary outcome), our pharmaceutical case illustrates that corporations have very different expectations when approving funding for research.

The interest-based nature of organization-sponsored research has far-reaching implications for the process of research, enabling a host of interesting projects in real-life settings but also constraining their scope. This tension is evident in the role of the researcher in the dual role as investigator and as employee or hired consultant accountable to the sponsor of the project and expected to meet the needs of the client. As a member of the organization's culture, norms and values, the researcher is finely attuned to the many spoken and unspoken dynamics, rules and practices, but this insider status may also constrain the ability to recognize breakthrough solutions and issues. The researcher's own interests related to career, promotion and advancement may influence the way the project is conducted. Research participants may be on guard, withholding or altering information when being interviewed, answering surveys or participating in focus groups, for fear that their information may influence their own performance evaluations, result in changes to their work processes, or influence their department or work unit in certain ways.

Research sponsors may deliberately limit the scope of the investigation and thereby neglect important levels for change. In the CM example, for instance, the team was discouraged from raising issues of compensation and rewards when investigating the poor performance of newly appointed CMs. At the time of the study, the company had decided that it was not able to change the compensation of its managerial ranks. Asking questions about satisfaction with pay, therefore, might have raised unrealistic expectations and led to disappointment and frustration later on. Research sponsors, while interested in the results of the study, may not easily tolerate hearing negative assessments about their own performance or outright criticism about aspects of their own behaviour that have been raised during data collection. Finally, it should be noted that the results of even carefully conducted organizational research do not always translate into direct action. Organizational research is not the end point but rather the beginning of a discussion about the best way forward. Decision makers will consider the findings and recommendations as only one of a range of factors in a complex decision process. Assessments of feasibility, financial ability, priority and political trade-offs, among other elements, will come into play and determine the actual decision to implement in full, partially or not at all what the outcome of the study suggests.

These and many other risks inherent in organization-based research have led to a very explicit set of recommendations in organization development. Cummings and Worley (2009), McLean (2006) and Burke (2002) are among the scholars who have carefully delineated the role of the organization-development practitioner and articulate important guidelines for responsible and ethical professional practice. These include: the communication of the rules of ethical conduct for organization development to the sponsor; agreement on a clear contract-for-work, including rules, expectations, scope and process; the clarification and establishment of trust between the researcher and the study participants; and the assurance of confidentiality of data

and anonymity when reporting results. When done in a responsible and ethical manner, organizational research can serve not only to produce data and obtain information, but to provide a way of introducing organizational change by involving all stakeholders in the information-gathering and decision process, and of creating workable solutions in a high-involvement manner that can lead to sustainable change.

## Conclusion: linking research to organization change, innovation and learning

At the beginning of the chapter, we invited the reader to consider the importance of applied social science research for HRD practice. If, as we believe, the opening quote about the role of measurement in business and industry is correct, then the role of HRD research as a way of gaining trustworthy knowledge about important aspects of an organization's functioning is clear. The conduct of social science research is an important contribution to the success of any organization, and the research role falls, most of the time, to the staff working in HR and HRD units and departments. Research is the foundation of training design, of organization development initiatives, of programme evaluation and many other initiatives. Research should also underlie the practice of HRD itself, applying outcome and impact-focused research on its own processes in order to better understand how to improve and increase its value. The discipline of process improvement forms the foundation of quality management, and HRD students should be encouraged to study process improvement methods – for example the seven tools of working with data and the seven tools of working with ideas – along with traditional social science research methods (Table 21.1).

**TABLE 21.1** Quality tools

| Quality tools for working with data | Quality tools for working with ideas |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Check sheets                        | Flow charts                          |
| Run charts                          | Brainstorming                        |
| Control charts                      | Multi-voting                         |
| Cause-and-effect diagrams           | Decision matrix                      |
| Histograms                          | Affinity diagrams                    |
| Scatter diagrams                    | Force field analysis                 |
| Pareto diagrams                     | Gantt charts                         |



In addition, students of organizations and HRD should understand the role of research in the broader context of organization learning. As Marsick and Watkins (1993: 9) in their original text on the learning organization have observed: 'Learning takes place at successively more complex, collective learning levels in organizations: Individuals, groups and teams, larger business units and networks, the organization itself, its network of customers and suppliers, and other societal groups.' Organizations that aspire to become learning organizations are advised to implement, among other measures, the following action imperatives:

- create continuous learning opportunities;
- promote enquiry and dialogue;
- encourage collaboration and team learning;
- establish systems that capture and share learning.

Organizations learn in action and through reflection (Marquardt et al, 2009). In the learning organization and in action learning there is a critical role for HRD to lead the processes of generating trustworthy knowledge through research, reflection and seeking deep insight about important dynamics that underlie the many performance-related issues, and by recognizing areas of excellence and understanding their contributing factors. To assert and execute these leadership roles, HRD practitioners must be capable of acting as researchers and playing their part in attaining the strategic goals of the organization.

## Questions for reflection

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- How would you evaluate the impact of a management training programme in your organization?
- How would you develop the research skills of all the managers in an organization?
- Your manager says, 'Forget about wasting time researching, just get on with it!' What do you say, and what do you do given that if the intervention fails your job will be on the line?

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Kogan Page

## 22

# HRD and consultancy

**KIRAN TREHAN and CLARE RIGG**

*The nature of knowledge is contested: that it may be privileged due to the social nature of the consultant/client; that their knowledge is accepted because of who they are, what they are saying, and how they relate to each other, within that specific context. Moreover, it is assumed that the outcomes of such work, the 'smoothing over' process of implementing change, are not contested or that some are advantaged or disadvantaged by change initiatives.*

(HARVEY, 2009: 213)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter you should be able to identify, review and critically appraise:

- the theoretical perspectives on HRD as consultancy;
- consultancy models;
- the consulting cycle;
- the methods, tools and approaches to consultancy;
- consulting styles;
- the role of the internal consultant and process consultation;
- politics and ethics in consulting approaches.

## Introduction

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Human resource development (HRD) as a form of consultancy is constantly being refreshed and revitalized by innovations in terms of outlook and approach. An

emerging strand of literature advancing the concept of critical human resource development and action-learning consultancy models (see for example, Trehan, 2004; Trehan, Rigg and Stewart, 2006) is suggestive of a fresh wave of activity. Fore-grounding questions of power and political dynamics within the analysis of HRD and consultancy helps direct particular attention to the importance of context and patterns of interrelationships amongst organization stakeholders. It is notable that much of the work in this area operates on a theoretical plane and is often light on practical guidance or recognition of the distinctive contexts of HRD consultancy practice, compared with other areas of HRD learning.

This chapter first elucidates the concept of HRD as consultancy by illuminating the diversity of theoretical perspectives; through this it will, second, demonstrate some of the intricacies and complexities within current theorizing on HRD as consultancy; thirdly, it will illuminate the practical significance of techniques and interventions within the consulting process, and finally the chapter explores some problems and pitfalls in HRD consultancy.

## HRD as consultancy

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In order to review HRD as interconnected to consultancy we need to question what is meant by consulting, consultant and consultancy in the context of HRD. These questions relate to the different ways in which HRD can be organized and managed. Larger organizations across all sectors will tend to have at least an individual, if not a team or department, who leads on learning and development. In smaller organizations, if there is anyone formally nominated to lead HRD, this will be a role they combine with other responsibilities.

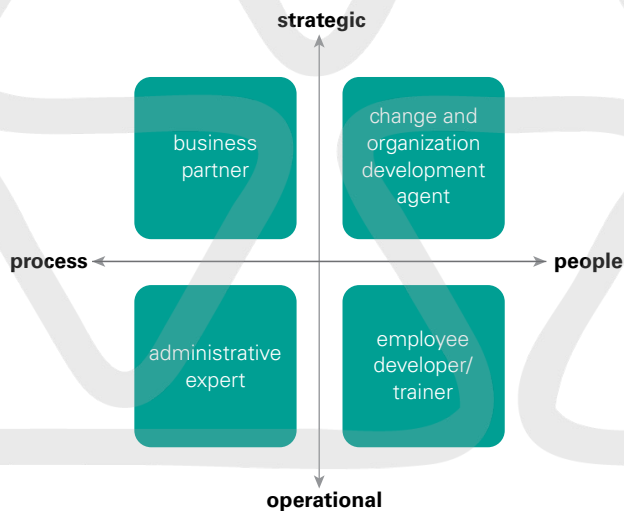
Delivery of learning and development interventions is also achieved in a variety of ways within different organizations. Complete internal provision may be feasible within a large company or local authority. SMEs and small voluntary organizations will tend to completely buy in what they need from external providers, whether these are colleges, universities, commercial training companies or independent providers. The existence of so much externally provided HRD highlights a blurring between outsourcing and consultancy. Richman and Trondsen (2004) have developed an 'outsourcing/out-tasking continuum', with comprehensive outsourcing at one extreme, where responsibility for an organization's entire HRD function including strategic direction or significant sections such as design, development and delivery, is contracted to an external supplier and, at the other extreme, out-tasking, referring to specific tasks or parts of the learning and development process, such as provision of a virtual learning environment, being undertaken by specialist companies. Between these two extremes sits selective outsourcing, whereby an external company controls and provides certain HRD activities, such as training or administration of development assessments. From these examples, it could be said that external consultancy is a form of outsourcing, but not all outsourcing is consultancy.

These themes relate to two common questions within organizations: 'Whose responsibility is HRD?' and 'Who is the client?' From the brief discussion above, it should be evident that HRD consultants may be internal or external to an organization.

As internal consultants, they may be employed by a large organization in a team that provides HRD interventions to clients located in other parts of the same organization. As external consultants, working autonomously or employed by a specialist HRD provider such as a training company or change consultancy, they provide HRD services to clients within an organization as independent advisors.

The question of who is responsible for HRD is often divided further to differentiate between operational delivery of HRD interventions and strategic conceptualization and design. Perhaps the greatest source of variation between organizations is the extent to which HRD is explicitly recognized as playing a strategic role, in the sense of being aligned with organization strategy. The underlying logic of HRD is to obtain a return from the investment in learning and development, as Watson (2006: 407) says, 'enabling the utilising of employee efforts and capabilities to bring about long-term organizational survival'. Ulrich (1996) provided a much-used framework for thinking about the extent to which HR is focused strategically or operationally and the balance of focus on people and business processes. He argued there are four ways of delivering HR excellence. Here we have adapted his original model to conceptualize the role that HRD consultants can play in organizations (see Figure 22.1).

**FIGURE 22.1** HRD consultant roles



**SOURCE:** adapted from Ulrich, 1996

Strategic roles are intended to develop culture, talent and social capital, capabilities that are both internally aligned with each other and externally aligned with the organization's strategic direction. HRD interventions may also drive strategy, in the sense of developing capabilities that enable future strategic choices. As a business partner, the HRD consultant is a strategic ally if not member of the senior management team. Responsive and accountable primarily to these stakeholders, consultants advise and respond with the primary focus of business performance in mind. Change

and organizational development agents have a longer-term transformational role to develop culture, identify and nurture talent, and develop organization-wide capabilities that position the organization for future strategic opportunities (Gillon, 2011).

The operational roles of the HRD consultant involve delivery of learning and development interventions in response to a client brief. This may be direct provision of training courses or acting as an administrative expert, providing back-office facilities such as administration of a 360° appraisal instrument or collation of training needs analyses. All four of the roles illustrated in Figure 22.1 could be provided by either external or internal consultants.

From the discussion so far, we have illuminated that HRD consultants may be internal or external, working at strategic or operational levels; they may provide discrete interventions in response to a tight client brief; or they may have long-term strategic relationships with responsibility for leading organization development and change. In the next section we explore some of the key consultancy models that are prevalent in HRD and organizational development.

## Consultancy models

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This section sets out to promote critical thinking about consultancy models, with the aim of supporting improved consultancy practice. Consultancy and consultancy approaches form a vast subject that presents any author with a multitude of options when addressing it. In this chapter we focus on three main approaches to consultancy, which are outlined below. They are not exclusive but attempt to provide a framework to think systematically, and illustrate some of the complexities of systemic organizational interventions.

### *The purchase model*

The purchase-of-information model depends on the client diagnosing the cause of the problem, then deciding what appropriate action should be taken and who will supply the expertise.

#### Key description

- Buyer defines needs.
- If the organization does not have the time or capability it will bring in a consultant.

#### Assumptions

- The manager knows what s/he is looking for from the consultant's intervention.

#### Success depends upon

- whether the manager has diagnosed the organization's needs correctly;
- whether the manager has communicated these needs effectively to the consultant;

- whether the manager has correctly assessed the capability of the consultant;
- whether the manager has thought through the consequences of implementing the changes recommended.

### Examples of this type of consultancy

- surveys;
- purchasing of training courses;
- design of computer systems and processes.

### The doctor–patient model

The consultant ‘examines’ the organization, diagnoses and prescribes.

### Disadvantages of this model

- The ‘patient’ (the organization) may not reveal all the information.
- The ‘patient’ may not like the prescription.
- The consultant may not prescribe an appropriate course of action.
- The ‘patient’ may not implement the prescription effectively.

### The process consultation model

Process consultation (PC) is a set of activities on the part of the consultant that help the client to perceive, understand and act upon the process events that occur in the client’s environment in order to improve the situation as defined by the client. The most central premise of PC is that the client owns the problem and continues to own the problem throughout the consultation process.

(Schein, 1998: 20)

### Assumptions underlining process consultation

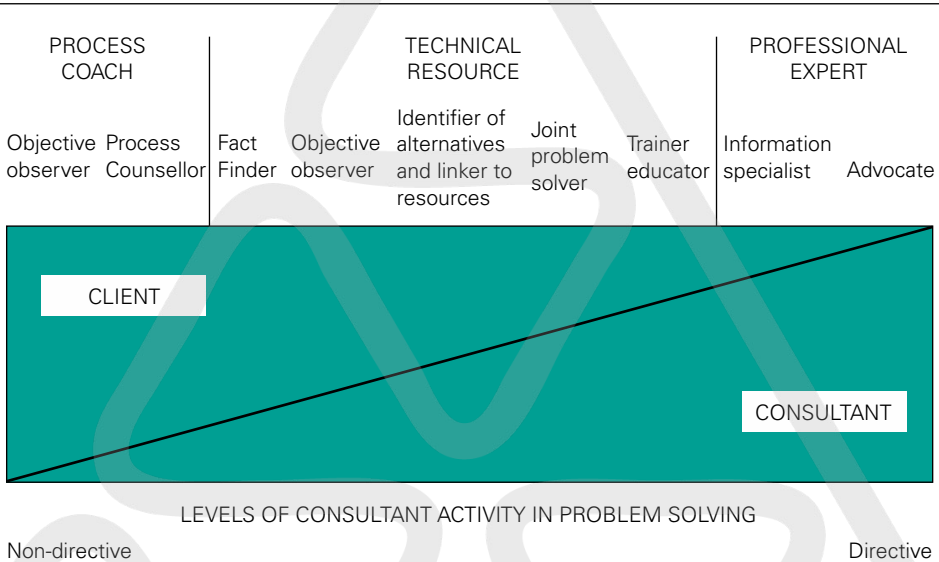
- The consultant *helps* the client to identify and find solutions to problems and develops in the client the necessary skills to solve similar problems in the future.
- The consultation process itself then helps the client to define diagnostic interventions that lead to the right problem-solving steps; the client thus learns how to solve problems on future occasions without the help of the consultant.
- The goals of the process consultant are to pass on some of his or her skills, perspectives and broad insights to the client.

In driving organizational change, the HRD consultant is looking to change *individual group and organizational* behaviours attitudes and culture. As Schein (1998: 22) highlights, ‘The processes we need to learn to observe and manage are those that make a demonstrable difference to problem solving, decision making, and organizational effectiveness in general.’



The above models illuminate that there are a number of styles that consultants can adopt in their relationship with the clients and the organization. An important part of internal or external consultancy is the *'entry' relationship*. This involves analysing the situation and deciding what styles should be adopted by the HR consultant. The styles open to the consultant can be explored in terms of a continuum, as outlined in Figure 22.2.

**FIGURE 22.2** Multiple roles of the consultant

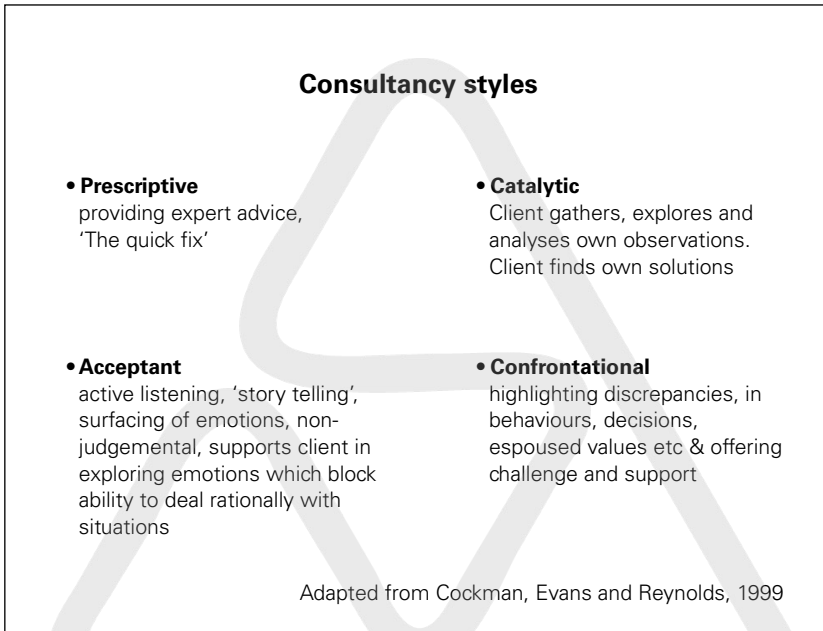


When considering which style to adopt it is important to analyse and evaluate the context and relationships in which you are operating, choose the most appropriate styles and check from time to time that the chosen style remains appropriate. In many instances the relationship of the external consultant and client has a secondary purpose – that of developing skills in the client, so that they are able to act as internal consultants within the organization. In such cases, although the problem itself might suggest a consultant-dominated relationship, the need to develop interdependency might call for a juggling of consultancy styles, as illustrated in Figure 22.3.

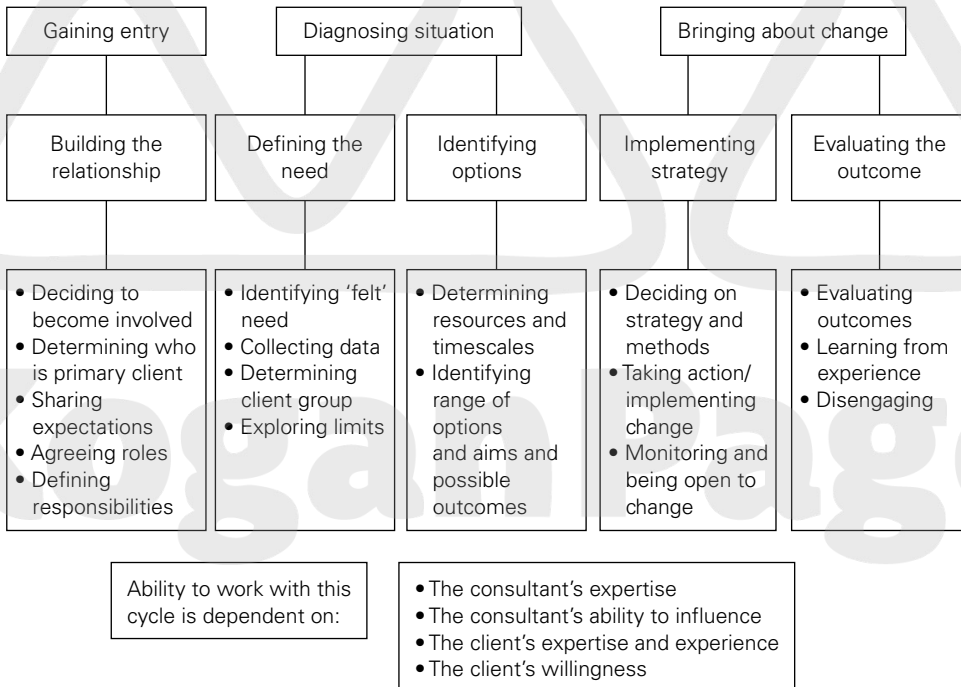
In summary, the models offer a guide to consultancy approaches as applied to HRD. The intention is not simply to impart knowledge but to stimulate critical thinking in the more subtle questions such as the politics of using consultants, the range of purposes for which they may be engaged, and the effects of different contexts on consultancy practice.

A key aspect of HRD consultancy is to link theory to practice, thus situating HRD consulting practice within the organizational system and the power relations that impact *on* and *in* the system. Critical engagement requires the consultant to be observant of the wider impact of any consultancy intervention taken, and conversely to be conscious of how HRD consultancy is influenced by other phenomena within the organizations. The consultancy model outlined in Figure 22.4 will hopefully seed

**FIGURE 22.3** Consultancy styles



**FIGURE 22.4** The consultancy model



ideas and questions that will develop as the reader is engaged in the practice of consultancy, thus developing more contextual and processual accounts than the idealistic prescriptions and models that have dominated the study of this practice.

## Consulting techniques

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Internal and external consultancy involve planned interventions in real-time situations and a study of those interventions as they occur, which in turn forms further interventions. Thus, consulting involves more than an exchange of information and ideas as outlined above. In the next section of this chapter we explore consulting techniques and problem-solving approaches that can be used to facilitate organizational learning and development. A range of these are outlined and discussed below:

- the GROW model;
- SWOT analysis;
- force field analysis.

### *The GROW model*

The GROW model is a helpful coaching and problem-solving framework for individual and organizational development (Figures 22.5 and 22.6).

### *SWOT analysis*

SWOT analysis is a very effective way of identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of a situation and for examining the Opportunities and Threats that exist within the organization.

#### How to use the tool

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, write down answers to the following questions:

#### Strengths

- What are your advantages?
- What are the advantages in the situation?
- What do you do well?
- What is going well in the situation?
- What do other people see as your strengths?
- What do you see as the strong points of the situation?

Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you are working with. Be realistic. If you are having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics or the characteristic issues of the situation you are dealing with. Some of these will, one would hope, be strengths.

**FIGURE 22.5** The GROW model**Goal**

- **Agree** topic for discussion
- **Agree** specific objective
- **Set** long-term aim if appropriate

**Reality**

- **Invite** self-assessment of situation/need
- **Offer** specific feedback
- **Avoid** or check assumptions
- **Discard** irrelevant history
- **Focus** on problem and its causes

**Will**

- Commit to action
- Identify possible obstacles
- Make steps specific and define timing
- Agree support you will provide (eg absentee's colleagues)

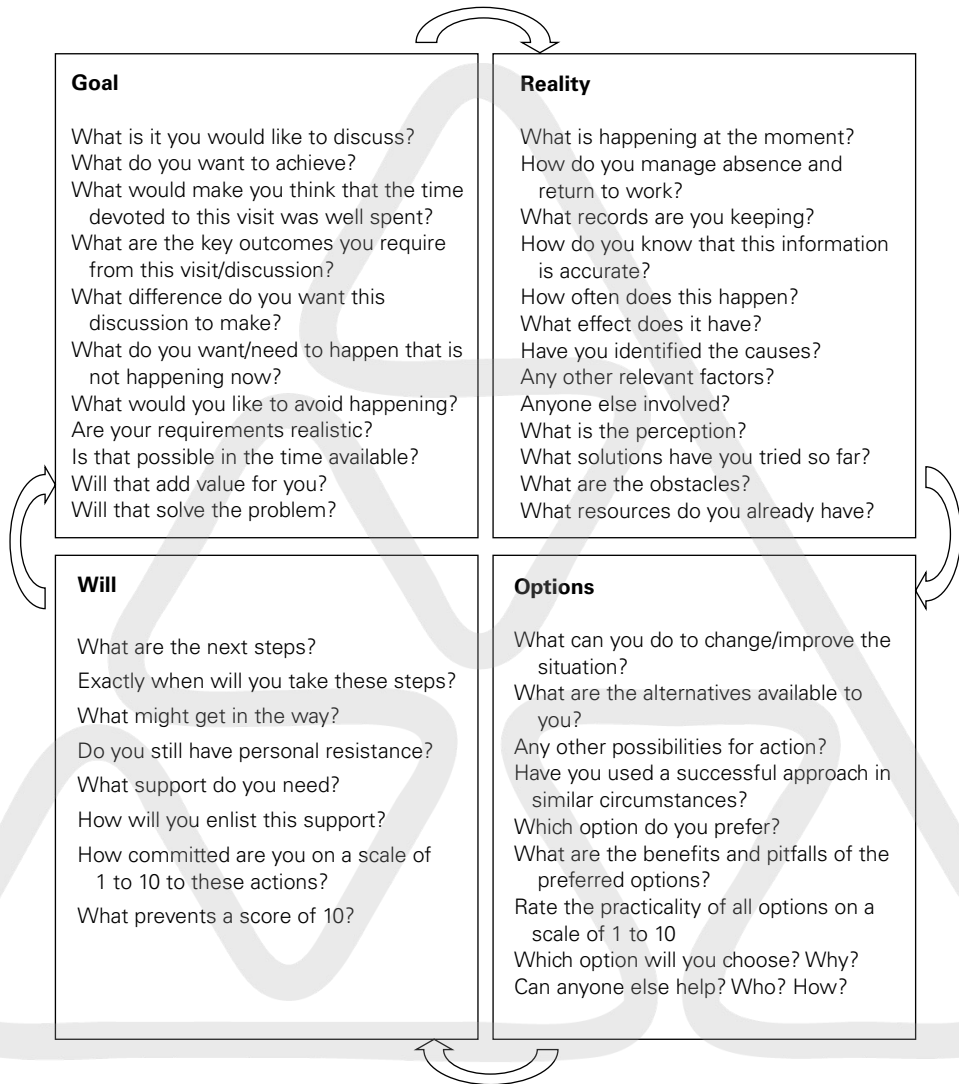
**Options**

- Cover the full range of options
- Invite suggestions from client
- Offer suggestions carefully and supportively
- Agree other support needed
- Ensure appropriate choices are made

**Weaknesses**

- What should be improved?
- What could you improve?
- What needs changing?
- What do you do badly?
- What should you avoid?
- What real problems exist in the current situation?
- What is failing or being overly stretched?

Again, consider this from an internal and external perspective. Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Are they doing any better than you? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

**FIGURE 22.6** Useful questions when using the GROW model

## Opportunities

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?
- What new opportunities are you aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- changes in technology and markets on both a broad and a narrow scale;
- changes in government policy related to your field;

- changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes etc;
- local events;
- new people;
- gaining new skills.

## Threats

- What obstacles do you face?
- Will people react positively or negatively?
- What is your competition doing?
- Are the required specifications for your job, products or services changing?
- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?
- Is sickness absence increasing either in time off or in numbers of people involved?

## Key points

SWOT analysis is a framework for analysing an organization's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats it may be facing. As a result, it enables managers to focus on the key strengths, minimize weaknesses and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to the organization.

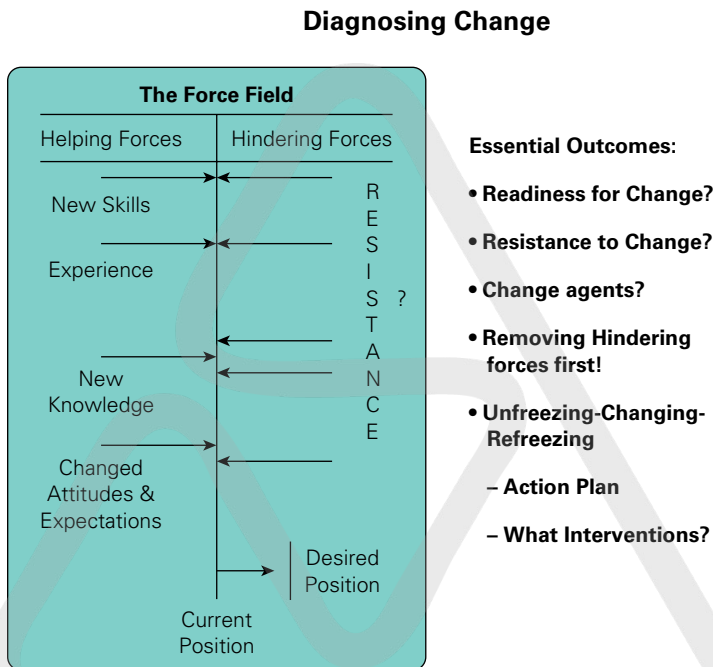
## Force field analysis

The force field is a technique for diagnosing the process of change in an organization. By assessing the 'helping and hindering forces', HRD consultants and managers can assess what may be needed to help the change process move towards the 'desired position'. Initially, it is more helpful to reduce the hindering forces so as to try to lower the resistance to change.

## How to use the tool

To carry out a force field analysis, follow these steps:

- List all forces for change (positive forces) in one column, and all forces against change (negative forces) in another column.
- Assign a score to each force, from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong).
- Draw a diagram showing the forces for and against change, as outlined in Figure 22.7.

**FIGURE 22.7** Force field analysis

### Key points

Force field analysis is a useful technique for looking at all the forces for and against a decisive plan. It helps you to weigh the importance of these factors and decide whether a plan is worth implementing.

## Problems and pitfalls in HRD consultancy

Illustrations in the previous sections have introduced different applications of consultancy methods from the considerable range available to HRD consultants. An aspect of consultancy that we have not touched on is the problems and pitfalls of HRD consultancy. In this section we focus on potential pitfalls for HRD consultants that can arise from conflicting stakeholder expectations, client positivism and the difficulties of achieving a meaningful evaluation. We illustrate the issues with extended examples.

Problems of outsourcing have been well documented, including that consultants are often unfamiliar with clients' strategies and cultures, or have insufficient knowledge of the business (Woodall et al, 2009). Internal consultants may have a better contextual understanding, but as the example below illustrates, insider consultants can sometimes be blinkered by the presumptions that come from their familiarity.



## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Pitfalls of pre-knowledge in internal HRD consultancy

Carol Yapp (2006), who has a role as training manager within an English local authority, describes making an HRD intervention with the management team of one of the authority's divisions. The particular intervention was requested by the Division Head for the purpose of helping the team focus on working more collaboratively. As an internal consultant with several years experience within the organization, Yapp was familiar to several of the individuals in the team, a fact she came to see as both a disadvantage and an advantage. She describes engaging in a 'pretty careful and substantial setting up process, from the "classic" training needs analysis, choosing the development tool, building the "contract", gaining agreement, warming people up to an unfamiliar approach, through to implementation' (Yapp, 2006: 114).

Yapp initiated a six-month action-learning process, taking care to outline different levels of emotional exposure members could choose to engage with. After three sessions reasons were found by group members to take a break, and the initiative was not resumed. In reflecting on the reasons why, Yapp drew several conclusions about her own interventions and their timing, but one factor, which is of particular relevance for this chapter, is how she describes relying on her insider knowledge to make assumptions about individuals' comfort with disagreement and about existing group norms, which turned out to be unhelpful. The suggestion is that an external consultant, unclouded by prior assumptions, might have been more attuned to picking up such signals.

We do not present this example to suggest internal consultancy is inevitably doomed. It illustrates some potential pitfalls, but on other occasions insider cultural knowledge can enable internal consultants to work more effectively than externals.

## Power, positivism and evaluation

Discussing the methodological arguments surrounding psychological consulting within organizations (for example as applied to coaching), Kilburg captures the common mismatch with client positivist expectations of quick, simple solutions experienced by consultants:

In the best of circumstances, practitioners are blessed with sophisticated clients who both know and understand what our discipline and craft can contribute and seek services willingly, even eagerly. In many cases, practitioners face the same kind of situation that this case presents – an extremely difficult and complex organizational challenge, a reluctant if not hostile primary client, and an initial contract that in essence communicates – perform or else you will be fired.

(Kilburg, 2010: 204)

## ROE and stakeholder expectations

Organization stakeholders can have different expectations about what a learning intervention will deliver. For example, participants in first-line supervisor training

might particularly value the qualification and might expect to see advancement in their careers soon afterwards. Their line managers might hope to see them expand in capability and confidence, and hope to be able to delegate to them more. Senior management might expect the training to result in an increased pool of potential new team leaders, ready to be moved to wherever required. HR may share this expectation. Anderson (2007) found that whilst ROE (return on expectation) is popular with learning, training and development professionals (L&TD), it carries little weight with senior managers, who place more value on such matters as: the extent to which employees show 'strategic readiness', the delivery of performance improvements, the extent to which employees are showing anticipated new behaviours, the extent to which particular strategic people skills have been developed, the size of the talent pool and the successful management of succession. Anderson terms this ROE, which she suggests starts from the anticipated results looked for by various key stakeholders from a learning intervention. This is informed by their organizational position as well as the extent to which L&TD professionals have communicated and clarified expectations prior to designing an intervention.

One way of understanding the differing stakeholder expectations within organizations is through recognizing that people, can see any of 'four territories of experience' (Fisher and Rooke, 2000; Torbert, 2004) as critical for effective action in the world: visioning, strategizing, performing and assessing:

- Visioning is concerned with long-term intentions, purposes and aims.
- Strategizing is concerned with planning and implementing overall delivery.
- Performing is concerned with acting in pursuit of role-defined responsibilities.
- Assessing is concerned with observed behavioural consequences and the effects of action.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Stakeholder expectations – an illustration

This account relates to a management and leadership development programme for 100 senior managers of a British public service organization. Commissioned by the Chief Executive for the purpose of raising the authority's overall capacity and performance, the programme was provided by a university, using a team of experienced facilitators with public policy backgrounds, from within and outside the university. The main point of contact with the client organization and its project leader was a representative from the local authority's human resources team. The contract to deliver was won after competitive tender, with the client very clear on the outcome wanted: namely, to increase across the organization as a whole the level of transformational leadership (as defined by Alimo-Metcalfe and Nyfield, 2002). Alongside this fundamental objective was a secondary one expressed in the tender specification: '90 per cent of sessions to be rated good or higher'.

Running over two years, the programme involved a range of elements, including workshops, master classes and readings that explored different theoretical ideas. Core, however, were student-selected live organizational issues, presented within action-learning sets that met periodically throughout the programme. Critical reflection was encouraged particularly within the action-learning sets, where each member was guided to work on an individual inquiry question (Torbert, 1999; Mead, 2006), making their own interpretation of the broad question, 'How do I improve my managerial leadership?' So, for example, if one individual initially pursued the question, 'How do I improve my team meetings?' they would be facilitated to ask other questions, such as

- Why am I using meetings in this format?
- How am I managing?
- What do I feel about what is going on?
- Where is the power in these meetings?
- What emotion is there?
- What are my choices?

As mentioned above, one of the contract's specified objectives was to have 90 per cent of the sessions rated good or higher, a common enough phrase in training evaluation sheets. However, this is not an expectation that anticipates dissonance from a development intervention. Yet dissonance is commonly, if not inevitably, generated by critical reflection, (Jackall, 1988; Reynolds, 1999; Brookfield, 1994). It should therefore have been no surprise to find some negative reactions within the workplace programme. The interesting point is how this was construed by different stakeholders.

A majority of participants in this case study engaged actively with the action-learning process and the critical reflection involved, and expressed positive views about the impact on their confidence, self-understanding and insights into the wider organizational/policy context. But some remained reluctant and sceptical about the value of critical reflection. A handful approached the client to try to opt out of the action learning and complained, 'I don't find the sessions useful. All the facilitator does is ask questions.' 'I can't possibly spare three hours to sit around just talking.'

These could be interpreted as discomfort with exposure (Yapp, 2006), anxiety over the uncertainty of an unfamiliar process (Vince, 1996), or perhaps hastily made utilitarian judgments regarding the value of time spent reflecting. The facilitator perspective of sceptical participants might be to assume they are avoiding engagement. Another interpretation is that facilitators often become the containers for participants' emotions, temporarily being recipients of feelings that really relate to elsewhere in their lives, typically some aspect of their organization. Dissonance and disruption is an inevitable feature of the organizational change that HRD consultants are commissioned to accomplish.

The university manager, if she has a strong grounding in critical reflection, may take the view that participants' reluctance to engage in the critical reflection/action-learning process of an in-company programme can be attributed to a desire for a conventional training or development programme, where the focus is more often on giving instruction about 'how to do it', and a facilitator 'teaches' rather than asks questions. She might communicate to the client the view that behaviours towards the consultant mirror organizational behaviours and as such

should be treated as useful data about blocks to the desired transformational leadership across the organization. However, she may prioritize immediate steps to keep the customer happy, focusing on future reputation and the prospects of future contracts, even if this sacrifices the deeper impact the programme could have on the client organization.

The client may conceive of the participants on the programme as internal customers who should each be satisfied 90 per cent of the time, as specified in the case study programme contract. In this case the client will respond to them as such and perhaps tolerate their disengagement from the programme because it is uncomfortable and disruptive. Alternatively, the sponsor might construe the managers as participants of, and in, an organization change initiative. In this case the client might understand them to be not only actors in that organization transformation process but also potentially organization members who are integral to existing organization dilemmas. The client faces a tension between a role of pleasing the internal members and a change agent role that asserts to participants that they cannot choose not to 'consume' the product, and sets expectations that they fully engage.

In the context of HRD consultancy there are several stakeholders, not only participants and providers, but also client and academic manager, in addition to the sponsor (chief executive). This is a different and more complicated brew of emotion and power dynamics. There is an interesting tension in which participating members are constructed simultaneously as customers of a product and as actors in an organization transformation process. There is an inherent contradiction between the pull to keep the customer satisfied and the conception that organization change needs disruption to the existing order (ie disorder, disorganization and disturbance) that will inevitably cause some discord amongst individual members. How this is constructed and managed by the client, sponsor, participants, facilitators and academic manager will affect which direction prevails.

One way of looking at these complex dynamics builds on Geoff Mead's (2006) use of the 'four territories of experience' proposed by Fisher, Torbert and others (Fisher and Rooke, 2000; Torbert, 2004). They present the four territories – visioning, strategizing, performing and assessing – as critical for effective action in the world. As they define them, visioning is concerned with long-term intentions, purposes and aims; strategizing involves planning and implementing overall delivery; performing is concerned with acting in pursuit of role-defined responsibilities; and assessing focuses on observed behavioural consequences and the effects of action. Table 22.1 uses this framework to assess the different perspectives held on critical reflection by the different players in this case study.

**TABLE 22.1** Different perspectives on critical reflection

|                     | Stakeholders  |  |   |   |  |
|---------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
|                     | Sponsor (chief executive)   | Client   | Academic manager  | Action-learning set facilitators  | Individual participants  |
| <b>Perspective</b>  | <b>Visioning</b><br>Long-term impact of programme as a whole on the local authority's performance | <b>Strategizing</b><br>Medium to long-term impact of programme   | <b>Strategizing</b><br>Medium to long-term impact and sustainability of critical reflection/action-learning group process | <b>Performing</b><br>Medium to short-term exercise of facilitator role to sustain action-learning group and encourage critical reflection | <b>Assessing</b><br>Short to medium-term impact of reflecting in the group on my work                              |
| <b>Question</b>     | How do we know critical reflection is 'working well' – and represents good value for money?       | How can I deliver the contract aim of transformational leadership whilst keeping the space open for satisfaction of individual organization members? | How can I satisfy the client that we are doing good work whilst keeping the space open for dissonance to work through?    | How can I encourage critical reflection and be attuned to individual feelings?  | How can this activity meet my needs well enough to justify the time I have to take out of my busy life to be here? |
| <b>Pull towards</b> | Control<br>Tangible outcomes that can be evidenced to others to prove value                       | Co-ordinate<br>Coherent stories of what critical reflection is achieving in relation to contract aim   | Co-ordinate<br>Coherent stories of what critical reflection is achieving in relation to contract aim                      | Facilitate<br>Activities that promote critical reflection and improve practice of participants  | Relate<br>Peers that help me act more effectively in face of demands and pressures and work                        |
| <b>Tensions</b>     | Holding the space between the Council and the deliverers  | Holding the space between the sponsor, individual participants and academic manager  | Holding the space between the client and group facilitators   | Holding the space between academic manager and participants   | Holding the space between work demands and space for my development  |

## Conclusion

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This chapter has highlighted a number of implications for HRD consultants. Kilburg's (2010: 205) argument that, 'Postmodern views of leadership and organization suggest that nothing happens between and among humans without dialogue and relationship,' highlights the importance of building trust within the consulting relationship. He and others argue for an extended contracting process, through which dialogue is used to explore expectations and to articulate some of the paradoxes of consultancy (Whittle, 2006), such as being both a facilitator (in the sense of leaving ownership of problem and solutions with the client) and leader (in the sense of having expert knowledge to steer the process). To this could be added the paradox of committing to action without necessarily knowing the diagnosis of a situation. Arising from this perspective on the consulting process, HRD consultants need well-developed insight into themselves (Yapp, 2006; Whittle and Izod, 2009), so that they are highly attuned to their own drivers, assumptions or power needs. Furthermore, the HRD consultant's pre-understanding, organizational role and ability to manage organizational politics play an important role in the political process of framing and facilitating the consultancy process.

## Questions for reflection

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- How would you normally conduct an assignment? Relate this to the theory.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external consultants.
- The various stakeholders in the organization do not agree on a course of action. What do you as an internal consultant do to resolve these differences?

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## 23

# Learning spaces that change people and organizations

COLIN BEARD and ILFRYN PRICE

*There are few more urgent tasks than to design social infrastructures that foster learning.* (WENGER, 1998: 174)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- explore how space, in relation to new defining parameters of learning, has been largely neglected by HR;
- grasp the concept of convergent evolution in relation to ‘learning’ and ‘working’;
- have a snapshot overview of the evolving theories of learning;
- consider the interrelatedness of learning theories and learning environments;
- understand a simple model of learning that explores learning environments in relation to other important learning dynamics;
- explore how spatial dynamics affect language and conversations.

## Introduction

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What might an ideal learning space look like? In this chapter we show how work and learning spaces and places are rapidly changing. We begin with a consideration of theory and then illuminate the theory with leading-edge practices from several

international contexts. We will explore how the design of the workplace and the occupation of *other spaces* for learning, working and knowledge generation are evolving and becoming complex due to occupancy costs, lost-knowledge costs and what we know about learning and human development.

*Working* and *learning* in the knowledge economy are regarded as converging phenomena, with both requiring a similar range of mental functioning, particularly ‘higher-level’ thinking through complex information manipulation. However, what has been largely misunderstood is that such functions can be assisted and, more significantly, liberated by mobility, particularly by incorporating the powerful capacities of the GPS-like human positioning mechanisms. This chapter will suggest that humans might better experience and understand complex and problematic knowledge by providing space for the extra gear of bodily-sensorial capacities.

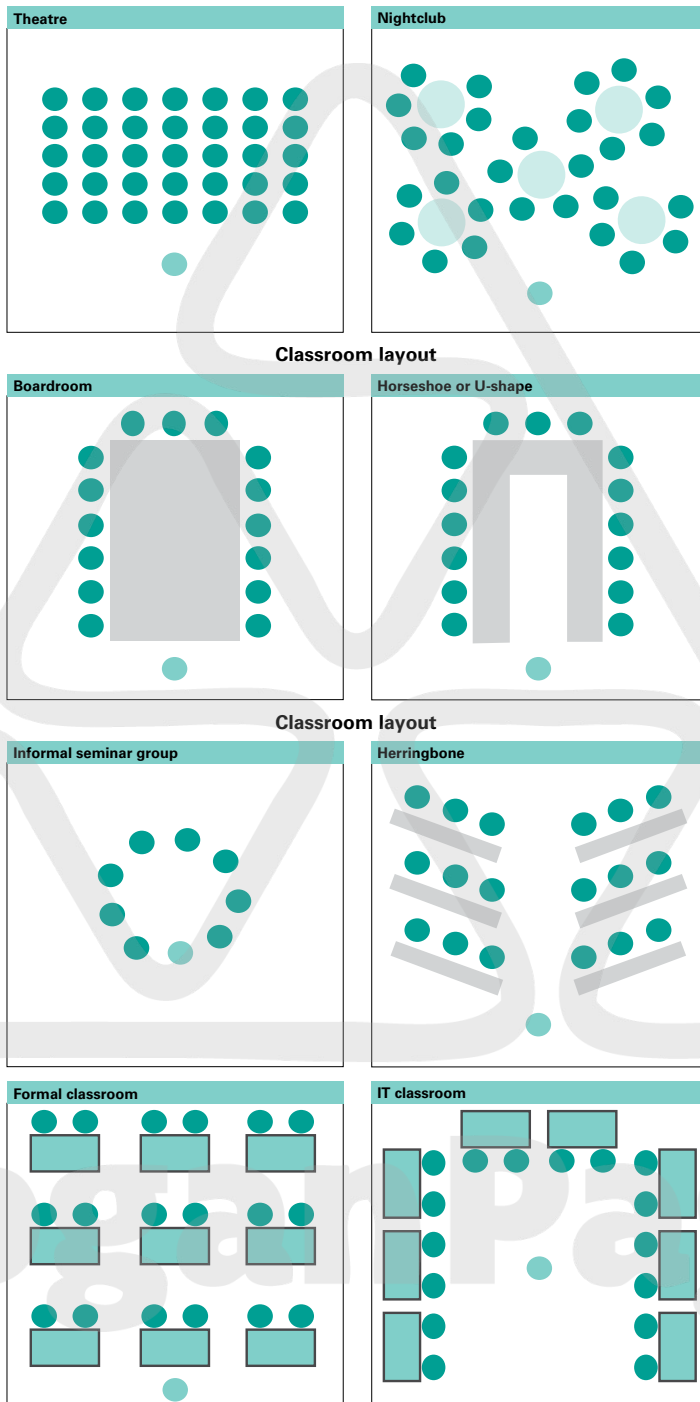
## Schools, colleges, universities and workspaces

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At one time, many texts about learning discussed the learning ‘environment’ in simple terms: seating arrangements (see Figure 23.1), room ambience and the use of basic information dissemination technology. From the earliest days, schools used to seat children at separate desks, in rows, for dissemination and reception of basic information, and our offices did much the same.

Gradually thinking about school design evolved, and this wider approach is illustrated by the writing of Jeffrey Lackney and Randall Fielding of Designshare, who identified a number of school design principles based on brain-based learning research (10 important principles are provided below):

- *Rich, stimulating environments*: Colour, texture, ‘teaching architecture’, displays created by learners so they have connection and ownership of the product.
- *Places for group learning*: Break-out spaces, alcoves, table groupings to facilitate social learning and stimulate the social brain – turning break-out spaces into living rooms for conversation.
- *Linking indoor and outdoor places*: Movement, engaging the motor cortex linked to the cerebral cortex for oxygenation.
- *Corridors and public places containing symbols of the community’s larger purpose*: To provide coherency and meaning that increases motivation (warning: go beyond slogans).
- *Variety of places*: Provide a variety of places of different shapes, colour, light, nooks and crannies.
- *Have all the resources available*: Provide educational, physical and a variety of settings in close proximity to encourage rapid development of ideas generated in a learning episode. Multiple functions and cross-fertilization of ideas are primary goals.
- *Flexibility*: A common principle in the past continues to be relevant. Many dimensions of flexibility of place are reflected in other principles.

**FIGURE 23.1** Seating arrangements

- *Active/passive places*: Students need places for reflection and retreat away from others for interpersonal intelligence as well as places for active engagement to develop interpersonal intelligence.
- *Personalized space*: The concept of homebase needs to be emphasized more than by just the metal locker or the desk; this speaks to the principle of uniqueness: the need to allow learners to express their self-identity, and personalize their special places and places to express territorial behaviours.
- *The community-at-large as the optimal learning environment*: Need to find ways to fully utilize all urban and natural environments as the primary learning setting; the school as the fortress of learning needs to be challenged and conceptualized more as a resource-rich learning centre that supplements lifelong learning. Technology, distance learning, community and business partnerships, home-based learning, all need to be explored as alternative organizational structures for educational institutions of the present and future.  
(<http://www.designshare.com/Research/BrainBasedLearn98.htm>)

Universities had a similar focus on linear teaching arrangements, but these institutions are now leading the way with changes in the design of new learning environments (Beard, 2008), partly because the *business of learning* is taking centre stage in faculty design. Straight lines and cubicles promote linear thinking, inhibiting what Peters called ‘systemic thinking’; indeed Peters suggested long ago that ‘space management may well be the most ignored – and most powerful – tool for inducing culture change, speeding up innovation projects, and enhancing the learning process in far-flung organizations’ (Peters, 1993: 413). And, it would now appear, learning and working environments are becoming more intricate, and the reason is partly to do with what we know about adult learning (Beard, 2012).

## So what do we know about learning?

Adult learning theories have been critically examined, exposing their limitations and deficits (see Chapter 3) and there appears to be an evolutionary process that points to a continuing search for more ‘complete’ ideas about how adults learn. By the early 20th century behaviourism had emerged and was linked to and associated with animal behaviour, focusing on, for example, conditioning and stimulus–response (Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1974). Cognitivist theories surfaced in the late 1950s, seeing the ‘human’ as unique, intelligent and rational (eg Lewin, 1951; Gagne, 1974; Bloom, 1956). The cognitive focus alluded to computational processes of thinking, remembering and analysing, and seeking ways to explain and make sense of the world. By the late 1960s humanist theories were emphasizing personal agency and the fulfilment of potential. Perhaps the most well-known proponent was Carl Rogers, whose classic text *Freedom to Learn* (1969) articulated the liberatory metaphor. Rogers was a therapist, and he suggested that warmth, acceptance and nurturing were central to learning, and individuals had it within themselves to learn and change if treated in the right way. Such ideas gave rise to

learner-centred methods. Historically, such thinking has influenced issues such as office-space design and human resources.

Culture and social context became increasingly recognized as important (eg Vygotsky, 1978), giving rise to a range of social constructivist theories, with learning seen as active and contextualized. Learners ‘constructed’ knowledge themselves, both individually and through social interaction. The ubiquitous cafe-style spaces within work buildings have, to an extent, been liberatory, driven partly by thoughts about knowledge creation through human interaction. However, social constructivist thinking is now positioned amidst a vast milieu of views about human learning: psychoanalytic theories (Britzman, 1998), the questioning of a single intelligence (Gardner, 1983), major advances in neuroscience (Damasio, 1995), a widening recognition of the role of the body in learning (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Sheets-Johnstone, 2009), specifically bodily gestures (Gallagher, 2005), the human senses (Abram, 1997) and emotions (Illeris, 2002; Mortiboys, 2005). Such diversity illustrates the ongoing search for more integrative explorations of learning within and across disciplines (Dillon, 2007) where the connective relationship between what practitioners in neuro-linguistic programming call *mind*, *body* and *field* can be further understood.

Although far from presenting a comprehensive picture, this very brief historical sketch highlights a trajectory towards the understanding of the now complex *ecology* of human learning. Holistic modelling is increasingly required to go beyond the simple primacy of the mind. Heron (2001: 208) voiced concern that, ‘The old model of education, going back to classical times, dealt only with the education of the intellect, theoretical and applied,’ and that ‘nowadays we have people who are learning by thinking, feeling and doing – bringing all these to bear on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.’ In 2002 the Danish educator Knud Illeris broadened his theorizing to include emotions, suggesting three dimensions as central to learning: the social dimension, cognition and emotion. He noted (Illeris, 2002: 157) that ‘in order for learning to be characterised as formation of experience, the learner must be actively present and be self-aware in his or her interaction with the social and/or material environment.’ But this was just the beginning. While at first glance these examples appear to have little currency for human resource development there is a further translation. The contemporary design of working and learning space and place is beginning to mirror the very same complexity found in the theories of learning. Let us illustrate this with a definition of a learning environment as:

A sufficiently diverse and varied, physical or virtual, natural or artificial place and/or space that, wherever and whenever, can facilitate and engage people in the wide range of learning activities, through connectivity and community, cultivating and sustaining psychological, intellectual, emotional, social and political development.

(Beard, 2008: 184)

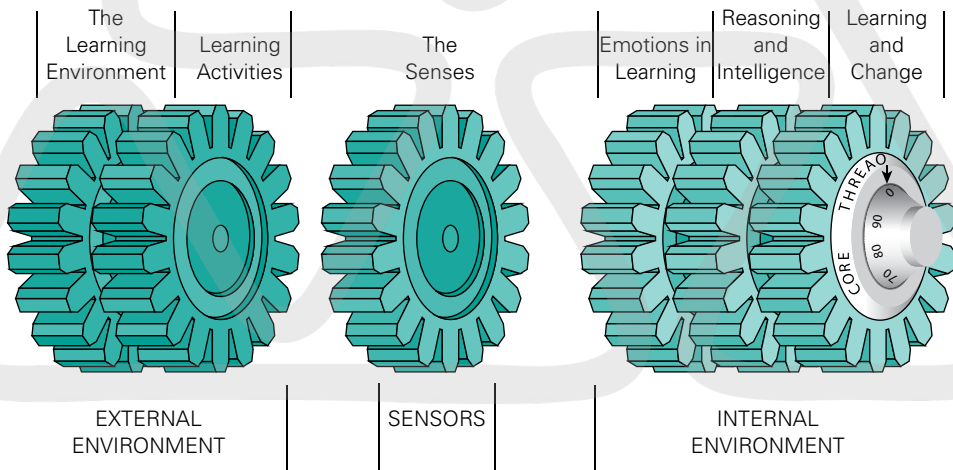
The same definition might also hold for *working* environments; after all working and learning have a mutual affinity in the knowledge economy. Learning theory has renewed significance to HRD thinking, both in organizational and pedagogic contexts. Our biological inheritance is to sense and understand the world through a range of complex processes.

## A simple model of complexity

Connecting six dimensions of learning, Beard and Wilson (2002, 2006) argue for a greater understanding of the relational and dynamic nature of a number of core aspects of learning. Using integrative theorizing, the model (Figure 23.2) specifically recognizes the importance of the learning environment, including the relationship between space, place, and cultural and socio-political contexts. External stimuli are then interpreted emotionally, cognitively and behaviourally. The model is sometimes presented as a mechanical metaphor of a combination lock to represent the almost infinite possibilities for these important dimensions to be unlocked.

Broader philosophical considerations of the location and context of learning are addressed through six dimensions (Figure 23.2), the first of which involves *belonging*. The second dimension concerns what learners *do* (active component); the third concerns *sensing* (how information and the experience is received internally for processing), the fourth concerns *feeling* (emotions), the fifth concerns aspects of *thinking* (cognition), and finally the sense of *being* (learning and change).

**FIGURE 23.2** Increased complexity: six dimensions of learning



| SIX PRACTICAL QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT |   |  |  |                                       |   |
|--|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| WHERE? WHERE DOES LEARNING TAKE PLACE?               | WHAT? WHAT WILL THE LEARNERS ACTUALLY DO? | HOW? HOW WILL LEARNERS RECEIVE THE EXPERIENCE? | HEARTS? CONSIDER THE EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT? | MINDS? WHAT DO LEARNERS NEED TO KNOW? | CHANGE? HOW CAN LEARNERS BE ENCOURAGED TO CHANGE? |
| SIX PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS                     |   |  |  |                                       |   |
| BELONGING  | DOING                                     | SENSING  | FEELING                                    | THINKING                              | BEING   |



## Mirror image? Learning environments reflect learning theory complexity

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The focus of the first dimension on the left of the model (Figure 23.2) is related to a simple question: 'where' does learning takes place? The answer is more than a mere location: many social, political, and cultural dynamics are involved and the environment for learning relates to our sense of '*belonging*'. Becker (1990) suggests we should observe how workplace '*tribes*' operate in their '*territory*'. What we now know is that conflict exists between workplace tribes about these territories: the space providers (facilities and estates managers), space consumers (workers), space designers (such as architects), and institutional senior managers, including human resources specialists (HR), all speak a different language. The estates tribe have traditionally been focused on a language of efficiency in use, of durability in performance and density of occupation. For this tribe, work environments are operational places, to manage through measures and costs, inventories and equipment lists, offering an educational 'service'. Durability, efficiency, use of space (occupancy x frequency), percentage of seats filled, number of rooms used, return on investment, health and safety issues and theft and security problems all become part of the statistical data that form the basis of important managerial decision making. This is clearly not the language of individual and organizational learning and change.

Physical and virtual learning environments (VLEs), and work offices, have until recently remained rooted in simplistic, limiting, fixed linear arrangements. Although paper and telephones created a need for desks, the processing tools that once tied us to the workstation now have the potential to liberate people from a view of work as stationary and sedentary. Mobile tools, including lightweight, portable gesture-based computing technology, now support human movement in unexpected ways. From the pod came the pad: next the *i-wall*, allowing huge spaces to be potentially more productive for learning and working, rather than containing pictures or unused coat hooks. A simplistic non-technological application is outlined below (see *In practice* below).

The linear format of the written and spoken word as symbols of the uniqueness of the human being is now beginning to present new problems. Sheets-Johnstone (2009: 362) illustrates this point nicely when she suggests that 'everyday language is clumsy and inadequate when it comes to dynamics... [and] bodily feelings are not easily or readily describable, especially when it comes to affectivity and movement.' Mobility within and between spaces can accelerate the complex thought and social interaction that is learning and working. After all, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 555) note, 'our conceptual system is grounded in, neurally makes use of, and is crucially shaped by our perceptual and motor system.' They point to the lineage of cognitive processing metaphors that we live by as inherently sensorial and kinaesthetic: 'I see what you mean...', 'I have grasped the concept now...', 'I support my argument by...'. Lakoff and Johnson (ibid) also note that 'reason is not disembodied, as the tradition has largely held, but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience.' They note that the period before written and spoken language is usually referred to as *pre-linguistic*, implying a language vacuum. Reframing is suggested, utilizing the term *post-kinetic* that recognizes the bodily sensorial precursor to spoken and written form, which rather interestingly is still evident in existing pictographic languages (Abram, 1997) such as Chinese.

**CASE STUDY****In practice: Corporate financial training in India and Taiwan**

A training event for organizations in India and Taiwan concerned a refocus on the efficacy of staff training concerning complicated financial procedures. Linear oral descriptions and flat process diagrams tend not to support memory retention of complex information. Awareness of complex relational issues is restricted with linear processes involving speech, text and slide presentations.

The response was to arrange a 'walk-the-talk' experience (Beard and Price, 2010) in which participants equipped with suitable resources mapped out and talked about the processes concerned. Bodily movement and the natural human GPS system were key to the enhancement of learning through mapping, movement and conversation (see image below). The awareness of the body in space and time is partly the function of the senses, especially muscular proprioceptors. People have a sense of time and space through the bodily position in this mapping process, and the relational complexity is more easily understood and remembered.

The picture below shows work with AIG in Taiwan where the *learners did the learning*, rather than the *trainers doing the training*. Financial and selling models were 'constructed' by the learners using floors and walls, and the constructed material was then walked through whilst having conversations. A more technological response to this would be a gesture-based *i-walk*: gesture-based technologies allow multi-dimensional constructs to be manipulated by

**FIGURE 23.3** Complex financial information and memory retention: constructing models using floor and wall *space* and conversational learning (AIG Training Centre, Taiwan)



moving fingers and hands across screens. The movie *Minority Report* shows a glimpse of more futuristic technology that uses human gesture-based movement.

It is not without reason that 'war rooms' contain model ships, tanks and other battle resources, moved by hand across land and sea on flat surfaces and surrounding walls. They present complex vital information with greater efficacy. The corporate boardroom is traditionally devoid of such dimensional interplay, relying instead on speech, text and simple one-dimensional visualizations.

## Learning and working: a convergent evolution

An empty space becomes a place when we endow it with our culture and functional artefacts. A *workplace* thus becomes part of our identity and sense of belonging: a complex place to work, to learn, to socially interact, to think, write, and to just 'be' and 'belong'. Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) suggests that space is freedom, place is security. Place enables, but it can also limit. We now further explain the limiting aspects. Working is no longer solely concerned with *doing* work; the work function is diversifying, and learning is a key component. In the knowledge economy, socially constructed knowledge is important, requiring new forms of people mobility, particularly meeting in different spaces to have different conversations. It is worth noting that Aristotle's *peripatos* (the Greeks used the *peripatos* to signify learning while walking in a place that is sheltered – English 'peripatetic'), the cloisters of early universities, and golf course conversations emphasize such movement in a social interaction that has been largely misunderstood in business terms. This use of 'other' spaces is now of greater interest to HRD managers.

Organizations occupy *spaces* for staff to 'go away', for innovation, and for learning and change. Many other spaces are used for 'away days': hotels, retreats, outdoor centres, yachts, mountains and golf courses. Spaces can provide silence to think or write, both important business functions. How does this happen? Typically, heightened sensory alertness and increased cognitive receptiveness occur in novel locations and these other *spaces* have considerable potential to divest us of habituation and elements of (social, political and cultural) *belonging* that can inhibit change. 'Other space' is often less distracting, with less 'noise' emanating from culture and identities: a new collective identity has to be forged in new locations. Physical exercise and routine movement in outdoor environments can provide for different conversations. Such spaces appear exemplary for specific kinds of organizational and individual learning. Let us develop this further.

Reflection can be significant to learning. Wood-Daudelin (1996) suggests that solitary and group reflective processes are important for workplace learning, and she lists performance appraisal, project review sessions and mentoring as examples of group reflective processes. Individual, solitary reflective activities on the other hand include repetitive, rhythmic, routine so-called 'mindless' activities such as jogging, swimming laps, lawn mowing, and routine habits such as shaving, driving an established route, ironing or showering. It is suggested that this bodily act reduces or suspends incoming sensory information, allowing for a mental rewiring and a concentration on the sorting of existing data about previous experiences. Significantly

Wood-Daudelin is proposing that reflection is operating here as a state of flux between mind and body: the higher cognitive functions are facilitated by bodily movements. The *sand walk* at the house where Darwin lived honours his original example of a route around which he would walk so as to develop his thinking by creating a 'synthesizing mind state', which resulted, of course, in Darwin having some of the most original insights in the history of thinking. The rhythmic, subconscious movement of the activity facilitates contemplation by reducing sensory input. Much of the other scientific work by Darwin, sitting at his desk in his office studying barnacles for several years of his life, remains largely unknown.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: Space for working and learning – the ECHQ story

Pragmatism, rather than theory, guided the redevelopment of the London headquarters of the global property consultancy EC Harris. ECHQ, as it was labelled, was redesigned as a solution to several strategic challenges, notably differentiation and rejuvenation of the company's surveying practice and its aim of projecting itself as 'the built asset consultancy'. The developed design involved some 20 per cent of the available space as a semi-public front-of-house, with clever but discreet security. The workplace was reconfigured, tiered and layered, with some 900 staff accommodated at 545 'work stations'. The project is credited with dramatic increases in profitability, staff satisfaction and knowledge generation, as well as a significant reduction in space requirement per head and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (for a full account, see Stuart, 2012).

The three key layers of the workplace were as follows. Layer one created public areas available to anyone, including the practice's clients and collaborators. This area was welcome 'public' space for staff and visitors, involving the cafe/social dynamic as a conversational form. Layer two was available, though less formally recognized, for 'friends' of ECHQ to have space to work online, with a desk. Layer three was a restricted 'staff' hot-desk milieu of varied light office spaces, designed to achieve a richer range of spaces for different conversations, with efficient density without crowding, and allowing for 'clusters' – mobile teams. The result was that the traditional desk is no longer the fixed space at which a worker is expected to sit. For me, the ECHQ approach was significant because if it were replicated in collaboration with other businesses in the City of London then, possibly for the first time, there would be an ecology of spaces and places providing a network of home and 'away' spaces. The spaces would also enable inner and outer conversations that mirror the understanding of the whole-person spatial-functional awareness of management learning and knowledge creation in a rapidly changing world (Beard and Price, 2012, forthcoming).

Another example of the use of space is provided by GCHQ, the UK's intelligence and communications agency, which is concerned with matters such as anti-terrorism and cyberspace monitoring. Their new circular building encourages new ways of working including: a work-anywhere culture with more open plan areas, greater desk and knowledge sharing, and agile teamworking that reduces response times. An outer circular ring of walking space, known as The Street, is the modern equivalent of the Ancient Greek's *peripatos*.

## Thinking spaces for learning, and working

Silence is required for certain mental functioning and it enables us to ‘concentrate’, to ‘think’ or ‘write’ in depth. Behuniak (2005: 11) argues for a pedagogy of silence, as a research topic, and she suggests that public spaces are diversifying whilst private spaces are declining, particularly in universities:

Given the need for solitude, it is ironic that what most universities do is to create an environment in which students are rarely alone. Intent on forming a campus community, campus architecture creates communal spaces: classrooms, student living quarters, outdoor quads, dining halls, recreation centres and now even libraries are places designed for students to be with others. Where, then, do they go to be alone... Where is the private space?

Here is the irony: workplaces and universities have little or no space to concentrate, think or write! Going on *away* days or retreats presents interesting terminology: *away*, retreating from what? To get away from the computer station, the incoming e-mails, incoming calls and perhaps the corporate cultural clutter, to find spaces to ‘concentrate’, to ‘think’, to ‘write’ or to innovate? These *away* environments need not be the same as space to process paper at a work *station*. If working and learning is more mobile it can occur in a diverse range of spaces and places; thus a tension between *doing* and *thinking* becomes apparent. Space diversity aligned to human functionality appears key.

### CASE STUDY

#### In practice: Solo and collaborative conversations

An approach to reflective learning, referred to as ‘*Coffee and papers*’ (Beard, 2008) got its name from learning and development settings in hotel lounges where the learning experience was designed to be comparable to reading the Sunday newspapers in a relaxed environment, and with a relaxed but focused mind state. Essentially it consists of an invitation to individuals to read themed articles and to intentionally relax in an environment that is special for each individual.

*Coffee and paper* typically generates high levels of learner engagement and knowledge generation through the process of individual reading in a retreat simulation, followed by social conversational learning. The experience is designed to develop a specific sensory-cognition, or body–mind state of ‘relaxed alertness’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Individuals experience comfort, with a degree of solitude, to enhance concentration and thinking. Coffees, teas, fruit juices, croissants and fruit add to the sensory experience. The quiet solo experience involves individual, internal conversations. After a period of solo reading the group reassembles and constructs collective conversations, critically exploring the range of readings. The acquired collective knowledge can be substantial. One senior manager said of one such session:

*One of the more effective learning community development exercises, in my view, followed the coffee and papers sessions each morning. During these sessions, differing views concerning the same articles were discussed and new insights developed based on individual experience*



*outside the articles. This led to a spin of ideas that spurred more new ideas, and reshaped some of my initial thoughts of the articles. It appeared that many of the participants shared this experience regarding the coffee and papers sessions.*

The reading is themed around subjects such as organizational development (OD), and papers are taken from both scholarly and professional journals: *Harvard Business Review*, *People Management*, *Management Learning*, *Management Education and Development*, *Training and Development*, *Industrial and Commercial Training*, *Sloan Management Review* and many others. Hardly Sunday morning reading! One chief executive in the corporate world sat in her stocking feet on a stool in a hotel lounge, surrounded by strawberries coated in chocolate, and coffee and croissants and papers. She said, 'Colin, I am in heaven. I never have the time to read any more. I have lost the power to think or read with any depth these days... I am enjoying this experience so much!' Senior executives admit to their pleasure at effectively being given permission to experience an extended period of *thinking* and *concentrating*. The *place* signifies that *time* for concentration is important and a legitimate extension of work.

Facilities managers and HRD managers concerned with new workplaces and the various barriers to change thrown up by organizational culture (eg Becker, 1990) might find a *coffee and papers* approach a pragmatic means of gaining executive buy-in to the strategic possibilities inherent in new workplaces. The *coffee and papers* experience had a profound effect on a whole organization. Staff in the UK's National Health Service (NHS) have responsibilities for sustaining professional development through reading of evidence-based clinical practice. Time to read about such clinical practice, however, had largely diminished due to the dominance of everyday activities: the *doing* dimension of learning. Concentrated reading and subsequent collective sharing was not happening for a number of reasons, including that of guilt associated with relaxed reading at work. Reading might not be interpreted as *doing* work. However, the staff of one primary care trust (PCT), having experienced *coffee and papers* on a training programme, put forward what turned out eventually to be a successful proposal brought to senior managers under the workplace umbrella. The proposal, as part of an 'Inspiration Award' scheme in 2009, included some of the following actions suggested in order to implement this idea:

- Encourage staff to write *reading time* into their objectives.
- Develop a marketing campaign across the PCT showing that it's ok to sit and read clinical material.
- Provide education for managers to help them understand how to enable staff to absorb current evidence.
- Understand the cost of allowing staff time to absorb evidence, but also calculate and understand the cost, service and other benefits.
- Purchase resources to make reading easier.

The provision of, and the informal legitimization of, reflective space within working environments is under-explored. The importance of such experiences to the corporate progress is highlighted by Ray Anderson, the CEO of Georgia-based global company Interface Carpets; when he realized he had little understanding of the notion of sustainable development he started reading more widely, and more critically, about his role as a business leader in society. His reading changed his views, his business and his life. The company is widely recognized as leading the way globally in business sustainability, winning many international awards. Significantly the dawning experience for Anderson, often referred to as an epiphany, was initiated through reading with an open yet critical mind.

## Innovation at work: spatial dynamics and conversations for innovation and learning

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Emerging as a new spatial phenomena is a recognition of the value of separating human inner conversations and human social, outer conversations. According to Dilts (1994: 163), a major element of Walt Disney's original genius was his ability to explore something from a number of different perceptual positions. An important insight into Disney's creative strategy comes from the comment of one of his animators: 'There were actually three different Walts: the dreamer, the realist and the spoiler. You never knew which one was coming into your meeting.' Based on this insight, Dilts identified creativity as a synthesis of different processes or phases. Specifically, *Dreamer* conversations enable new ideas and goals to be formed; *Realist* conversations transform those ideas into concrete expressions; *Critic* conversations act as a filter to counter overly creative or ambitious ideas but also to provide a stimulus for refinement. The separation of these conversations in time and space enables different contributory voices to be heard: commercially sound creativity can flourish. Likewise, Greenaway (2011) uses this phenomenon for reviewing learning experiences, taking learners through conversations about the plain facts of what they have done, their feelings about what they have done and the findings that have occurred, and finally allowing conversations about where these findings will take them into the future. The four conversations are separated in time and space.

## Conclusion

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An ideal learning space doesn't exist in a single form. Spaces for learning are undergoing considerable evolution, with contemporary models of learning beginning to recognize that the physical environment affects a vast milieu of learning dynamics (Beard and Wilson, 2006). Through practice examples we have sought to open up a new vista for HR, to highlight the under-appreciated and sophisticated nature of the connectedness of space and learning, including physical space, the bodily senses, human language and conversation. We have explored the important role of rhythmical physical bodily movement, the separation of cognitive and social conversations in different spaces, the use of quiet space to develop mind states of relaxed alertness, and the experiencing and understanding of problems that have a relational complexity in terms of time and space dimensions. At the heart of these brief explorations of practice is the requirement for greater flexibility and mobility of the space-learning-working dynamic. Mobility and flexibility are required for the movement of people, for the movement and reconfiguration of information, for the movement of technology itself as well as other artefacts, and for the reconfiguration of spaces to facilitate different conversational types that are essential for learning.

We have also highlighted a complex ecology of *mind*, *body* and '*field*' (the latter being the environment, the spatial milieu). Those with responsibility for workplace



productivity and change do need to understand the important, interrelated nature of space, cognition, bodily movement and conversation. An inability to grant physical expression to modern views of learning as mobile and corporeal may have long-term consequences that significantly limit the HR function. Learning and working are increasingly seen as undergoing asynchronous, co-evolutionary processes. The syncretization, the coming together, of learning theories with space usage has great potential to liberate the human. Learning and working is moving out beyond the office and classroom into other spaces, sometimes beyond immediate ownership. As a result, a new spatial ecology of spaces is being forged for learning and working.

Learning takes place everywhere on a college campus. In fact, learning arguably happens everywhere – on city sidewalks, in airplanes, in restaurants, in bookstores, and on playgrounds. Human beings – wherever they are – have the capacity to learn through their experiences and reflections.

(Chism, 2006: 2.2)

## Questions for reflection

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- You have been given a generous budget to design and build a new learning centre – what factors and learning theories would you take into account?
- Mobile learning is becoming increasingly popular – how are you going to maximize the benefits for your organization?
- Your CEO asks for a written report comparing the advantages and disadvantages of running courses in hotels and running them internally. Support your discussion with reference to learning theories.

## Further information sources

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Building Schools for the Future:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schoolscapital/funding/bsf>

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# Kogan Page

# 24

## HRD and business ethics

**ALEXANDRE ARDICHVILI and DOUGLAS JONDLE**

*To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.* (PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT)

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain the concepts of business ethics and ethical business cultures;
- explain why promoting business ethics should be one of the central concerns for HRD;
- describe major systems and processes that contribute to the creation of an ethical business culture in an organization;
- explain the role of HRD in institutionalizing ethics in a business organization, and describe specific activities that HRD professionals can engage in to promote organizational ethics.

### Introduction

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Corporate scandals of 2000–01; the global financial and economic crisis of 2008–09 that was accompanied by revelations about major violations of ethical and moral codes at a range of large business institutions; mounting evidence that the negative impact of business activity on the global ecosystem is not only real but also rapidly escalating; wars and armed confrontations in various regions of the world, most of which were triggered by conflicts over resources and had further devastating impact on the environment. These and numerous other recent events suggest that business

and economic models dominant in the Western developed societies may not be sustainable in the long run and need to be updated. Likewise, HRD practitioners and academics are actively searching for new approaches that would help our organizations to remain sustainable in the new uncertain business and socio-economic conditions. One of the manifestations of this search is the call for a more aggressive and encompassing integration of HRD and corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and business ethics (Garavan and McGuire, 2010).

## The increasing role of ethics training

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Why are organizational initiatives aimed at institutionalizing business ethics becoming even more important today, and why is the role of HRD in promoting business ethics growing? When it became clear that the crisis of 2008–09 was triggered, among other things, by serious ethical violations at a number of large financial institutions in the United States and Western Europe, this came as an unpleasant surprise to many business executives and academics. It had been hoped that measures like the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations, Sarbanes–Oxley act of 2002 and Frank–Dodd Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, taken after the spectacular scandals of the 1980s and the early 2000s, would prevent the reoccurrence of such excesses. Indeed, today most large business corporations have well-developed value statements and codes of ethics, procedures for monitoring and reporting ethics violations, and ethics training programmes. Are these sufficient safeguards against repeating the mistakes of Enron, Arthur Andersen and Worldcom?

According to Carroll and Buchholtz (2008: 242), ethics ‘is the discipline that deals with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation’ and can ‘be regarded as a set of moral principles or values’. This definition includes two parts: an understanding of what is perceived as good and bad, and a focus on moral duty and obligation. Therefore, business ethics can be construed as a discipline that deals with what is perceived as good or bad behaviour in an organization’s interaction with its multiple stakeholders (including its internal stakeholders – employees), and what are the business’s obligations to its stakeholders, society, and ultimately to the world and the environment.

When it comes to promoting ethical business practices, most business organizations focus on two main strategies: the creation of training programmes aimed at the creation and enforcement of procedural frameworks for regulating business behaviour, and increasing ethics and moral awareness among their employees (Schminke, Arnaud and Kuenzi, 2007). Undoubtedly, individual moral development is necessary to ensure that individuals will do the right thing when faced with difficult ethical choices (MacIntyre, 1991). Therefore, supporting and promoting such individual development through training programmes is a necessity.

Developing codes of conduct and procedures for reporting ethics violations is a necessary condition. However, these formal procedures cannot guarantee the success of ethics programmes on their own. A recent review of studies of corporate ethics codes showed that these codes are a necessary instrument for promoting ethical behaviour in organizations, but to be effective they need to be combined with other

factors and activities: ‘culture and effective communication are key components to a code’s success. If codes are embedded in the culture and embraced by the leaders, they are likely to be successful. Communicating the code’s precepts in an effective way is crucial to its success’ (Stevens, 2008: 601).

Even so, in discussing the factors that contributed to the Enron scandal, Gabler (2006: 337) pointed out that Enron had all the required elements of an official ethics and compliance programme in place, including a code of ethics, a reporting system and a training programme. However, it was the ‘culture of the company that brought out the worst in some top executives, and inaction and passivity on the part of many others... Culture is the leading risk factor for compromising integrity and compliance in companies today.’

Establishing the right ethical culture is the lynchpin to creating an environment that creates a business with a conscience – where decisions are truly made taking into consideration all stakeholders that are impacted one way or another by the business. Ethical culture is an ethical social environment that creates fertile ground for individual moral development, and makes it possible to act according to one’s convictions (Feldman, 2007; Schminke, Arnaud and Kuenzi, 2007).

This all suggests that in order to promote and sustain business ethics in an organization, HRD needs to engage in a range of activities that include the identification of organizational values, the creation of mission and vision statements and of compliance and ethics codes, provision of ethics training at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, and incorporation of ethical decision making in all organizational change and leadership development initiatives. In addition, to be able to provide adequate support for organizational ethics initiatives, the HRD function needs to adhere to its own internal standards of ethics and integrity (Woodall and Douglas, 1999). In the following pages we will address these areas of focus and will discuss HRD’s evolving role in creating sustainable and ethical business organizations.

## Ethical business cultures and organization change

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According to Schein (1985: 5–6), organizational culture is a set of learned responses where ‘basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization... define in a basic “taken-for-granted” fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment.’ Cohen (1993) viewed organizational cultures as systems, composed of both formal and informal sub-systems, processes and interactions.

The *formal part* includes mission and vision statements, codes of conduct, processes for socialization of new employees, decision-making processes and the like. An ethical business organization has a socialization process that on a daily basis reinforces the practice of the values communicated in a mission statement. Such organizations pay significant attention to the issues of health and safety of employees, customer and community responsiveness, and fairness. The decision-making processes in an ethical organization are designed to broaden its field of vision so as to consider the ethical ramifications of business decisions instead of cost–benefit analyses alone.

The *informal elements* of an ethical business culture are less tangible and are harder to observe and communicate explicitly. Trevino and Brown (2004) argued that such

intangible aspects include norms for behaviour that are consistent with the ethical standards or codes of conduct, mission statements and formalized decision-making processes. The core of the informal base of an ethical culture is constituted by organizational values. These values are ‘basic determinants of human behaviour and social attitudes’ and define ‘what is desirable and acceptable to an individual (personal values) or a society (societal values)’ (Dion, 1996: 333). On some level, values are shared by organizational members and serve as a source of collective identity and as guidelines for behaviour. However, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge, since it is unrealistic to expect that all employees will always have the same values, and organizational values are likely to conflict with values of at least some of the individual members (Dion, 1996).

Other elements of the informal ethical culture include heroes and role models, metaphors used in discussions of organizational values, and myths and stories about the ethical standards of the organization being upheld by its members (Schein, 2004). Having a powerful impact on the way individuals in organizations think and act, these modes of expression play a crucial role in shaping ethical cultures by inspiring members to behave ethically (Dion, 1996). Organizational rituals also help to strengthen the informal culture by providing reinforcement and affirmation of the ethical values over time. Finally, the language and metaphors used by organization members play an important role in shaping behaviour in the informal ethical culture. Use of moral or ethics ‘talk’ to address problem-solving and decision-making situations creates an awareness of the ethical dimension of such processes. Research shows that ethical cultures have leaders and members who engage in ethics talk regularly in pursuit of organizational activities (Trevino, 1990).

Based on a series of qualitative and quantitative studies, Ardichvili, Mitchell and Jondle (2009, 2011) developed a model (the CEBC Model – research supported by the Center for Ethical Business Cultures) of five characteristics of ethical business cultures. The five characteristics are: *Values-driven*, *Stakeholder balance*, *Leadership effectiveness*, *Process integrity* and *Long-term perspective*.

**FIGURE 24.1** Model of ethical business culture





Values provide the structural integrity that delimits ethical business culture. They represent the lifeblood of the organization. For an organization to survive and thrive, its core values must be an integral component of its strategic focus. They must be aligned to foster a high-performance culture and flow freely and systemically throughout the organization to become the foundation of operational norms (that is, codes of conduct and ethics, human resource processes and financial reporting) that drive the desired behaviour.

However, there are two languages of an ethical culture: that which takes its cue from espoused values, and a language of values-in-action (Goodpaster, 2007; Schein, 2004). The benefits from an ethical corporate culture with a conscience are optimized when there is alignment between the stated, formal, espoused values and the values-in-action – practised, informal values. Formal or stated values are those actively and openly promoted by the organization to affect desired behaviour and organizational goals. Informal or practised values, unwritten and non-specific, are behavioural in nature and are actively practised within the organization. They evolve through employee experiences and interactions with the organizational processes and possess the potential to harmfully or beneficially moderate behaviour and affect goal achievement. The magnitude of tension between stated and practised values impacts operational effectiveness: the greater the misalignment between stated and practised values, the greater the dysfunction within the organization and the greater the chance organizational goals are not achievable. According to Goodpaster (2007: 153), ‘when the two come into conflict, the second language inevitably prevails.’ Thus, an organization’s success hinges upon the dynamic interaction between the stated values that define desired behaviour within the organization and the practised values that moderate and reinforce the desired behaviour within its core business functions and processes.

*Leadership effectiveness* is linked to a *values-driven* dimension. Leadership establishes the tone for most companies through the value statements that are incorporated into their mission and vision statements. As leaders ‘lead by example of personal integrity’, their values are translated through practice into ‘values in use’ that may or may not resemble the stated values or formal norms. These ‘practised’ values or informal norms take on a life of their own within the organization, influencing behaviour that may not conform with the intended behaviour envisioned in the stated values.

Founding leaders create organizations imaged by behavioural expectations and governed by specific stated values. Establishment and institutionalization of these stated values within the organization will dominate behaviour, creating an environment that shapes an organization’s culture and defines the evolving leadership behaviour. Leadership drives the building and sustaining of an ethical culture through ‘tone at the top’. Effective leaders exhibit exemplary ethical judgment and decision making that employees notice and emulate. ‘The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead’ (Schein, 2004: 15).

Leaders, most notably senior management, must embody the organization’s values in their own behaviour and must articulate those values in a way that is compelling for employees and all other stakeholders. Ethical organizational culture

is a non-starter if senior managers refuse to function as role models for the rest of the organization. However, building and sustaining an ethical culture is a two-way street. It depends on senior management demanding ethical conduct at every level of the organization. It must permeate throughout all aspects of the business from top management to the frontline employee and throughout all functional systems of the firm. If called upon to lead the organization during a time of crisis, leaders have the wherewithal to moderate behaviour and thereby change the core cultural values.

According to Aronson (2001: 245), 'Ethical behaviour on the part of the leader would appear to be a necessary condition for the establishment of an ethical organization... CEOs are obliged to set a moral example for organizational members.' When leaders are serious about promoting ethics in their organizations, they make a concerted effort to understand the ethical dimensions of their organization's culture through culture surveys, support the implementation of ethics training programmes and make sure that all employees are included in this training, introduce ethical considerations into organizational decision-making processes on a regular basis, and use ethical standards in all performance evaluation and disciplinary action decisions (Collier and Esteban, 2007; Trevino and Brown, 2004). These leaders are also able to communicate and role-model high ethical standards, and actively promote ethical ideas in their communication with employees and all other stakeholders (Brown, Trevino and Harrison, 2005).

Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005: 130) asserted that 'Ethical leadership emerges out of a combination of characteristics and behaviours that include demonstrating integrity and high ethical standards, considerate and fair treatment of employees, and holding employees accountable for ethical conduct.' Thus, ethical leaders need to be able to use both transformational leadership approaches (especially role modelling and inspirational motivation), and transactional elements (rewards and punishments). However, we need to make a distinction between authentic and pseudo-transformational leadership. Authentic transformational leaders base their actions on consideration of the interests of their followers and society in general, while pseudo-transformational leaders use the altruistic rhetoric but act on the basis of their selfish motives.

Authentic leaders are distinguished by heightened self-awareness and a moral perspective and high ethical standards that guide decision making and behaviour (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Leadership authenticity is developmental, and is a process of becoming, of uncovering and developing one's hidden potential, and of forming one's moral character through activities one chooses as a leader to pursue (Liedka, 2008). Authentic behaviour is closely connected to ethics mindfulness, defined as 'enriched awareness among organizational members regarding the potential for catastrophe and resulting in an ever-present conscious engagement of personal responsibility to prevent its occurrence' (Thomas, Schermerhorn and Dienhart, 2004). Ethics mindfulness is part of an individuals' moral self-identity, a form of self-regulation that results in consistent application of ethical standards and ethical decision making in a variety of situations. The main factor in developing and sustaining such moral awareness in organizations is the presence of moral leadership, which serves as a role model and a source of continued inspiration and an example of ethical behaviour and decision making.

An ethical business culture espouses a holistic approach when identifying constituents in its sphere of influence. This includes employees, customers, suppliers, owners/investors, the community, competitors and the environment. Balancing the wants and needs of these stakeholders exposes a tension that is ongoing and challenging.

According to stakeholder theory, business executives have a fiduciary responsibility to various stakeholder groups that, in themselves, have a vested interest in the success of the organization. The countervailing theory espoused by Milton Friedman is stockholder centric, where the only responsibility of businesses and corporate executives is to maximize profits (Friedman, 1970). The stockholders, or owners, are the risk takers. Therefore, they alone are entitled to benefit from the returns.

The CEBC Model supports the stakeholder theory. This is reflected in the dimension called the *stakeholder balance*. The responsibility of an organization is to its numerous stakeholders and their interests. The term stakeholder balance suggests that a tension exists between multiple stakeholders. Focusing too long and too much on any one stakeholder can create an environment of distortion that can lead to ethical lapses. The model does not suggest that the tensions between stakeholders could completely disappear in the ethical organization. It does, however, create a forum for discussion and consideration of various stakeholder groups of an organization, one in which to work toward maintaining a balance of all stakeholders (eg customers, employees, owners and community) in all the organization's decision making. In addition, the model expands on the underlying theme that the purpose of business is not to just make money. Rather, it is to provide a balance between customer value and profit on the one hand, and on the other giving back to the community in which the company does business.

The institutionalization of an organization's mission, vision and values is critical in fostering an ethical operational environment. Within this paradigm employees are motivated and compelled to do what is right, not what is easy. Decisions are focused on long-term perspectives encompassing sustainability, not on the potentiality of short-term loss. An effective ethical business culture evolves within the milieu of aligned, stated and practised values that work symbiotically with internal processes to determine how an organization hires, fires, rewards, compensates, promotes, trains and communicates with its employees. The characteristic *process integrity* describes the institutionalization of the company's mission throughout its business functions. Numerous challenges exist, including establishing desired behaviour standards and aligning the systems to encourage behaviour and monitoring of behaviour. Key to this theme is the importance of reinforcing company values within everyday operations. There is a need to focus attention on the need for alignment of processes and for transparent decision making by the people closest to the issues.

Finally, the *long-term perspective* involves balancing between the short term and the long term. It means not doing things in the short term that create harm in the long term. Concern for the environment and the long-term sustainability of the business and the community is another key feature of the long-term perspective. Organizations must be environmentally sustainable and socially responsible, as well as profitable. Leadership's role is exhibited through its ability to establish a strategy focused on consistent long-term growth and not be distracted by short-term growth targets and gains.

## HRD activities in support of ethical business cultures

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What are the specific actions that HRD professionals can take to develop and support ethical business cultures? In general, there are two types of ethics programmes in organizations: formal rule-based and less formal values-based programmes. While rule-based approaches emphasize prevention and corrective actions in response to detected violations, values-based approaches aim at defining organizational values and motivating employees to adhere to these values in their actions. According to Schminke, Arnaud and Kuenzi (2007), in organizations where values-based approaches are implemented, employees act ethically not because they are afraid of punishment but because they share the ethical values of the organization and its leadership. The other type, using rules-based approaches, is less effective than values-based approaches. However, to be effective, values-based programmes need to be supported by well-thought-through rules-based programmes as well.

Paine (1994) described two orientations for corporate ethics programmes: they are either compliance based or anchored in a values-based approach. Ethics programmes with a compliance bent are usually created by corporate legal officers, and focus on combating violations of the law through prevention, detection and correction/punishment. Value-based ethics programmes nurture ethical culture through a more holistic, systemic approach that elevates and integrates ethical decision making into all functions of an organization. ‘Compliance programmes are likely to elicit conformity; values programmes are likely to elicit commitment’ (Collier and Esteban, 2007: 25). These two types of programmes do not have to be mutually exclusive, and there is a place for both in an organization. HRD can play an active role in developing and supporting both types of programmes, but, given its roots in humanistic and value-oriented paradigms of organization development, HRD can make an especially strong contribution to the development of value-based programmes.

A model for processes and systems, developed by the Ethics Resource Center, is composed of six components:

- 1 Development of formalized policies identifying ethical conduct and the creation of codes of ethics.
  - 2 Ethics-related training.
  - 3 Ensuring the availability of and access to advice or information on ethically challenging situations.
  - 4 Mechanisms for reporting, and encouragement to report, misconduct.
  - 5 Processes to investigate and discipline employees for wrongdoing.
  - 6 Inclusion of ethics considerations in the employee performance review processes.
- (Seligson and Choi, 2005)

HRD has a role in each of these components, but to a different degree. Steps 1 and 3–6 are usually managed by the general HR and/or legal and compliance departments of the organization. However, HRD should have an input at the stage of

the development of relevant documents and processes, and should later be actively involved in disseminating the information about the codes, processes and principles, through training and corporate communication channels. The second component, ethics-related training is, obviously, the area where HRD's leading role is largely unchallenged. Here the HRD professionals, in their turn, need to be mindful of the need for an inclusive and systems view of the training, and involve as much as possible not only the compliance officers but also line management and C-suite executives in the delivery of ethics training. As demonstrated earlier, leaders play a central role in creating ethical cultures, and they can exercise this influence through communicating their ethical vision and values. Therefore, ethics training delivered by executives will be much more powerful and impactful than an online self-paced programme or a training session conducted by an outside consultant (of course, the latter delivery modes also have their place in the line-up of ethics training programmes).

Last but not least, ethical considerations should play a central role in any organization-change (or culture-change) interventions developed by HRD professionals. Are these interventions likely to result in layoffs, and thus lead to the loss of valuable talent and cause distress in local communities? What are the consequences for various stakeholders, including communities in other parts of the country or in other countries where the organization is sourcing its supplies? Is the change initiative strengthening the organization's determination to conduct its business with long-term sustainability and stakeholder balance in mind, or is it just mindlessly serving the dictates of short-term profit maximization? These and other questions need to inform all decisions made in conjunction with new change initiatives.

## Conclusion

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In summary, in an ethical business organization there is an alignment between formal structures, processes, policies, related training and development programmes, consistent value-based ethical behaviour of top leadership, informal recognition of heroes, stories, and the use of rituals, metaphors and language that inspire organizational members to behave in a manner consistent with high ethical standards. The personal moral development and authenticity of leaders is an important contributor to the overall ethical climate and culture of the organization. Finally, when developing ethical culture programmes, business organizations not only need to address formal compliance requirements, but should also focus on identification of a set of corporate values and the alignment of those values with all other elements of the culture, including the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Ethical perceptions in organizations are highly interpretive in nature and depend on social construction and joint interpretation of values. They are thus constantly evolving. Ethical thinking and behaviour can be learned and internalized by individuals as a result of these interpretive interactions among organizational members and outside stakeholders. An ethical mindset and ethical values can be internalized by the organization through the formalization of processes and codes of conduct, and through the tacit emergence of informal routines, rituals and symbols.



Applying principles of the cultural-historical theory of development (Cole and Engeström, 1993), we argue that the emergence of ethical business cultures is inseparable from the development of the individual moral identities of organizational participants. This development occurs in the process of participation in work and learning activities, and is mediated by the interaction between organizational members, environmental factors, and organizational tools and artefacts (including codes of conduct, training programmes and materials, and value statements). Therefore, to be able to build and sustain ethical business cultures, HRD needs to understand the evolution of key organizational activities and systems, related tools, and relationships between individual organizational players and various groups of stakeholders, both within and outside the organization.

The above argument suggests that ethical business culture emerges as a result of the interaction between individual moral development, situational factors (including those shaping current and historical development of the system), tools and various stakeholders. To play a leading role in establishing ethical business cultures, HRD will need to effectively and efficiently engage in a system of interrelated and well-coordinated activities. The most important of these activities should focus on culture change efforts aimed at the creation of an organizational culture conducive to desirable ethical behaviour. To achieve sustainable results, this effort needs to be supported by the creation of a dynamic and constantly evolving programme of ethical education and training for employees at all levels of the organization. This includes the incorporation of ethical leadership development programmes, the creation of mentoring and career-development programmes that foster ethical culture, the development and strengthening of ethical decision-making skills, the creation and review of codes of ethics or codes of conduct, and succession planning focused on sustaining the ethical culture.

A lasting impact on the organization can only be achieved if the organizational values are fully integrated into all HRD interventions and day-to-day operations. Since values develop and strengthen in interactions and through personal example, HRD practitioners, being among the most visible carriers and promoters of organizational values, must act as role models of ethical behaviour within the organization. Furthermore, since the tools have a decisive impact on our ability to achieve desired outcomes, to serve as the catalyst of ethical culture transformation HRD needs to re-examine currently used models and frameworks. Hatcher (2002) pointed out that the majority of currently applied HRD models are not based on considerations of social responsibility and ethics, and thus limit HRD's ability to create ethical business organizations. These models are 'noticeably silent on the impact at both the societal and environmental levels' (Hatcher, 2000: 18). Therefore, as suggested by Hatcher (2002), new models for HRD work should incorporate not only considerations of economic outcomes and individual, group or organizational performance and efficiency, but also outcomes related to business organizations' impact on society, community and the environment.

## CASE STUDY

### In practice: AHRD standards on ethics and integrity

'Values are a critical part of HRD research and practice' (Hatcher, 2002: 34). Realizing that, to be able to promote ethical culture and behaviour in organizations, HRD professionals themselves need to adhere to a strong set of ethical standards for their profession, the Academy of Human Resource Development has created the *AHRD Standards on Ethics and Integrity in 1999* (you can access the full text of the Standards at the AHRD website at: [http://ahrd.org/associations/10425/files/ethics\\_standards.pdf](http://ahrd.org/associations/10425/files/ethics_standards.pdf)).

The General Principles articulated in the AHRD Standards include Competence, Integrity, Professional responsibility, Respect for people's life and dignity, Concern for other's welfare and Social responsibility. More specifically, the *Competence* principle acknowledges that HRD professionals need to recognize the boundaries of their expertise and offer only services that they are qualified to provide. At the same time, HRD professionals should constantly strive to advance their professional knowledge and acquire new skills and knowledge so as to be able to better serve their customers.

The *Integrity* principle assumes that HRD professionals are 'honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, fees, research, or teaching, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive' (Standards: 2). Integrity also means that they are aware of 'their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations' and avoid conflicts of interest (p 2).

*Respect for people's rights and dignity* means '[respecting] the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and autonomy', and being 'aware of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status' (p 2). Following the next principle, *Concern for other's welfare*, HRD professionals would take into consideration the rights and welfare of their clients and all other stakeholders with whom they interact professionally (p 3).

Finally, the *Social responsibility* principle presupposes that 'HRD professionals are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community, the society in which they work and live, and the planet... work to minimize adverse effects on individuals, groups, organizations, societies, and the environment... and understand that a healthy economy, healthy organizations, and a healthy ecosystem are intricately interconnected' (p 3).

### Questions for reflection

- Reflect on the General Principles of the AHRD Standards. Do you agree with the inclusion of these five principles in the Standards?
- Do you agree with the interpretation of the concepts of competence, integrity and social responsibility articulated in the Principles?
- What other principles would you include?



**CASE STUDY****In practice: To report or not?**

Imagine that you, an independent OD consultant from a Western European country, have been hired by a major Western hotel chain to develop and implement an organization development intervention at one of its hotels, located in a capital of one of the countries that used to be part of the USSR. The company owns more than 500 hotels around the world; in countries of the former USSR, the chain owns several upmarket hotels for business travellers. The need for the intervention, as described to you by the management, arises from the fact that the work ethic of local employees is very poor. There are numerous instances of embezzlement of company funds by waiters at the hotel restaurant and by other employees. The company managers from the headquarters in Western Europe think that you may need to conduct ethics training, and also develop some new policies and procedures for reporting ethics violations.

After arriving at the hotel, you conduct preliminary interviews with local employees and Western managers working there. But, being an experienced international consultant, you know that to get honest feedback, formal interviews are not enough. You also need to establish a good social rapport with the key people. This works: at a private party one of the employees opens up to you and reveals the real cause for the disappearance of money from the company funds. It turns out that the local mafia is extorting money from the hotel employees (who are perceived as 'rich' by local standards). Considering the money that they have to pay to the mafia a 'business expense', the employees do not think twice about taking cash from the company funds. In addition, local government officials regularly dine at the hotel restaurant and never pay the bill. Now you face two major dilemmas. First, should you report what you have found or not? Second, you need to decide how to proceed with your project: the interventions requested by headquarters may not be needed at all.

**Questions**

- Should you tell the management about your discoveries? You hesitate to do this, because you have promised your new friend to keep everything he was sharing with you confidential.
- If you decide to report, with whom should you have this conversation? Local managers? Headquarters?
- If you share this information with the management, what possible course of action will you suggest?
- How will you proceed with your project, and how will your role change as a result of your discovery?

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