DIVERSITY AND COHERENCE

A STUDY OF CAREERS IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Technology Sydney

2004

CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being admitted as part of candidature for any other degree. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help that I received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in the thesis.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project arose from a genuine interest in how people construct careers and a realisation that this was an unexplored area in terms of human resource development practitioners. To conduct research which allowed me to move some way in understanding this phenomenon, however, required people to share aspects of their life with me. To those who helped satisfy my curiosity by being willing to talk about their lives I say thank you.

The support, advice and assistance of many others have also variously helped me to complete this research project and for this they deserve thanks. Firstly I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by my supervisors, Andrew Gonczi and Clive Chappell. I thank Andrew for his encouragement when I initially discussed the possibility of exploring this area and then the challenges he posed and his ongoing advice as I moved through the various iterations of the research project. I also thank Clive for his readiness to discuss my ideas, help me refine my thinking and read my writing over many cups of coffee before he was one of my supervisors and then his ongoing efforts in reviewing chapters of my project as a supervisor.

I also wish to thank my colleagues from the faculty, who at various times contributed to my thinking and research project progress. I would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of my "writing group" colleagues, some of who were fellow travellers along the road of completing a doctoral project. Their ongoing humour and advice especially during our meetings gave me the confidence to keep going. I also wish to thank Maree Joulian for her assistance and patience with me during final formatting and editing stage and for frequent help at various times when I thought I had lost research material on my computer.

My family also deserves my thanks for their support and help. To my younger daughter Fiona, who in the final year of her own schooling threw down the challenge to me to undertake this research journey, I say thank you. At times I wondered why I had ever listened to her words but the completion of project now makes them worth while. To my mother, Pat Sherring and my older daughter, Melissa, and, son, Lachlan I also say thank you. I have been grateful for their encouragement and interest in my progress especially at times when my energy for the project was flagging. Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Gary. His unswerving support for my endeavours related to my Ed.D studies and his critique, advice and encouragement in final stages of writing of this research project have been greatly appreciated.

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ABSTRACT

This research study is concerned with examining human resource development (HRD) as a career field. In so doing the research study attempts to present a picture of the nature and structure of careers of those who practise in this field in Australian organisations. This line of investigation has been pursued by researchers for other career fields such as teaching and management. Such research has added to the maturation of these occupational fields and provided insights for the ongoing development of practitioners aspiring to or seeking to maintain careers in these fields of practice. This line of research, however, has not been pursued as part of building a more complete understanding of human resource development. The lack of research examining HRD from a career perspective could be seen as needing to be addressed to assist this field of practice attain greater maturity as an occupational field. Such research potentially will provide those who practise or wish to practise in this field with informed insights into the nature and structure of careers that are available to them. Further, such research could be seen also as being timely given the recent attention by governments throughout the developed world to the processes of skill formation as a way of building national capability and increasing competitiveness, and, the increased interest by organisations in employee development and learning initiatives as a way of building organisational capability and improving organizational performance.

This research project therefore attempts to illuminate this field of practice from a career perspective. In so doing it uses the literatures of HRD, careers and changing organisational practice as three disparate yet interrelated lens to examine the dimensions and characteristics of HRD careers and to surface questions that need to be asked to better understand this area as a career field. This research project argues that such sources are relevant given the dearth of direct research about HRD as a career field. The project also draws on findings from two empirical research studies. One of these studies is a survey -based study that was completed by HRD practitioners or their supervisors. The second empirical component comprised a series of in depth interviews with 12 HRD practitioners about their careers in this field of practice.

Findings from these sources allow the research project to argue that the nature of careers in HRD can be explained by the dynamic interplay of forces originating from individual aspiration, capacity and self agency, the shifts in practices which are occurring in contemporary organisations as well as from the diverse and evolving nature of the field of

HRD. These forces and the interplay between them determine the direction and movement within individual HRD careers. They also shape what could be seen as consistent career patterns and common career experiences of practitioners in this field even though it is recognised that there is considerable diversity in the models of practice associated with this occupational area. This research project therefore argues that coherence can be seen in HRD careers even if at times this area as a career field lacks the regularity or orderliness of some other career fields. Findings from studies showed consistency in career structure and some career experiences. Findings also indicated at a very embryonic level a commonly held sense of occupational identity can be seen as existing amongst practitioners who come from this area of organisational practice.

The report of this study concludes with some general implications for ongoing development of practitioners drawn from these findings about careers.

Chapter 1

Context and orientation of research

1.1 Introduction

Throughout the world in recent decades governments, educational institutions and organisations have invested considerable effort in building workforce capability. Such efforts have included the rethinking and reforming of education and training systems by governments and the establishment of more systematic learning related strategies in organisations. Individuals also have actively pursued learning opportunities to enhance their workplace positioning or to increase their workplace competence, often choosing to learn in a self-directed fashion. Such initiatives by governments, organisations and individuals can be seen as being driven by a recognition that learning is imperative in times of change. Similarly, both individual and organisational learning are being seen as essential at a time in history that is characterised by the globalisation of national economies, rapidly changing markets, increased global competition for goods and labour, technological innovations, movement from mass production to flexible specialization in the productive process and the progression to the information, knowledge-driven society (Casey, 1999; Castells, 1993; Sofo, 1999).

Efforts to increase learning and skill formation at a national level have been especially apparent in Australia. One major dimension of such effort has been the attempt through government intervention to integrate various forms of skill formation and work-related learning (e.g. publicly and privately provided learning, formal and informal learning, structured and unstructured learning, self-directed and institution directed learning) into a more unified competency based vocational education and training system. As part of this revised system a national qualifications framework (the Australian Qualifications Framework) to which post compulsory training and education qualifications can be aligned and from which development pathways can be planned has been established. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms which enable some learners to have previously unaccredited learning and skill acquisition formally recognised have also been established. Furthermore, rethinking of approaches to national skill formation has resulted in the opening up of the accredited training market. As a result, nationally accredited vocational education and

training is being provided by teachers in public and private educational institutions and by trainers from training and development/human resource development (HRD) functions in some organisations.

Much more extensive data gathering and reportage of the contemporary educational and training market and training activity is another facet of the rethinking of approaches to skill formation and the increased focus on learning in organisations in Australia. Such data certainly confirms that many players are now more actively involved in providing workplace related skills development. For example, the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Report on Education and Training Experience Australia, 1997* shows that more than 70% of the working population in Australia had undertaken some form of structured training throughout that year. Most of this training led to an award and was completed though Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges. There was, however, also evidence from this data source of increasing activity in the field of structured accredited training provision by Adult and Community sector organisations and other registered training organisations (RTOs) which included private training colleges, enterprises with developed training functions as well as schools offering vocational education programs.

A still more complex picture emerges when an examination is made of reported non-award training and development provision. This category of training accounted for 41.5% of the reported training and development taking place in Australia in 1997. This training was supplied by a myriad of providers with a large proportion of such training taking place in-house in organisations and delivered by in-house trainers (Chappell and Johnston, 2003; Chappell, 2000; Dumbrell, 1998).

Data reportage of the kind discussed above provides only part of the picture in that it does not reflect clear perspectives of the unstructured informal learning and development also taking place in Australian workplaces. The existence of and need for this more nebulous and less easily documented form of learning has assumed an increasingly prominent place in contemporary organisational and learning literatures (Dobbs, 2000; Denton, 1998; Stamps, 1998; Marsick and Watkins, 1997; Coopey, 1996). Some evidence of attempts to report practices that include such informal learning practice (e.g. Johnston and Hawke, 2002(a); Garrick, 1998; Field and Ford, 1995) is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

In summary, in the final decades of the 20th century there was considerable investment in learning, skill formation, capability building by governments, public and private post compulsory education providers and organisations. It is within this context of a greater attention to developing individual and organisational performance as well as national competitiveness through learning related initiatives that this research project is located.

1.2 Focus of this research project

1.2.1 Overview

Such attention to learning and development arguably could be seen as bringing into greater prominence the role of those responsible for increasing such workplace capability through learning. Certainly, over the last two decades, there has been considerable investigation into the role of school teachers in the development of the capability of individuals and considerable examination of career pathways available to them as teachers (e.g. Hall, 1996; MacLean, 1992; Logan, Dempster, Chant, and Warry, 1990; Schools Council, National Board Employment Education and Training 1990; Hughes, 1991; Huberman, 1989). More recently some studies have investigated the impact of the changing policy context on identity and career patterns of TAFE teachers and other vocational education teachers (e.g. Chappell and Johnston, 2003; Chappell, 2001; Chappell, 2000; Office of Compulsory Education, Training and Employment, 2000, Childs, 1997). There has, however, been little attention given to an examination of the nature of the role and particularly to the career patterns of those practitioners responsible for learning and development who practise within organisational contexts and who are referred to in this research project as human resource developers. This lack of research into career patterns and experiences of learning practitioners in organisations is obvious from both Australian research as well as research from other parts of the world.

This research project is concerned with this group of occupational practitioners. More specifically, it is concerned with examining the ways in which human resource development (HRD) can be seen as a coherent career field for practitioners in Australian organisations and with illuminating the nature and structure of careers for those who practise in this field. This project will therefore attempt to surface consistent career practices, career patterns, common

properties and repeated career themes found in the stories of or about HRD practitioners. This data will also reveal insights into the structure of HRD as an occupational field and potentially provide directions for ongoing professional development for this group of practitioners.

In making this examination, this research project argues that human resource development can be seen as providing its practitioners with a relatively coherent career field despite the evolving nature of this field of practice and the shifting nature of work, organisations and careers generally. Moreover, the report argues that the nature and scope of careers of HRD practitioners working in organisations can be explained by the dynamic interplay of forces originating from individual aspiration, capacity and self agency, as well as shifts in contemporary organisational practice and the evolving nature of the field of HRD itself. These factors determine the direction and movement seen within individual HRD careers and shape the career patterns or career opportunities that exist for those who practise in this field.

Arguably such research is timely given the increased recognition of the central role post compulsory and organisationally based and focussed learning plays in determining effective organisational performance in the knowledge economy (CCH, 2001). An increasingly "learning- oriented" workplace environment driven by a changing and competitive economy could be seen as increasing the prominence of HRD practice and the HRD professional within organisations and potentially has opened up career opportunities within this field. This, at least in part, can be inferred from studies which report the growth in a learning and/or training culture within Australian organisations (e.g. Robinson, 1999). At the same time it must be acknowledged there is some evidence that the HRD role is often being undertaken by managers/supervisors and other HR specialists (Ulrich, Losey and Lake, 1997; Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000). There is also considerable rhetoric in some strands of organisational and career literature, which suggests the notion of career, is, if not outmoded, certainly questionable (Macken, 1997; Hilltrop, 1995; Bridges, 1994). Such positions, along with a lack of research into this facet of HRD, add to the challenges for this research project.

This research project therefore investigates the scope and nature of careers in HRD. It does so from both an examination of existing literature which directly

and indirectly addresses the nature of HRD as well as by drawing on relevant data gathered through empirical studies.

1.2.2. Key Research Questions

In so doing this research asks the following questions:

- In what ways and to what extent can HRD be characterised as a coherent career field?
- What have been the influences that have contributed to the shape and nature of careers of HRD practitioners?
- What properties do continuing careers in human resource development possess and, if such properties exist, do they contribute to the development of what could be seen as a commonly held sense of occupational identity by HRD practitioners?

1.2.3. Understandings of key concepts associated with research

In investigating such questions the following understandings of key terms or concepts have been accepted.

i) Human Resource Development

In attempting to address the above questions a broad conceptualisation of what constitutes the field of human resource development and those who practise within this field has been adopted. The term human resource development (HRD) is therefore used as an umbrella term. It is seen as encompassing those activities and processes associated with the areas of training, training and development, staff development, learning and development, organisational and career development and performance improvement which are directed towards improving workplace capability and performance through learning related activities within the organisational context. The label human resource developer is seen as encompassing those employees whose primary role is to design and deliver or implement activities related to the above areas.

Such broad conceptualisation of this role is warranted for this research project. While, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, there is still an argument that

HRD lacks clarity as a concept, approach, discourse or a set of practices (Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle, 1999), and even though these terms are not always used to label the practice or occupation role in Australian organisations and many other terms are used interchangeably with HRD, these terms are used regularly in both the Australian and international literature to generically describe the practice area and their practitioners (Kuchinke, 2002; Swanson and Holton, 2001; CCH, 2001; Sofo, 1999; Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle, 1999; Smith, 1996; Moy, 1991 a,b.)

ii) Career

Similarly, a broad understanding of the concept of career has been adopted as part of the research for this dissertation. While a more detailed examination of understandings of careers is provided in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, it should be noted that the usage of the term career and the meaning attached to it are comparatively slippery, despite a long heritage and common usage.

The term "career" has been used to describe the series of work related movements which provide the individual with upward occupational mobility or occupational progress e.g. the route taken by a person to progress to a senior position within an organisation. It has also been used to imply consistency and stability in occupational identity (e.g. a career soldier or a career criminal, or a career of leisure). Van Maanen therefore suggests:

> Whether stable or mobile a career represents an organized or patterned path taken by an individual across time or space. The career then is simply a series of separate related experiences and adventure through which a person passes during a lifetime. It can be long or short and an individual can pursue multiple careers either in rough sequence or at the same time. In this sense the concept is descriptive not normative (Van Maanen, 1977:1).

It is also worth highlighting that in the consideration of careers of HRD practitioners, this research project accepts the position advanced by a number of theorists that careers can be seen having both an objective/external as well as internal aspects (Zabusky and Barley 1996: Maclean, 1992; Chen, 1998; Schein, 1980). The objective or external dimensions or aspects refer to the succession of roles or ranks or positions an individual occupies throughout his or her career. The subjective or internal career is the individual's picture of his or her own

worklife and vocational/occupational self-image. Zabusky and Barley (1996:192) clarify these two aspects of careers when they state:

> An objective career refers to the public structural aspects of career, the stream of more or less identifiable jobs, positions, status and situations that act as landmarks for gauging a person's movement over time. "Subjective" career denotes the meaning that an individual attributes to such movement in order to add coherence to his or her biography.

This project further acknowledges positions advanced in much of the career literature which argues that the nature of an individual's career is often the result of the interplay between the objective and subjective elements of the individual's career (Chen, 1998; Maclean, 1992).

The research project, however, also recognises the potential shift in the career phenomenon emerging from the contemporary work context and acknowledges Arnold's (1996: ix) warning:

> It is important that the notion of career is not confined to predictable upward movement over a long period of time within one organisation or occupation simply because this pattern has become rarer. Indeed a career concerns any sequence of employment related positions. It includes people's subjective experiences of sequences not simply an objective account of jobs they hold.

For this research, therefore, career is understood as including the sequence of roles or steps or stages or experiences individuals perceive as contributing to their positioning themselves within an occupational field. As such, this research will investigate whether there is a "regularity" or "orderliness" or some other form of coherence in the objective or structural features of careers in HRD. It will also investigate the subjective features or properties of these careers as constructed by individual practitioners and shown through career stories gathered in interviews to, in Zabusky and Barley's words, "add coherence to the biography".

Thus one element of the empirical research completed for this research project seeks to determine if there is a consistent pattern of identifiable jobs, positions,

statuses and situations amongst HRD practitioners. Similarly, it attempts to ascertain whether individual HRD practitioners attribute consistent meanings to career "movements" and experiences they have had over time.

iii) Patterns

A further construct used in the exploration for this research is the notion of pattern. The notion of pattern has been a common phenomenon studied by career researchers and, much like the term career, takes on a number of meanings. Maclean (1972), for example, when talking about career pattern argues:

> Because most job moves are not random, it is possible to identify career patterns which emerge as individuals seek out and follow career lines that are available within their particular occupation or work organisation and as they also develop new career lines. (25).

He argues that some occupations in fact offer their incumbents highly structured, orderly career patterns. To support this argument he cites research of the early 1960s that indicated orderly career patterns were usually associated with highly bureaucratic organisations or those in traditional professions.

The concept of pattern also implies the existence of repetition (e.g. a repeated feature in the design of an object is seen as constituting a pattern). This research will therefore attempt to identify the existence of any repeated features both within individual career stories and between these career stories. For example, do the stories of HRD practitioners show that they have common occupational experiences? Are there similar entry points to careers in HRD? Do practitioners make transitions for the same reasons?

The concept of pattern also suggests the "weaving" of interconnections, crossovers and strands (Wyn and White, 1997). This dissertation will search for commonality or dissonance in strands of career or interconnections within the career of individuals (e.g. further qualifications and promotions or transfer; organisational downsizing and careers as external consultants; personal life style changes and career change).

iv) Properties

This research additionally investigates whether HRD careers have common properties. The term property is being used to denote qualities, characteristics or attributes that can be seen as critical to the way practitioners have enacted or at least understood their careers. One possible property could be seen as being the existence of consistent occupational patterns in the careers of HRD practitioners of the kinds discussed above. Another property may be the existence of a commonly held sense of occupational identity being held by HRD practitioners collectively.

The notion of occupational identity draws on understandings of vocational identity which are advanced by Super, Savickas and Super (1996:137) when they argue:

> Vocational identity is best defined as "possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interests and talent" (Holland, 1985:5). From this and other definitions it is clear that occupationally relevant traits such as abilities and interests constitute the substance of a vocational identity whereas sense of continuity and distinctiveness construct it (Damon and Hart, 1988:125–126).

In searching for the existence of a commonly held sense of occupational identity amongst HRD practitioners, this project recognises that the formation of such an identity, even embryonically, amongst a group of practitioners from one occupation may result from a number of elements. These elements could include: similar forces determining the shape of their careers; similar value positions about the purpose of their work; repeated patterns in the way such practitioners respond to their work; similar ways of talking about their work, or, similar sources of satisfaction gained in carrying out the work associated with this work role. This project is therefore not so much interested in illuminating the occupational identity of the individual HRD practitioner as it is in highlighting any consistencies in the way a number of practitioners from the field themselves have constructed their careers. Much as research examining the identity or culture of an organisation searches for and highlights consistency in the behaviours, languages and beliefs of members of an organisation, this research searches for consistency in abilities, interests, work practice patterns, responses to work experiences, sources of work place satisfaction and beliefs about the nature and role of the HRD professional. Potentially common

findings from language, lived experience and particularly from vocational experiences which have occurred within worksites may be seen as contributing to what could be seen as at least in an embryonic or shadowy form as a commonly held sense of occupational identity. It should be noted however, much as Huberman (1989) was forced to admit, that even though it is possible to establish patterns in careers, individuals can always be expected to respond in different ways (Schools Council, NBEET:105). Thus a concept of an occupational identity even if present, needs always to be seen as a very loose concept.

1.3 Research perspectives

This project is essentially an illuminative study that examines and describes human resource development as a career field. To shed light on the nature of careers available to those who practise in this field three sources of evidence have been utilised.

The first source of evidence, which reveals insights about HRD as a career field as well as generates questions that need to be asked to understand this field from a career perspective, is found in the existing literature from three separate but interrelated disciplinary fields.

One branch of such literature is that which considers and theorises human resource development as a field of practice. This literature provides a pivotal source of information for any attempt to illuminate HRD as a career field as there little evidence of any other research more directly examining this organisational practice area as a career field. Secondly, literature from the field of career counselling and development is examined. This literature yields insights about different types of careers and suggests ways of understanding careers that arguably have relevance for understanding HRD as a career field. Finally, the third body of literature that provides insights about careers in HRD is that which addresses aspects of change in contemporary organisations. The site of human resource development practice and of careers in human resource development is the enterprise or the organisation. Thus, commonly experienced phenomena occurring in organisations reported in this strand of literature arguably have the potential to shape the careers and work identities of the individual practitioners, and, to some extent, contribute to the formation of a commonly held occupational identity amongst practitioners. As a

consequence this strand of literature needs to be examined to gain insights into possible influences shaping careers that are enacted in such sites.

One perspective of the nature of careers in human resource development is therefore sought from an analysis of recent literature from three disciplinary areas related to human resource development.

The second perspective used in this research to illuminate this area as a career field comes from empirical survey-based research. This survey-based study which attempted to understand the work of training and development practitioners in Australian organisations from the perspective of human resource developers and human resource managers was part of a study examining the "New VET Professional" (Johnston and Chappell, 2001). The findings from this survey study provide insights into the practices of human resource developers in Australian organisations from a group of practitioners or those who oversee and determine the nature of work of this group of practitioners. As such these data have the potential to provide some insights into the degree of consistency of practices in this field.

A third perspective comes from further empirical research with practitioners themselves. Consistent themes emerging from career history interviews with a sample of practitioners reveal additional dimensions of careers in this field and allow for a testing of the some of the positions about this career field surfaced in the review of literature presented in Chapter 2. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, such interviews allow for the surfacing of multiple perspectives of career realities of participants and hence also allow for the surfacing of tensions and difference in careers in this field as well as consistencies.

1.4 Structure of the research project

The report of this research project is divided into 6 chapters. Also included is a reference list and appendices supporting the empirical research. A brief description of the contents of each chapter revealing the logic of the report of the project follows.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the overall direction of the research project. In so doing it highlights the research questions driving the project and provides understandings of key concepts on which the research project focusses.

Chapter 2 Review of literature on HRD, careers and organisation

This chapter considers relevant literature that has the potential to inform this project. In so doing it surfaces prominent themes and key findings from research and theorisation on human resource development, career development and the changing nature and practice of organisations which may contribute to an understanding of HRD as a career area. From a review of these literatures this chapter also suggests areas still needing to be investigated through empirical research to come to some understanding of and answers to questions driving this research.

Chapter 3 Description and justification of methodological approach

This chapter positions the project theoretically. In so doing it makes use of a schema developed by Deetz (1994) which allows for the use of seemingly incommensurable research approaches for theoretically locating a single research undertaking. This chapter also specifically looks at the arguments supporting the use of interpretivist — biographical approaches in career research.

Chapter 4 Mapping the field: reportage and discussion of findings from survey research

This is a short chapter that interrogates the data gathered from a survey of practitioners completed as part of another larger research study. This survey based study designed initially for the larger study sought to understand contemporary HRD practice in Australian organisations by gathering data that provided a "snap shot" of practice. It also sought to gain some insights into what practice may look like, or, at least what respondents perceived practice would look like in the near future with several questions in the survey asking about perceived changes. Such a perspective also allows for insights into what a career in this field looks like. The results of questions

from the survey, which were relevant for examining HRD as a career area, are reported and discussed.

Chapter 5 Mapping the field: reportage and discussion of findings from career stories

This chapter presents and discusses findings from HRD career stories collected from interviews with 12 practitioners. The participating practitioners came from diverse career experiences in terms of the scope of their previous positions, the industries in which they were operating at the time of interview and the length of time they had been practitioners within this career field.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and implications from research

This chapter briefly reviews key findings from literature considered in Chapter 2 and the two empirical studies reported in Chapters 4 and 5 and then discusses the resonances between the findings from the empirical research studies. It also discusses the relationship of these findings with literature considered in Chapter 2. In so doing the chapter examines such findings and resonances in terms of the research questions that have been the catalyst for the overall research project. The chapter also includes general implications derived from such sources for ongoing professional development of practitioners seeking to maintain a career in HRD and advances some areas for further research.

1.5 Anticipated contribution of the research project to the knowledge in this field

As indicated above, this project is about human resource development as a career field. As such it is investigating elements of an area of organisational practice from a perspective or, through a lens, that appears not to have been used or at least documented in previous studies. In so doing this research illuminates the nature of careers afforded within the broad field of human resource development. Such a perspective contributes to the development of additional knowledge that better helps in building an understanding of this field of practice. Potentially such knowledge therefore could be seen as adding to the maturation of the field. Such an investigation also potentially provides an

additional platform on which to base on-going professional development approaches for practitioners from this field which in turn may contribute to the professionalisation of this field.

Chapter 2

Lenses for inquiry-a review of relevant literatures

2.1 Introduction

There has been remarkably little theorisation and even less research about human resource development as a career field and of human resource developers as an occupational grouping. Apart from the identification of various organisational positions and roles that have been seen as part of this career field by writers of HRD texts, and a descriptive model of possible career pathways advanced by Sredl and Rothwell (1987), there is little other evidence of inquiry into this field of organisational practice from the career field perspective. This is quite unlike the situation that exists for many other occupations. There is, for example, quite a substantial literature that addresses aspects about career formation and development and career activity for teachers, managers, nurses, engineers, technicians and entrepreneurs. In this literature, dimensions of career such as entry and transition patterns, common stages, learning for and within occupational area, consistent attitudes amongst practitioners, sources of satisfaction gained from practice and consistent concerns in the chosen field have been focal points for inquiry (Handy, 1999; Bierema, 1996; Hall, 1996; Zabusky and Barley, 1996; Osterman, 1996; Knowles and Holt-Reynolds, 1994, Maclean, 1992; Schools Council National Board of Employment Education and Training(NBEET), 1990). Such explorations of careers in these professions help to illuminate these areas of practice and often highlight characteristics and working conditions associated with excellence in practice and satisfaction with careers in these fields. As a result, studies of careers from specific fields can assist in providing richer, more informed bases for the ongoing development of practitioners from the studied fields and, to some extent, can contribute to the professionalisation or at least the maturation of these areas of occupational activity.

While there is certainly a lack of such research about human resource development professionals specifically, there are several bodies of literature from a number of interrelated disciplinary fields reporting research that provides by implication some insights into HRD as a career field. Prominent themes and findings for understanding careers in HRD from these bodies of literature will be considered in this chapter.

One such body of literature is that which addresses HRD practice. Some of the literature and reportage of research about this practice area provides one lens through which at least aspects associated with work and careers in HRD can be examined.

A second lens which is useful for understanding careers more generally, and HRD careers more specifically, is provided by literature and research that has examined careers and career development. Much like the literature associated with HRD, this is a growing and yet often contested field of investigation. It is, however, a field of research that does provide models of careers and explanations of how careers are formed and enacted. Such insights have relevance for this research project and indicate potential areas for further investigation for research attempting to study careers in a specific field.

A further body of literature that also provides insights about forces potentially shaping careers in HRD is that which addresses organisational practice and organisational change. The organisation is the site of practice for the human resource developer. HRD practitioners are either employees of organisations, working with organisations as consultants, or, working with individuals to improve their work in organisations. For this reason micro level changes occurring in individual organisations (e.g. re-structuring, reengineering, downsizing, upskilling) potentially change the practices, practice directions and the career structures and possibilities of individual HRD practitioners. Similarly more macro level change which impacts on organisations or industries (e.g. shifts in terms of trade arrangements, globalisation, industry deregulation) also results in shifts in work related tasks, activities and the competencies required by those who work in organisations. Such change therefore impacts on the work of HRD practitioners as a group of professionals and the potential structure of their careers. In recognising the potential of the research on and literature about organisational change for this dissertation, the project also acknowledges du Gay's argument that through the discourses of organisational reform the meaning and reality of work is being transformed and new forms of work based identities are being constructed (1997:287). Thus some of the prominent themes in the literature addressing change in contemporary organisations which contribute to an understanding of forces shaping careers in HRD are considered in this chapter.

In summary, this chapter draws on these three interrelated bodies of literature that arguably have the potential to contribute to an understanding of HRD as a

career field. In so doing the chapter presents insights into the forces potentially influencing the careers of practitioners in this field and possible characteristics of those careers. Almost conversely, analysis of these literatures also reveals, as suggested in the introduction to this chapter, a lack of direct research into HRD from a career perspective. Analysis of this literature therefore both generates and leaves unanswered a range of questions about the nature of HRD careers. As such, the "gaps" left after an analysis of these bodies of literature suggest areas and further questions needing to be considered through empirical investigation in order to more completely understand HRD from a career perspective. Thus the findings and positions yielded by these strands of literature as shown in detail in the remainder of this chapter could be seen as having a dual function in the research project. They are the source of questions driving the empirical components of the research project, and, at the same time, they also are a source of evidence in that they shed some light on careers in HRD. As such they also serve as a contextual framework against which findings from the empirical components reported later in the dissertation can be mapped.

2.2 Exploring the HRD Literature

2.2.1 Overview of early history of practice of the field

A starting point for understanding the history of the field is the work of Nadler whom some have argued was the first to write about this field and document its history (Sofo, 1999; Francis, 1989).

In 1970 Nadler described the evolution of HRD in the USA as beginning in mid 19th century, when job related training began to emerge as an essential part of the US economy. This growth of job related training was a response to the need for trained mechanics to operate the increasingly complicated farm machinery that was being developed as a result of changes in agriculture. He suggested, however, that pre-job training as opposed to workplace based employee development remained the dominant mode of development throughout the first decades of the 20th century in America. Changes in the approach to workforce skills development, Nadler claimed, came with the popularity of Frederick Taylor's views on organisational management and then the findings from the Hawthorn Studies in American organisations. Such changes acted as catalysts for industrial, work-based training approaches in the 1920s and 1930s. A

further stimulus for HRD practice and research, he argued, arose with the onset of World War II when there was a need to convert large numbers of the non-working population into workers as well as to develop civilians into active members of militia throughout the world. New human resource development needs emerged with the return of military personnel to the workplace at the end of World War II. At this time there was a need for an emphasis on human relations training in organisations especially as a major component of the management and supervisory training programs required in organisations. Such programs for managers and supervisors were necessary at this point as the employees they were managing were not young inexperienced school leavers but men who had fought in war zones often with considerable authority and responsibility. These employees could no longer be treated as either unskilled or inexperienced.

The need for programs providing effective management training continued through the 1960s but during this time manpower planning also became a particularly prominent concern.

Burack (1980:xi), in writing about the evolution of HRD in the UK, also foregrounded manpower planning as part of HRD practice. He suggested that HRD in England dealt with training the right numbers, at the right place, at the right time with the right skills. Such manpower planning encompassed developing plans for recruiting, selecting and placing new employees, as well as planning for training and development and anticipating necessary promotions and transfers. Walker (1980) argues that such activity was labeled Human Resource Planning/Development (HRPD) largely because this new term implied:

> a concern with broader issues than merely trying to balance supply and demand or project quantitative estimates...(and) the term also had the advantage of minimising the sexist implication of "manpower' emphasising the positive aspects of personnel as a basic corporate resource (Walker 1980:126).

From the mid 1970s HRD was seen as taking on quite an expanded array of tasks such as work design, selection, needs analysis, evaluation. At least one writer at the time, Odiorne, argued that the HRD function no longer belonged in the traditional personnel function because the status of the training and

development staff had overtaken that of personnel. He further stated that status of HRD staff in US organisations had improved for the following reasons:

> The high educational level of HRD staff.
> PhD degrees are common and the modal level of education is frequently a Master's degree.
> Training and development had acquired a reputation for being supportive of and liaising well with line people in respect of programs.
> America's corporate giants were generally investing heavily in training and development.

The growth of Organisation Development (OD) approaches and human relations oriented management systems training as part of HRD practice were particularly suited to the prevailing socio-economic climate according to Odiorne (Odiorne, 1976:3-6).

At about the same time Curry, writing about the growth of this field of practice, made the following observation about this career field at least in the USA. Curry (1977:24) stated:

> as organisations came to be more dependent on emergent HRD functions individuals became recognised as professionals and the field came into its own.

The use of the term human resource development and the early history and evolution of learning and development provided within organisations in Australia are not extensively documented. There is, however, some evidence of research being undertaken into this practice area in Australia by 1981 and reported by Geering in 1985. This research, like much of the literature about the field from the USA, highlighted the lack of role definition, concept clarity or practice guidelines associated with this field of organisational practice.

Some aspects of the evolution of this field in Australia can in part be derived from work documenting the Organisational Renewal Movement by Dunphy and Griffiths (1998). While not solely addressing HRD practice Dunphy reflects on the directions of this field of practice particularly for those working with organisational change/organisational development aspect of this field when he stated at a conference in 1983:

> There is currently a major shift taking place in the traditional role of OD. Practitioners within the movement are moving beyond the solving of lower level problems to the larger role of enterprise human resource planning. This is reflected in the structural re-organisation of many companies, where the functions of OD training, personnel, industrial relations, manpower planning, public relations and technical efficiency are being brought together into a single division with its manager reporting to the chief executive. It is also reflected in the comprehensive human resource planning being undertaken for large -scale projects, particularly in the mining and processing industry (Dunphy and Griffiths, 1998:102).

Dunphy and Griffith then describe the move to more strategic approaches in facilitating change particularly in large organisations as part of the organisational renewal that was taking place in Australian in the 1980s and early 90s. Such change programs in organisations, they argue, were often supported by the microeconomic reforms being promoted by the then Federal government. These reforms included major industrial relations reform, industry restructuring, higher education and vocational education reform and new approaches to skill formation. Furthermore a government levy was introduced to encourage Australian firms to invest in training to enhance the skills of their workforces at this time. Additional discussion of skill formation policy change of the late 80s and early 90s and its impact on the role of learning and development practitioners in organisations follows in a later section of this chapter.

In summary, the writing about the early history of the field suggests there was some lack of clarity concerning the boundaries of practice for this area. There does, however, seem to be some evidence in the writing from the USA, UK and Australia that the role scope of HRD practitioners extended beyond orthodox classroom based training from the late 1960s. The early lack of clarity about clearly established practice boundaries could also be seen as paralleling some of the other areas of contestation associated with this area of practice. Some areas of debate in the HRD literature are discussed in the following section.

2.2.2 Debates about the nature of the field

i) Definitional debates

One of the areas of greatest contestation that has dominated HRD as a field of study since its inception arises from attempts to define this field and thereby establish what is encompassed within the boundaries of this occupation activity. As both a consequence and a sign of the differences in understanding as to what constitutes this area of practice there is a myriad of differing definitions. Some of these definitions emphasise learning activities; others focus on the various audiences of HRD practice, and still others provide a menu of strategies that come with the term HRD. There is also evidence in some definitional attempts of an emphasis on corporate or strategic orientation (Luoma, 1998; Garavan, Costine and Heraty, 1995). In others the emphasis is on the delivery of learning events (Garavan, Heraty and Barnacle, 1999). The years of debate and on-going failure to agree about how the field should be described or defined have resulted more recently in the advancement of definitions that have included sets of dualisms as the more effective way of explaining the activity and practice. Common dualisms related to direction and activity of practice advanced in these more recent definitional attempts include: strategic-operational; organisational-individual; change–maintenance: culture-structure; long term-short term; organic-packaged; pro-active-reactive; employer driven-employee driven (Stewart, 1986; Harrison, 1997; Woodall and Winstanley, 1998; Gilley and Eggland, 1992). Such dualistic definitions however have left explanations of what constitutes this field as open and contested as the attempts at more unitary definitions.

A further dimension of this definitional debate can be seen in the competing understandings of the relationship between HR (Human Resources), HRM (Human Resource Management), HRD (Human Resource Development) and Industrial Relations (IR). McGlagan (1989) (whose work on HRD practitioner competencies is discussed later in this chapter) attempted to illustrate the relationship in the late 1980s using a diagram of a wheel. In her 1989 work she positioned what could be seen as outcomes of HR practices eg productivity, quality innovation, HR fulfilment and readiness for change at the centre or core of the HR wheel. These outcomes were seen as being driven by the outer rim of the wheel, which McGlagan divided into three segments, each of which in turn was further compartmentalised into practices associated with the segment. . One segment making up a third of this wheel was devoted to HRD practice and included training and development, organisational development and career

development. The HRM segment was divided into HR planning, organisational and job design, performance management and selection and staffing. McGlagan maintained that this third was closely related to HRD because development was important even though it was not the primary orientation. The final third included IR, HR research and information systems, employee assistance and compensations /benefits.

This 1980's explanation clearly established HRD, HRM and IR as separate organisational practices, in some way aligning with the understanding of the field that was advanced by Ordione(1976) and Curry(1977) in the 70s and referred to earlier in this chapter. This view however was not and has not been however universally accepted. Nadler and Nadler (1989) for example stated that some used the term HRM to mean the entire field (Sofo, 1999 63) and Hall in 1985 certainly was suggesting the need to see HRD and HRM as interdependent organisational functions.

Moreover it is arguable that by the end of the twentieth century the practice boundaries between these fields were becoming considerably more blurred. For example McGlagan by 1999 seems to emphasise the linkage between HR and HRD, a position explained in more detail in section 2.2 of this chapter. Further illustrating this blurring, and in line with positions advances by Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna (1985), is the frequency with which activities once associated with HRM or HRD are seen as the domain of the generalised HR professional.(Dunphy and Griffiths 1998; Dunphy, Turner and Crawford,1997; Ulrich Losey and Laker,1997). Such a blurring of boundaries between these field HRD, HRM and HR generally can also be seen in discussions of literature which emphasises the strategic nature of HRD and its contribution to business strategy (a theme also discussed in a later section of this chapter).

ii) Theory base/ philosophies of practice debates

The almost chaotic nature of definitional attempts is also mirrored in what Watkins (1991) has referred to as a 'cacophony of voices' that attempt to determine the underpinning theoretical bases of this field of practice. Many theories have been nominated as being capable of informing this field of practice. These have included theories of organisation and organisational behaviour, economics, communication, information processing, systems theory, adult education and learning organisation theory, change and development, developmental stage theory and career development and human capital theory (see Kuchinke, 2002; Barrie and Pace, 1998; Garrick, 1998:

Wimbicus, 1995; Swanson, 1994; Dixon; 1992; Watkins and Marsick, 1992; Rummler and Brache, 1990; Stredl and Rothwell, 1988; Pace 1982).

Such diversity has resulted in almost common agreement that no one distinct theoretical base or body of knowledge informs or drives HRD practice even though most now would agree with Garrick's assertion that "contemporary HRD knowledge frameworks are unashamedly linked to market economics (1998:5).

While most are comfortable with the notion of multi-theory bases and with calling HRD an interdisciplinary practice (McLagan, 1999; Smith, 1998) this has been also seen as presenting the field of practice with some problems. Nadler (1992), for example, sees the lack of a commonly accepted theoretical base, of practice definition, or of a common model of practice as contributing to the struggle faced by HRD in being recognised as an academic disciplinary field. Other writers have been also concerned by the difficulties that arise resulting from HRD being "housed" in a variety of locations in academic institutions (e.g. Kuchinke, 2002; McLagan, 1999; Pace, 1996). McLagan (1999:61) for example, acknowledges the field of practice as being interdisciplinary and therefore requiring practitioners to act from a broader viewpoint than would be necessary than if operating from a single disciplinary purview. She, however, illustrates a dimension of the struggle HRD experiences in the university context when she states:

> In universities, there's been an ongoing battle about where to house HRD. Is it a business school discipline? Is it education? How about Industrial Relations? Or the Communication Department? Maybe in Agricultural Extension? Or let's put it in Industrial Psychology/ in Sociology? Most recent, breakthroughs in the new physics and the new biology tell us that the basic structure of complex problems is at the borderline between chaos and order. Does this mean that HRD should be part of a hard science program?

Most recently Kuchinke (2002) has also focussed on some of the difficulties arising from the multiple "homes" and what he sees as not always appropriate homes for HRD in universities. He argues:

> Conceptual, definitional and marketing work on the part of the profession and individual programs is called for to argue and

> demonstrate the value and significance of HRD programs located in academic departments so seeming disconnected from the world of business and industry (140).

This diversity of field of practice definitions, theoretical/ philosophical/ disciplinary bases and the related academic preparation for practice "homes" could be seen as presenting one set of problems for the maturation of this field and the professionalisation of practice. Moreover, issues emerging from such diversity could be seen as being further compounded by the fact that many people responsible for HRD practice in organisations have often "fallen" into the role of HRD practitioners rather than being prepared for practice. As a result such practitioners take on the role with little theoretical preparation (Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000; Rynes and Trank, 1999; Johnston and Anderson, 1997; Valkeavaara, Poell and Chivers, 1999).

iii) Debate about models and scope of practice of the field

The lack of consistency in definitions and theoretical /philosophical basis of practice, along with the resultant debate, is once again repeated in descriptions of quite diverse models of HRD practice as presented in the literature of the field. Some of the diversity seen in models of HRD practice is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Van der Krogt (1998), for example, advances a model that argues that the nature and structure of the organisation determine the types of learning/HRD systems operating in organisations, the type or approach to HRD adopted by an organisation and the role and hence required skills of the HRD practitioner.

The learning systems presented in the Van der Krogt model include what he terms liberal, vertical, horizontal and external learning systems. In the liberal learning system individual workers are responsible for their own learning activities. When this type or approach to learning is used the learning is usually individually oriented and relatively unstructured. The structure of learning and development is imposed by management and HRD practitioners on employees in the vertical learning system. In this system HRD practitioners, having previously determined what the learner needs to learn, design and deliver training. In a horizontal learning system learning activities are based in the work system itself. The HRD practitioner in this role often is a process consultant or group facilitator as opposed to an instructor. Finally when the

organisation utilises an external learning system or approach the learning is provided by external providers often through external professional associations. The HRD practitioner working within an external learning systems approach is the organiser/administrator arranging opportunities for professional staff to attend externally provided training often offered through industry associations.

Van der Krogt's network theory matches the type of learning system used to organisational type. He argues that vertical learning systems are associated with mechanistic and bureaucratic organisations; liberal systems are associated with entrepreneurial organisations; horizontal learning systems with organistic organisations and external learning systems with professional organisations.

Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle (1999) also have considered various models of HRD practice utilised in organisations. They argue practice can be categorised into one of three models. In the first model HRD activity is portrayed as a reactive activity isolated from core organisational strategies, focussed on current organisational needs and relying on a systematic model of delivery. When this model is utilised in an organisation it is usually staffed by a specialist practitioner whose primary role is to provide HRD solutions as requested by the manager. This model of HRD is operationally and subject matter driven, educational in orientation, and reliant on passive transfer of knowledge which is most often delivered in a classroom rather than workplace. Such an approach is driven by a strong assumption that training needs can be identified in very precise detail emphasising fixed job roles and boundaries.

A second common model or type of practice emphasises a more competency - oriented perspective. It adopts a broader definition of practice that includes employee managed, career and organisational development activities as part of its practice field. The primary focus of all developmental activities in this model is their contribution to the tactical level within the organisation rather than a linkage with corporate priorities or strategies. This type of HRD model may adopt a marketing type philosophy in the process, provide consultancy services and perceive line functions as customers. Attempts may be made to achieve close linkages with other HR strategies, and often the specialists working in this model have a better understanding of the language of business.

The third model is that which is often referred to as strategic HRD. The concern of such a model is the establishment of strong linkages with corporate goals and the achievement of vertical integration. In this model there can be a strong

focus on adopting an organisational learning perspective. This perspective includes pursuing a learning approach to strategy, proactively facilitating organisational change, nurturing learning in the workplace, encouraging greater individual responsibility for learning and assisting line managers in the creation of a culture/climate of learning. Learning using such a model is conceptualised as iterative, process driven, democratic, continuous and life long (Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle, 1999:170-171).

Luoma (1999) also suggests the possibility of at least three slightly different models of HRD practice from those presented by Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle (1999). Luoma argues that one model of HRD is a needs driven model. In this model of practice the task of the HRD function is to assist in strategy implementation. HRD is a service function reacting to the developmental needs perceived by other functions. HRD is therefore about addressing the skill performance gaps.

Opportunity driven HRD is a second model of HRD practice proposed by Luoma. Here HRD activities are employed to provide the company with the skills and patterns of thinking and working that are generally associated with successful performance. In this role HRD is a means of achieving cultural change within an organisation. Using such methods as participative workshops with cross sections of staff, quality improvement projects, team building, and problem solving groups such organisations seek to cultivate fresh ways of viewing themselves, their internal customers and the market in which they compete.

The third model is what Luoma refers to as capability driven HRD. In this model HRD works at the process of creating and strengthening and sustaining the capabilities emphasised in the business strategies. The focus of such an approach is the building of organisational capabilities through the creation of internal structures and processes and the development of superior organisational specific competences.

Luoma (1999:11) argues that an organisation's orientation to HRD determines which model is adopted and enacted. The orientation of the organisation therefore acts as a background factor affecting the nature and expected impact of HRD initiatives taken up by a company.

Such lack of consistency about this field of practice in terms of definition, theoretical/philosophic underpinning or scope of practice models could partly be seen as a sign that HRD as an occupational area possibly lacks maturity and hence is still evolving and therefore lacks a coherence. This diversity however can also be seen as being a sign of a field of practice that has a dynamic flexibility. Such a position could be seen as appropriate and necessary in an age in which notions of career, employment and work itself have become questionable and at a time where post modernist thinking which celebrates difference and diversity has become acceptable. Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997:210) argue that "instead of only one truth and one certainty we are more ready to accept that there are many truths and that the only certainty is uncertainty". The reported diversity of practice in this area however raises questions that need to be investigated when attempting to understand HRD from a career. Such questions could include: is there consistency in philosophy and theories about practice, or "orientation" in Louma's terms, amongst those who see themselves as HRD professionals or is this area as a career field characterised more by differences in philosophy of and orientation to practice?.

2.2.3 Searches for HRD competencies

The search for defining practice roles and practice competencies is another theme that dominates the research associated with this field and is a further reflection of the ongoing evolution of the field and the potential for differences in career structures and properties. The following section presents an overview of some of the research studies with this orientation.

i) USA studies

A major voice in this category of research is that of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). This professional association has sponsored numerous competency studies (usually conducted by McLagan) in order to define the field of human resource development over many years. Findings from these studies have become benchmarks for practice (Watkins, 1991) and are used as a point of reference for curriculum in most university based HRD preparation programs in USA (Kuchinke, 2002). Early studies by McLagan (1983-89) for ASTD elicited competences that were largely associated with what could be now seen as more traditional forms of training and skill. McLagan reviewing her early work stated in 1996:

> I see a strong internal orientation dominated HRD in 1983. HRD seemed to float then, without a real concern for its effect. It was a specialized activity in search of a mission (McLagan, 1999, 61).

By 1989 the emphasis had shifted to performance and quality outputs and a saw a move from internal concerns to business impact. She states once again looking back:

> Our assumptions reflected a response to business and competitive realities. In the midst of this new responsiveness we found the beginnings of new HRD pro-activeness. One of the forces in 1989 was the increased use of systems approaches in HRD...
>
> From 1983 to 1989 the focus shifted overall to more comprehensive work that would have more impact. The definition of HRD expanded to include career development and organisational development. The move was towards HRD responsiveness and relevance (McLagan, 1999:61).

A more recent study by ASTD in 1996 identified competencies that its member practitioners saw themselves as needing to meet the demands of a changing society and the changing workplaces in which they were working. In this study the critical roles respondents identified included:

- providing performance support services (which required competences in all interventions not just training);
- using technology for delivery support interventions (which required competences in technology planning and implementation);
- managing human performance systems (requiring an ability to apply business system skills);
- promoting continuous learning at individual, team and organisational levels; and,
- managing change processes (requiring capacities with technologies to facilitate change and change management consulting).

The report argued that the critical competencies needed for practice were: an awareness of industry and corporations which included an understanding of vision, strategic goals, and culture and how to link HRD practice with organisational goals more than ever before; management skills including

leadership skills; understanding the customer focus and project management skills; interpersonal skill and technological literacy (ASTD, 1996).

McLagan (1999:62).(as mentioned earlier in this chapter) has also reflected on some of the changes she felt were impacting on human resource development practice as a result of the change occurring in organisations at the end of 20th century. She has stated:

> Now organisations require people who can manage themselves, teams that can do their own human resource work and human resource management and development practices that are just–in-time rather than when the course is given. Organisations don't distinguish between HR and HRD. Or at least they shouldn't. HRD has become the part of HR that cared about the dynamic part of people, the learning part. HR was more static: it was concerned with the procedural, replicable and predictable part.

McLagan suggests new roles required of HRD practitioners include: HR strategic advisor, HR systems designer and developer, organisational change consultant, organisational design consultant, learning program specialist, instructor/facilitator, individual development and career consultant, performance consultant, and researcher.

ii) European Studies

Competency profiling research about HRD practices in Europe, based on the work of McLagan, was also conducted between 1992-6. This research project which studied both practice and practitioners in England, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Finland has been quite widely reported (e.g. Valkeavaara, 1998; van Ginkel, Mulder and Nijhof, 1997; Nijhof and de Rijk, 1996). One of the more recent reports of this study by Valkeavaara (1998) proposed that this study showed the culture bound nature of HRD. Valkeavaara (1998) argued that in England and Finland HRD practitioners' views of their work and role in the organisation actually reflect the changes taking place in working life more generally with the work of HRD practitioners focussing on change promotion and organisational development. The study showed the beginnings of an emphasis on the strategic aspects of HRD and the notion of establishing a learning organisation being seen as part of HRD practitioners' role in England. From the German sample data showed there was an emphasis on the role of instructor even amongst organisational practitioners. In Italy the roles of

program designer and instructor were prominent and, as Valkeavaara suggested, may also reflect a rather traditional approach to HRD where there seems to have been little attempt to link HRD with business strategies. Many roles were nominated as part of the HRD work in the Netherlands, however, Valkeavaara argued this can be explained by attempts towards professionalisation of this field taking place in the Netherlands at the time of the survey. In an earlier report of some of these findings by Nijhof and de Rijk (1996) the following competencies were reported as being crucial for practitioners across the countries involved in the study: adult learning understanding; organisational behaviour understanding; feedback skills; relationship building skills; intellectual versatility; observational skills and self knowledge.

Poell and Chivers (1999) also reported findings from a study examining the changes taking place in job roles of 19 HRD consultants in the UK. Findings from this study revealed that a large majority of participants reported individual development as being at the core of their work. Organisational consultancy which encompassed internal consultancy, organisational change and process counselling was shown as second core work activity of these practitioners. Training delivery was also a domain of activity that was highly characteristic of the work of these respondents. A small minority of these participants also reported that their role included organisational analysis e.g. competency analysis, training needs analysis, job analysis and monitoring progress of change process.

While such findings would seem to suggest some shift in role and hence competencies required more recent European studies by Tjepkema, Horst, Mulder and Scheerens (2000) do not confirm this position. Results from this inter European study of HRD professional work in large organisations reveal that training provision remained the most frequently used practice of these practitioners. Training provision however was complemented with other strategies to support other types of learning in the organisations (Tjepkema, Horst, Mulder and Scheerens, 2000)

iii) Australian studies

From an Australian perspective there is some evidence of expansion in terms of roles and competencies required for practice. For example one profiling study by Moy (1991a), based on an analysis of advertised positions, suggested that traditional responsibilities associated with orthodox practice of training and

development such as instructing, facilitating, program design, and program administration continued to rate highly as key responsibilities. From this study there was also evidence of a trend toward the HRD professional as a provider of advisory and diagnostic services including needs analysis and skills audits. This study also revealed that, in newly created positions, the most frequently mentioned responsibilities included organisational change/development, analysing needs, conducting skill audits, advising on individual career development and strategic HRD planning.

Other findings from this study suggested that organisations advertising HRD positions placed greater emphasis on identification of desired competencies and personal characteristics than on educational qualifications. The HRD practitioner competencies sought in the advertisements were broadly based and included subject expertise and business understanding rather than a narrow focus on function specific HRD skills (Moy, 1991b).

At approximately the same time as Moy was presenting her findings, Collins and Hackman (1991) conducted a nationally based profiling study of 800 leading companies to examine training and development practice. Results from this study suggested that there had been an increasing use of systematic approaches to assessment of training and development needs and more attention given to management development and training in Australian organisations. This study showed that the training and development specialists were contributing most to the design of such management development programs within their organisations.

A follow up study to the 1991 study examining training practices reported by Collins and Hackman was conducted in 1996 drawing on data from organisations in Australia and New Zealand (CCH 2002). Two trends were which were seen as having critical implications for an organisation's approach and commitment to training and development in this 1996 study. The first trend was the shift in developed economies towards knowledge worker industries in which employee knowledge and skills were being seen, at least to some extent, as a powerful source of competitive advantage. The second reported trend was the shift from an emphasis on managing organisational change to managing organisational learning to ensure adaption, sustained organisational relevance and performance.

The 1996 report also revealed specialist training and development or human resource development staff needed skills to facilitate collective learning endeavours given the changing work context.

Additionally this study reported increased outsourcing of training and development activities within Australian organisations. Eighty eight per cent (88%) of the respondents indicated that they outsourced some of these activities and 11 per cent indicated that they outsourced all training and development. Once again the 1996 survey showed greater use of assessment centres, outdoor management exercises, computer-assisted training, and survey feedback than in the previous survey.

There was also some evidence in data gathered as part of this study that showed that increasing numbers of Australian organisations were not only linking training and development to their corporate and business plans but also to other human resource processes which targeted employee performance and development. These findings, to some extent, resonate with the findings about practice in HRD from America.

Two other much smaller profiling studies conducted later in the decade by Johnston and Anderson (1997) (reported Johnston, 2001) and Kostos (1998) could be seen as further indicating some of the shifts in practice indicated in the ASTD study. The Johnston and Anderson study reported that the most common practice activities reported by respondents were classroom based group training, assessment of performance or competence, assisting with the implementation of organisation change, program design, program evaluation, one to one training or coaching and HRD budgeting. Other activities undertaken in at least 40 per cent of respondents' organisations included: monitoring organisational change; career planning; facilitating team development; process improvement or quality initiatives, and internal performance improvement consultancy. The respondents in the survey also reported increased outsourcing of HRD activities, more frequent use of learning centres, individualised plans and open learning strategies and that managers were more involved in the processes of HRD than they had been in previous years.

This study also identified the skills and competencies HRD practitioners felt they needed for practice. Communication skills, which were seen as including skills for negotiation and group management, were the most frequently identified required practice skills. Traditional skills of training e.g. instructional

skills, skills in facilitation, program design and needs analysis were included in the second most commonly identified cluster of skills. A third cluster of skills nominated was concerned with organisational awareness. Skills in this cluster included: planning skills; knowledge of corporate culture; management of projects, time and resources as well as general administration; budgeting, and marketing skills. Some respondents in the study indicated the need for well developed skills in analysis investigation, problem solving and consultancy (Johnston, 2001).

Kostos (1998) also reported a further set of profiling competencies from a focus group with learning and development professionals with varying levels of responsibility in large and small organisations. This study revealed that there was a definite shift in the skill requirements of people currently involved with the field with the greatest change being in the area of a move from trainer to consultant. Her study found that the learning and development function required professionals to be more aware of business issues in order to make the linkages in the delivery of learning. Skills for consulting, high level communication, analysis, resource and project management, using behavioural transformation approaches, organisational development, managing change, use of new technologies and managing cultural diversity were also required. Participants also nominated a need for a refined capacity for knowledge management.

And finally, the most recent survey of training practice following on from the 1991 and 1996 CCH surveys reported earlier provides some additional insights into the direction of the field and, by implication, the skills required by its practitioners. The 2001 survey data revealed the following two significant developments which have occurred in training and development practice in Australia over the past five years. They are:

1. consideration of training and development has expanded not only to learning but there has also been a broadening of focus that pays greater attention to collective learning: a shift in emphasis from just individual organisational members to groups and teams training, developing and learning together.

2. increased attention is being paid to training, development and learning (TDL) as both a source of organisational performance improvement and the enhancement of the organisation's employment branding. Increased

> involvement of senior management, higher expenditure and tighter integration of TDL with corporate and business planning evidence this change (CCH 2002:1,023)

Studies profiling the skills required by HRD practitioners discussed above reflect the need for HRD practitioners to possess a broad range of competencies. Certainly most of the evidence from cited studies suggests the need for practitioners to have more than instructional skills. There is also considerable evidence in the more recent studies of a need for HRD practitioners to have both organizational and business awareness and the skills, which allow them to practice in a way that builds the performance of the organisation.

The linkage between HRD practice, other HRM practices and skills and awareness of business direction and strategy is major theme in some of the writing about HRD. Some of the positions advanced in this literature and by implication then impact on careers of HRD practitioners are discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.2.4 Linkage between HRD, HRM and business strategy

There is a growing body of often prescriptive literature potentially shaping the nature of HRD careers that calls for the linkage of HRD and HRM practice as a means for influencing business strategy (CCH, 2002; Kuchinke, 2002; Sofo, 1999; Ulrich, Losey and Lake, 1997; Harrison, 1997; McLagan, 1996; Boxall, 1996; Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996; Garavan, Costine and Heraty, 1995; Watkins and Marsick, 1992; Garavan, 1991). Some signs of this position could be seen in the 1980s when scholars lamenting the lack of strategic focus in HRD practice and called for a closer linkage between HRD and HRM to achieve a more strategic orientation.

Hall for example (1985:170-1) argued

> One of the most powerful ways to facilitate employee development is to develop human resource systems for the achievement of other objectives, with the full knowledge that improved development will be an important spin-off benefit. The fact is that human resource functions tend to be interdependent, and these interdependencies can be employed strategically.

> The two human resource functions that probably have the strongest impact on development are *performance appraisal* and *succession planning*.... (These) cannot be separated from the development process.

By the end of the 20th century theorists from the field were still emphasizing the importance of this linkage (De Simone and Harris, 1998; Ulrich Losey andLake, 1997; Garavan, Costine and Heraty, 1995). Sofo (1999:65) writing about the need for this linkage states

> The practice of HRD is inextricably linked to that of HRM through the strategic implications each has for long term survival. What is clear is that HRD is about developmental practices and that HRD needs to collaborate with the other HR areas in a mutually supportive relationship to achieve the desired outcomes for individuals and for organisations

Much of the literature calling for the nexus between HRD, HRM and business strategy, sometimes referred to as a high performance work system approach, (Becker, Huselid, Pickus and Spratt 1997; Winby, 1995) is prescriptive. It cites the need for both HRM and HRD to be more engaged working seamlessly with business strategy and entire business systems as opposed to individual HRD/HRM policies or practices a way of achieving increased productivity.

Smith (1999) argues that the link between training, human resource management practices and business strategy was originally investigated by Pettigrew and his colleagues at the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change at Warwick University in the mid 1980s. They proposed a model that showed the trigger for training was generated by the skills gap that related to the proposed business strategy of the enterprise. Smith further argues that the literature on the place of human resource management in business strategy subsequent to the Pettigrew research has consistently identified the importance of training to attracting, retaining and developing employees as a means of enhancing the core competences of the enterprise.

Garavan, Costine and Heraty (1995) have also considered the growth of this aspect of HRD practice. They argue that part of the reason for the growth in popularity of this understanding of the field can be attributed to the popularisation of the notion of competitive advantage advanced by writers such as Hamel and Prahalad (1994) and the literature advocating the need to strive for organisational excellence. This literature which advocates the need for HRD

to develop a strategic focus certainly looks at the role of building core competences as a way of achieving excellence and competitive positioning. Garavan, Costine and Heraty argue that the new business context of increasing competitiveness is prompting senior management to take a greater interest in the development of their organisations' human resources. They argue that senior managers now see HRD as an essential cog in the machinery of managing organisations in that they realise it may provide effective solutions to many business problems (4-5).

While there is considerable advocacy for HRD assuming this strategic orientation the degree to which this is actually occurring is more questionable. Horowitz (1999: 187), for example in a discussion of the South African situation, shows the difficulty in implementing a strategic HRD approach. He argues that it is unlikely that HRD will make a meaningful strategic contribution to enhancing organisational effectiveness if traditional approaches including the approach of devolving HRD practice to line managers are used. Horowitz claims such line managers lack enthusiasm, technical skills or time to carry out the HRD function effectively.

Despite some of the arguments advanced by Dunphy and Griffiths and discussed earlier in this chapter about the advent of strategic approaches to HR in Australian organisations there is also contrary evidence about the widespread adoption of such a strategic approach. Several studies of the mid nineties (Hayton, McIntyre, Petrocz, MacDonald, Noble, Smith and Roberts, 1996; Kane, Abraham and Crawford, 1994) while arguing about the need for a more strategic approach to HRD report little evidence of strategy driven practice. Smith and Hayton (1999), for example, argued from the 1996 study by McIntyre, Petrocz, Hayton, Noble, Smith and Roberts, that the relationship between training activity and business strategy was not straightforward. They claimed:

> The process of strategy formulation was only in infancy in most enterprises investigated and the direct connection between strategy and training were to all intents and purposes non existent (269).

Smith goes on to show in a later article that examples of a tight fit relationship between training and strategy in Australian organisations were rare. He states about this fit:

> more common were the many cases in which enterprises had a vaguely defined or emergent business strategy... Nor was it the case that the link between training and business strategy was confined to the large enterprises in this study. In many cases it was the smaller enterprises that had the clearest perception of their business strategy, the markets that they were competing in and the skills that they required in order to be successful. In these cases, a combination of strategic vision and the severe resource constraints produced some of the most innovative approaches to training in the study (75).

Thus while there is certainly theorisation of the need for a more strategic approach to HRD practice, evidence of such practice is less prominent at least in Australia. This line of research has potential for this dissertation. The career constructions of practitioners may yield evidence of practitioners perceiving their careers moving towards more organisationally strategically aligned practice and hence prescription about the need for a strategic orientation to practice has the potential to be perceived as a property of at least some of the careers examined.

2.2.5. *Advocacy for a"learning organisation" approach*

Closely aligned to the call for HRD practitioners to adopt a strategic orientation in their practice is also the prominent call for HRD practitioners to adopt a "learning organisation" orientation in their practice (Sofo, 1999; Marsick & Watkins, 1998; Field and Ford, 1995; Dixon, 1995; Watkins and Marsick, 1992.) So popular has this notion become that Garavan (1997) labels the learning organisation as one of the new "buzz" words in the management, psychological and human resource development literature. He further argues that:

> senior management in many organizations have also come to believe that the way in which an organisation learns is a key index to its effectiveness and potential to innovate and grow (18).

Despite the widespread call for the implementation of this "approach" or the promotion of a culture of organisational learning, there is considerable confusion about what such a phenomenon is, how it should be understood, who is responsible for promoting such a creation and in fact about the ease with which such a state can be created within an organisation (Garavan, 1997; Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom, 1999; Field and Ford, 1996; Coopey, 1996).

What is more obvious in much of the literature related to this phenomenon is that the capabilities associated with building learning organisations extend beyond capabilities associated with orthodox forms of training and methods for fostering individual learning. Most attempts at definitions or descriptions of learning organisations include the concept that such organisations are those that continuously acquire, process and disseminate knowledge about markets products, technologies and business processes. This knowledge is often based on experience, experimentation and information provided by customers, suppliers, competitors and other sources. Learning organisations are seen as being market oriented and having an entrepreneurial culture and a flexible organic structure. Such culture and structure enable a degree of experimentation in responding to future changes in the internal and external environment and as encouraging team work and team learning. A learning organisation is also seen as having facilitative leadership which supposedly provides a model and support for learning and encourages varying degrees of participation by organisational members in decisions making. (Coopey, 1996; Lundberg, 1995; Luthans, Rubach and Marsick, 1995; Slater and Narver, 1995, Watkins and Marsick, 1996; Pedler, Boydell and Burgoyne; 1988).

While much of the literature links the development of these characteristics to behaviours of organisational leaders and managers there is also considerable support for the establishment of a learning organisation becoming the responsibility of the HRD personnel. Watkins and Marsick (1992) argued that HRD practitioners should adopt an organisationally transformative role by embracing the concept of establishing a learning organisation framework for their practice. Such a shift, they argue, will enable HRD functions and practitioners to achieve more strategic positioning within organisations. Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom (1999) in a study of the behaviours required by managers to act as facilitators of learning also establish this linkage when they urge HRD practitioners to assist managers acquire such skills as part of their role in building a learning organisation. A recent Australian study by Johnston and Hawke (2002 a) that examined practice in Australian organisations which saw themselves as being on a trajectory to establishing themselves as organisations with learning cultures also revealed that in most cases the HRD practitioners played a significant role in building this culture. This study showed however that in such organisations the HRD role required a more extensive skill base than was required of a practitioner in a traditional instructor role. More frequently the HRD role involved developing and working with organisational

systems. At some sites these systems included self -managed self -directed instructional systems. At other sites practitioners worked with more advanced communication and performance feedback systems that supported learning, or worked with and helped shape new organisational structures to enhance learning opportunities.

Thus, despite the very diverse characteristics of the learning organisation as described above and the obvious need for many players within an organisation to be involved in the creation of this phenomenon, research shows the HRD practitioner is expected to engage in practices associated with building a learning organisation and this engagement obviously demands skill levels beyond those normally required by trainers/ instructors. Such findings and positions raise questions needing to be explored empirically about the degree to which practitioners need to play a broader more strategic role and display associated skills within an organisation in order to maintain their career in HRD.

2.2.6 Impact of rethinking of Vocational Education and Training policy within Australia on HRD practice

To better understand HRD as a career field in Australia it is also useful to consider the literature that reports recent changes in Vocational Education and Training (VET) policy and practice in Australia. Policy change in this area and the increased research and reportage of research has had significant impact on both the practices of learning in vocational education institutions and the role of and careers of VET teachers. It also has had some impact on learning practice in organisations and potentially the careers of learning and development practitioners in organisations as well.

Policy change in relation to skill formation and the associated rethinking of vocational education and training systems has been driven by a recognition that Australia, much like other developed nations in the world, needed a more highly skilled workforce in order to compete in the knowledge society. This awareness prompted a raft of initiatives that have impacted on VET practice (Simons and Harris, 2002; Johnston and Hawke, 2002(b); Chappell, 1999; Gonczi and Hager, 1992).

These initiatives have included the introduction of competency based standards for workers in most industries. These standards have become the basis for training and skill formation and assessment for some employees in both

educational institutions and in some workplaces. There has also been an attempt to vocationalise aspects of the school curriculum and to establish mechanisms that enable greater recognition of the previously acquired non-credentialled learning gained in the workplace by employees. A further change in this area has been the ongoing attempt to open up the training market. This has led to the national accreditation of training that is provided by both public and private providers of training as well as some in-house training provided within commercial organisations which have sought registered training organisation (RTO) status. This move has enabled some trainers in commercial organisations to offer their trainees development opportunities that have led to qualifications linked to the national qualification framework. In previous years provision of such accredited training has been the preserve of teachers working in publicly funded post-compulsory education institutions.

One mechanism to regulate the quality of training provision in this newly opened training market was a requirement that those trainers delivering courses that were linked to the national qualification framework had at least minimum qualifications in training and development. Such qualifications known as a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training were to be gained either through course attendance or participation in a "recognition of prior learning" (RPL) process provided by an accredited agency. While many who have worked in the HRD function in organisations have held qualifications related to their practice, until these recent policy changes there has been no requirement for these practitioners to carry qualifications. The introduction of this requirement could therefore be seen as one of the first attempts to regulate this field of practice. This step along with the competencies outlined in this set of standards developed for training and development practitioners have in fact been the source of considerable disquiet amongst at least some practitioners and theorists (Harris and Simons, 2000; Smith, E., 2000).

For some areas of skill formation and in some organisations, possession of a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training has become an imperative for employment for those wishing to be workplace trainers/ learning and development specialists/HRD practitioners. Hence this requirement has had quite significant effects for career formation and enaction for such practitioners. For other areas of learning and development practice or in other organisations where the awarding of employees with a nationally accredited qualification is not an issue, employers seem to have shown little interest in their HRD practitioners holding this qualification (Harris, Simons

and Bone, 2002; Johnston and Hawke, 2002(a) and (b); Harris and Simons, 2000; CCH, 1998).

Despite this differentiated impact on careers of HRD practitioners in organisations related to the acquisition of Certificate IV, the raft of policy initiatives and programs associated with the revision of the skill formation particularly until 1996 certainly has generated an increased attention to the whole area of post compulsory schooling and education. Furthermore the concurrence of this revision with the call for fostering organisational learning could be seen as promoting the positioning of learning and Human Resource Development within organisational settings. This was apparent especially during the years (early to mid nineties) when the Australian government imposed a training levy to encourage organisations to more actively engage in employee development activities. Some organisations at this time actively participated in Best Practice programs which led to the establishing and embedding of new learning systems within organisations (Warburton, 1994; Australian Manufacturing Council, 1994).

An additional development arising from policy reform in skill formation worth noting, in consideration of HRD literature which sheds some insights on careers in HRD, has been the development of a much more comprehensive system of collecting and reporting data about post compulsory training and learning. Such data has allowed Robinson and Arthy (1999: vi) to state:

> There is already considerable evidence on the surface at least that there is already an extensive training culture in Australia. Most medium to large enterprises in Australia provide some kind of training to their employees spending over $4 billion annually on training. Over 80 per cent of employed people receive some kind of training from their employers. Nearly 1.5 million Australians re-enrol in a publicly funded vocational education and training program each year.

Further analysis of data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that a substantial amount of the structured training that occurs in industry is not linked to any award or accreditation. Fifty eight per cent of this training is provided through in-house training (Chappell, 2000; Dumbrell, 1998; ABS 1997).

While the picture about training in large Australian organisations is very apparent and arguably suggests a field providing career opportunities, the situation about training in small organisations is slightly less transparent. Initial thinking about such findings seemed to suggest that employers in small organisations were providing staff with little opportunity for learning. This situation however has been more recently questioned (Harris and Simons, 2001; Gibb, 1997). All these studies indicate that employees in such organisations do receive relatively unstructured development on an as-needs basis. Gibb argues (1997:47):

> In small business, training means showing someone how to do a certain task on the job, it means demonstrating, coaching, advising, guiding mentoring and providing information. This is real and happening in the workplace all the time—new skills, knowledge, aptitudes are being developed all the time in the workplace as the need arises and in order to improve business performance. It may be called training or it may simply be called work to those doing it—whatever it is called, people in small business are learning.

Such findings could therefore be seen as suggesting that careers in HRD would certainly be more available in large organisations than in small organisations. This position, however, may be more observable from empirical data gathered for this project.

More recent evidence about the nature of training and development in Australian organisations can be gleaned from another large study of 350 companies conducted on behalf of the Australian Industry Group (Allen, 1999). This study much like other studies (e.g. Johnston and Hawke, 2002 (a); Hayton, McIntyre, Sweet, MacDonald, Noble, Smith, & Roberts, 1996) revealed that the key drivers of training and development in Australian organisations were competitiveness, innovation, flexibility and customer orientation. This study showed there was a shift in demand with a need for the attainment of higher skills including both the hard and soft generic at all occupational levels, with an increasing premium being placed on generic skills (hard and soft). There was however also some evidence of a growing emphasis on recruitment as a means of obtaining generic technical and personal attribute skills.

The study also advanced characteristics which are features of what it saw as a high performance company. Features which arguably have implications for HRD practice and practitioners are described in the report as follows:

> ... high performance companies recruit and build knowledge skills and their people in the context of a mix of activities designed to build the competitive performance of the company. The capability of their employees is inextricably linked to their research and innovation practices, investment in new equipment, introduction of advanced technology, company restructuring to emphasise a particular part of the value chain, and reorganisation to build teambased work or other strategic change.
>
> ... the companies invest in knowledge and skills of their employees and encourage them to learn. Company driven learning, conducted both in house and externally, using company trainers and external experts is an important part of their culture. They also provide incentives (financial and other) to encourage individual employees to advance their knowledge. These companies tend to invest more than the average in employee learning (Allen Consulting Group, 1999:93).

This position implies that while there is still some role for more traditional forms of in-company learning, the development that high performance organisations seek is also built using external experts, research and innovation, investment in new equipment, technology and organisational structuring. As such the HRD practitioner for this type of organisation requires a broader set of competences than traditional instructional skills and could be seen as needing the capacity to interact with a range of other organisational players in the building of capability in such organisations.

2.2.7 *Some conclusions*

The preceding reportage of literature and writing about HRD could be seen as yielding at least the following positions.

1. HRD is a field of practice that is still evolving. As a consequence a widely accepted set(s) of practice competences and practitioner attributes and definitive model(s) of practice are also still evolving.

2. The scope of practice for HRD practitioners is broadening and as a consequence practitioners may need a broader range of skills than in the past to work with a wider range of audiences in a variety of capacities.

3. Notions of performance in terms of resolving workplace problems and providing solutions to workplace needs and accountability for achieving stated and strategic outcomes have become more apparent expectations of practice associated with this field in recent years.

4. Practitioners may need to practise in a way that fosters learning and capability acquisition in individuals as well as the organisation as a whole. In so doing such practice now may involve having an increased capacity to understand directions and movements in organisations in order to develop the required systems, policies, relationships and structures for on-going learning.

From such findings a set of questions emerges which need to be investigated if understandings of this area as a career field rather than an organisation practice area are to be increased.

Most obviously, as discussed earlier, the diversity in the philosophies/theoretical and disciplinary bases driving HRD practice along with diversity in models and scope of practice in organisations immediately raise questions as to whether this area can be seen as a coherent career field. This, in essence, is the core question this research project is attempting to answer. Research is needed which elucidates whether there is some consistency in the philosophies of practice or role understandings of HRD practitioners. Further research is needed to reveal if there is some consistency in similarities of experiences of practice perhaps emerging from development within this field itself or in the skill sets or professional attributes required for practice. Such similarity could be seen as linking the variety of understandings of this field and giving it a coherence that allows HRD to be seen as a single career field such as teaching or management.

In understanding this area as a career field there is also a need to understand what sort of variations become apparent at different stages of career in this field. Is there some consistency required across a career or is a degree of variation

within careers in this area of practice obvious and, if so what is driving this and is it apparent when studying careers of different practitioners?

2.3. Informing themes from careers research literature.

2.3.1 Overview of approaches to understanding careers

The literature from the field of careers and career development also contributes to an understanding of the context of this research project and provides another framework or lens for analysis and interrogation of the empirical data to be gathered. This literature, like the literature of HRD, is both substantial and rich with attempts by researchers and career theoreticians to establish robust definitions, and commonly accepted theoretical bases and research methodologies for the field (Chen, 1998; Minor, 1992; Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989; Collins and Young, 1986.)

Minor (1992) presents a useful overview of some prominent theorisation of this field. She suggests that theorisation of this field deriving primarily from a psychological base has moved from a prescriptive model of matching individuals with jobs (Parsons, 1909), through stage models of career choice and career development (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma, 1951; Super 1953) to more specific explanations of factors involved in career choice and career adjustment (Holland, 1973, 1985; Krumboltz, 1979). Minor also provides a brief overview of the use of sociological theory and themes from sociological research into career formation and enaction. She sees such theory as including accident theory, or the effects of chance on vocational choice and career formation. Minor summarises her thinking about sociological theory stating:

> Although there is not just one sociological theory of career choice or development, sociological research predicts occupational choice primarily in terms of status, using such variables as fathers' education and occupation, education level, race, sex and influence of significant others. Accident theory also falls into this category (1992:30).

A further major development in the way this field is understood has been the acceptance by a range of theorists (with relatively frequently overlapping positions) of new ways of understanding and researching careers in a post industrial society. (Chen, 1998; Young, Valach and Collin, 1996; Collin and

Young, 1992). Researchers from this cluster, variously referred to as ecological, contextual and constructivist career theorists, fundamentally consider the dynamic interaction between the developing person and his/her environment as determining the dimensions of career. As such researchers from this cluster often seek what is unique in research into careers rather than what is similar.

Significant assumptions underpinning career research of this kind include:

1. All aspects of the universe are interconnected. It is impossible to separate figure from ground, subject from object, people from their environments.
2. There are no absolutes: thus human functioning cannot be reduced to laws or principles and cause and effect can not be inferred.
3. Human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs.
4. The subjective frame of reference of human beings is the only legitimate source of knowledge. Events occur outside human beings. As individuals understand their environments and participate in these events they define themselves and their environment (Brown and Brooks, 1996:10).

Such assumptions underpin the empirical research undertaken for this dissertation and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Despite the variety of philosophic orientations from which researchers from this field have come, they all face the challenge of understanding careers influenced by the rapidly changing societal and workplace context. The stability once associated with the workplaces that usually supported the establishment and maintenance of career hierarchies in particular occupational fields is no longer the norm. An uninterrupted work life can no longer be taken for granted. Periods of unemployment and career change are now seen as an expected experience in the normal course of events.

Such change in the way a career is enacted is occurring at a time when the professions and professionals themselves are also struggling to maintain their legitimacy, their professional expertise having been under scrutiny as a result of the general decline in "trust" once given to those in professional occupations (Frost, 2001:9) and there is a decline in traditional and craft skills (Casey, 1999).

In this context grand narratives which once could be used to explain organisational and career functioning are no longer appropriate (Super, Savickas and Super, 1996; Herr, 1996). Writers and theorists working in the area

of careers are now faced with more complex environments with new story lines and different dimensions being seen as determining and characterising contemporary careers, workplaces and work itself. Some of the dominant dimensions now recognised as constituting notions of career and which may be useful in the understanding of a career in HRD are discussed in the following section.

2.3.2 *Dimensions of contemporary careers*

i) External objective features v/+ Internal subjective experiences
In the contemporary post-industrial context, broad multi-dimensional understandings of careers have become common. Positions such as that advanced by Arnold (1996: ix) could be seen as reflecting these newer understandings of the concept. Arnold argues:

> It is important that the notion of career is not confined to a predictable upward movement over a long period of time within one organisation or occupation simply because this pattern has become rarer. Indeed a career concerns any sequence of employment related positions. It includes people's subjective experiences of sequence not simply an objective account of the jobs they hold.

This position on career insists on the need to see the phenomena from both an objective perspective, that is being made up of the external features such as positions held within an organisation or organisations as well as including an individual's subjective experiences of what they see as the sequence of their careers.

More than ten years earlier Schein also had asserted a similar position. In 1980 he wrote:

> One can define a career as being the expected sequence of roles that defines the progress of an occupation. The career of a doctor then is a sequence of roles of medical student, intern resident, practitioner, board certified and the like. But a role can also be defined psychologically as the identity that a person assumes in any given social situation, the set of self-concepts or self-definitions that he brings to the situation. In this psychological sense the career becomes the set of steps or stages or identities that individuals perceive

> themselves to be moving through in the process of working out an occupation. One can distinguish these two career concepts by calling one the external career and one the internal career (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) but neither career researcher nor practitioners have taken the distinction to be meaningful or important (1980:259).

The recognition of the importance of the subjective interpretation in understanding careers is emphasised by many contemporary career researchers. Young and Collin (1992:1-2) argue the importance of obtaining and providing the subjective interpretation in understanding careers when they state:

> In order to study careers and counsel others about their careers we have to interpret the words and stories people use to construct their career. Career research calls for an awareness of the dialectic between individuals and their context in this constructive process and it can only be achieved through interpretation. Moreover it is through interpretation and subsequent construction of narrative and stories that individuals make sense of their careers and world. The understanding and practice of interpretation, then are proposed as key elements in career research the more so now that a modern view appears to be giving way to a post modern one.

ii) Direction and movement of careers

Most considerations of career encompass the notion of movement or progress within career. As such they indicate that careers have direction. This notion is also highlighted by the developmentalist, Dalton, who in attempting to define the term, traces its origin to the French word "carriere" meaning a road or racecourse and its expansion into "One's progress through life in a particular vocation" (Guralnik, 1978 cited in Dalton, 1989). He further states "This word career brings with it a connotation of progression or development along some course" (89). The sense of pathway and direction, if not necessarily upwards can also be seen in Bytheway's (1992) understanding of the concept. In a study into the end of career Bytheway argues that:

> The concept of career is a reference to an individual's passage through a limited social world with an emphasis on the management of discontinuities and in the idea of status, success and failure (1992:135).

Such a position calls for the inclusion of the broader social world and therefore allows for the inclusion of more than the world of paid work as part of the concept of career. The linkage between career and paid work and jobs, however, is more common (Barley, 1989:47). Such positions therefore suggest that it is appropriate in a study of careers within a field to look for career movement or directions and for patterns in the directions in which careers in that field may move. Several such studies examining movement in careers are discussed below.

iii) Studies of types of careers

Schein (1980), for example, completed a study of career choice and organisational transitions made by MBA graduates which showed that there were patterns in the way these graduates made decisions about their careers. From the data of this 12 year longitudinal study which explored the intersection of individual needs and organisational demands faced by 44 MBA graduates he developed a typology of career types. Dalton (1989) reports that Schein found little consistency in the job histories of these graduates but a great deal of consistency in the reasons individuals gave for career decisions about job choice and transitions. These decisions became even more consistent as individuals in the study accumulated greater work experience. Schein used the metaphor of "career anchors" as a way of explaining the reasons given by subjects for career moves and the patterns created by such movement. These "anchors" could be seen as serving as guides and constraints for career moves as well as stabilising and integrating individual careers. The anchors identified by Schein included:

1. Technical functional competence anchor

Individuals with this "career anchor" organised their careers around specific areas of technical or functional competence and made job moves essentially by the criterion of maximising their opportunity to remain challenged in their specific content area. They were not interested in management per se and resisted the idea of going into general management.

2. Managerial competence

Individuals with a managerial career anchor were concerned with climbing the corporate ladder to positions of general management, where they could exercise large amounts of responsibility and link organisational achievement to their own effort.

3. Security and stability
Individuals with this anchor were preoccupied with stability, either in the continued employment of a particular company or in terms of geographical stability, settling down, stabilising the family and integrating one's self into the community.

4. Creativity
Members of this group organised their career decisions around the need to create something: a product, a company or a service of their own. Schein referred to the members of this group as entrepreneurs.

5. Autonomy and independence
Individuals with this anchor found themselves increasingly unable and unwilling to work in large organisations and found themselves essentially "autonomous careers" in roles such as professors, freelance writers, or consultants (Dalton (1989:930).

Another attempt to understand types of careers include efforts made by Driver (1980) who proposed that the careers individuals pursued or the type of career individuals had was the result of the "career concept" they held. He proposed that "career concepts" held by individuals (and hence the type of career they pursued) could be allocated to one of the following four career concept categories.

1. The transitory career concept. Those with this concept of career have careers in which no set job or field is ever permanently chosen. The individual moves from job to job with no particular pattern. This concept of career is found frequently among semi skilled workers.
2. The steady state career concept. Those with this career concept essentially select to join a job or a field early in life and stay essentially in one work role.
3. The spiral career evolves though a series of occupations where each new choice builds on the past and develops new skills.
4. The linear concept of career in which a field is chosen early in life and a plan for upward movement is developed and executed.

The upwardly mobile "linear" career has at least until recently been the most frequently examined model of career of this set. Many career researchers are however challenging this career type given the changing nature of work life over the last 20 years. Brousseau (1990) for example argues that the

demographics of baby boom baby bust generations, combined with severe economic trends are "turning career opportunities upside down" (p.46). He argues that while in this context "the upward career" is commonly seen as the successful career, not everyone personally desires this type of career. In fact recent research shows that upward movement is conspicuously absent from the "ideal career" that many people hold. He further argues that many people whose primary identification is with the linear concept of career are "closet spirals".

Also questioning the dominance of the linear upwardly mobile careers are researchers Zabusky and Barley (1996). These researchers argue that while some occupational areas offer careers which can be studied as upwardly mobile or linear careers or what these authors call careers of achievement, other occupations can be examined as careers of advancement. This model of career is usually associated with the careers of professional or crafts people. These, then, are careers that are played out against a backdrop of an occupation. In such a career model status attainment entails horizontal movement from the periphery to the centre of an occupational community, progress being scaled in terms of increments of skill, positioning in the network of practitioners and sometimes in the setting in which one practises (Zabusky and Barley, 1996).

Moss Kanter (1989) also explored notions of new models of careers. She argued that as organisations were undergoing considerable change to meet the demands of the more competitive knowledge based economy, that the bureaucratic model of career which could be aligned to an upwardly mobile career was losing its dominance to professional careers and what she called the entrepreneurial career. The entrepreneurial career she saw as being associated with creating or developing products, services or knowledge in order to add value or profitability to both small and larger organisations. The viability of this form of career may have been enhanced as organisations have sought to use a more flexible workforce and have converted what were once permanent positions into either part time positions or eliminated them all together and sought to use outsourced arrangements.

Hall and Mirvis (1995) further examining the changing shape of careers suggest a new career stage or type is emerging as a result of organisational downsizing and use of contingent labour. They suggest that:

> The protean career means decoupling the concept of career from connection to any one organisation (or to an organisation period) and even from its exclusive association with lifelong paid employment. Thus if the old contract was with the organisation in the protean career the contract is with self and one's work.

Other researchers and writers have looked at the patterns within careers. Several patterns are commonly identified. These include the traditional vertical career patterns or the linear career, the trunk and branch pattern, the planned rotational pattern, the dual ladder and multiple track patterns (Morrison and Adams 1991).

iv) Stages in Careers

Another perspective of patterns within careers is proposed by those researchers who have looked at stages experienced within careers. Some of the stage researchers have looked at stages across a career. One well-known model was presented by Dalton, Thompson and Price (1977). These theorists postulated that some professionals working in organisations have careers that have four relatively distinct stages.

Stage I is characterised by the individual usually working under the direction of another professional. At this stage the work is never entirely the work of the individual. It usually takes the form of assignments that are subparts of larger projects supervised by another professional.

Stage 2 occurs when the individual takes on work tasks that allow him or her to work in depth on one problem or technical area or assume responsibility for a project or a definable part of a larger project, process or client relationship. During this stage the individual works independently and produces significant results, in the process developing credibility and a reputation.

In stage 3 the individual develops a greater breadth of technical skills and understands the application of those skills for broader areas. He or she stimulates others through ideas and information and is involved in the development of other people as leader of small group, mentor or supervisor. At this stage the individual often deals with those outside his or her group for the benefit of others in the group e.g. being involved in getting funding, working with clients and working with higher management.

Stage 4. At this stage the individual provides direction for a significant part of the organisation, exercises significant formal or informal power, represents the organisation to individuals or groups inside or outside the organisation, sponsors promising individuals to test them and prepare them for key roles in the future (Dalton, 1989:97).

Other theorists have also advanced similar four stage models which have an establishment phase, an advancement phase, a maintenance stage and a withdrawal stage (e.g. Baird and Kram, 1883; Thompson, Baker and Smallwood; 1986).

McLean (1992) reports studies of stages in teachers' careers. He posits that there are five main stages in a teaching career. The stages he cites are very similar to seven stages identified in a study that was completed by the Schools Council (1990:105-108). This study which looked at patterns and properties of teachers had drawn heavily on the work of Huberman (1989) and Ingvarson and Greenway (1984). In presenting its findings, the Schools Council report argues that the patterns or motifs revealed are neither exclusive to the teaching profession alone nor necessarily pertaining to all members of the profession. In fact it could be argued that the overall findings in terms of career stages with the associated career properties are similar to the model presented by Super, Savickas and Super (1996). The research of this Council reports the following stages and the associated career properties:

- Career Entry

Properties or motifs which appear to be present during this phase include shock and the need to survive and its attendant dilemmas. The second theme is that of discovery- the headiness of having one's own pupils, one's program, the pride of collegiality and the "place" within the profession

- Stabilisation; developing commitment

It appears at this phase that a career choice is actually made. This period is marked by a shift to more instruction centred as opposed to self centred goals and a growing sense of confidence. It is a period marked by assertion of independence with teachers insisting more on their own prerogatives and the soundness of their own professional judgement and the joining of and alignment with the views of professional associations.

The Schools Council report suggests that the evidence is very strong concerning these two early phases in teachers 'career development, however it also states that the patterns are not so consistent in periods which follow. Some trends noted in the Schools Council report included:

- Diversification and change

This period is characterised by attempt to experiment using different teaching styles. This is also coupled with an increasing focus on the nature of the institution and the system and their frailties that inhibit change and improvement.

- Stock taking

Several studies are reported which show a distinct phase corresponding with 12-20 years of experience and 32-45 years of age where teachers question whether they are in the right job.

- Serenity - keeping your distance with increasing certainty

Several studies give examples of teachers who have invested heavily in their work becoming more modest in the professional goals they set for themselves. The level of career ambition is reported as decreasing, being compensated by higher levels of self-sufficiency and confidence, and increased distance from pupils.

- Conservatism

A period characterised by a feeling of "things are not like they used to be!"

- Disengagement

During this phase the teacher's energies are increasingly channelled towards outside pursuits or toward classroom work of a more modest or more specialised nature

Other career stage researchers have focussed on one or more specific stages that occur within a career. Van Maanen (1977) has focussed on entry to work and initial work socialisation, Amundsen (1995) has focussed on transitions in career, mid career, and career plateaus and Bytheway (1992) on end of career.

Other researchers still, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, have focussed their attention on careers in specific occupations and identified the properties and patterns associated with such careers, (Handy, 1999; Hall, 1996;

Zabusky and Barley, 1996; Osterman, 1996; Bierema, 1996; Knowles and Holt Reynolds, 1994; Schools Council, 1990; Fox, Maxmanian and Putnam, 1989; Huberman, 1989; Dalton and Thompson, 1986). In so doing they have examined existing patterns apparent in specific occupations and the pathways available within these occupational fields. Such studies have also examined factors that have influenced career enaction, attributes required by practitioners from this field, and sources of learning and means of acquiring working knowledge and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

v) Self agency dimensions of career construction

As part of the process of surfacing the subjective career there has been a call in much contemporary literature for recognition of the role individuals play in shaping their careers- their degree of self agency. Lent, Brown and Hackett (1996:373) explain this perspective arguing:

> Accompanying the quiet cognitive revolution (in career counselling and career development) has been an equally important trend toward viewing people as active agents in, or shapers of their career development. Re-emerging without much fanfare, this emphasis on personal agency (or self direction) actually has deep roots in the study of career behaviour and the practice of career counselling. In a real sense the field is reaffirming assumptions that counselors have long held to be self evident: for instance, that people help construct their own career outcomes; that their belief systems play a key role in this process; that we are not merely beneficiaries or victims of intra psychic, temperamental or situational forces and that behaviour is often flexible and susceptible to change efforts.

Early theorisation about self agency dimensions of career included a position advanced by Super about the role played by individual values (as opposed to interests) in career choice and enaction. He claimed that values provided a sense of purpose stating:

> They serve as stars to steer by in guiding individuals to specific places within life spaces, places that can be the center of meaning, locales for need satisfaction, and venues for the expression of interests (1970:4).

Other increasingly explored variables that are seen as contributing to such self-agency in career construction include the individual's self-concept and the

individual's self efficacy expectations (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1996; Amundsen, 1995; Miller – Tiedeman and Tiedeman, 1990; Super, 1990 Mager, 1992; Bandura, 1982).

The focus on self concept in career formation and enaction had been a major focus for Donald Super (1953) who argued that the way an individual enacted his or her career could be seen as involving the process by which the individual implemented his or her self concept and tested this self concept against reality (Dalton, 1989). As such, Super saw the self concept as the "picture of self in some role, situation or position performing some set of functions or in some web of relationships" (cited in Dalton p.18). He proposed that:

> The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing self concepts. It is a synthesising and compromising process in which the self concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, opportunity to observe and play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows (interactive learning) (cited in Minor, 1992:20).

Miller -Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) also highlight the pivotal role of self concept, which they see as being individually as well as socially constructed, as a component of career formation. They argue that the self concept is "the core that co-ordinates and manages the person's self-agency in designing his or her life career blueprints" (447).

Other researchers have been more interested in the role of self efficacy and the impact of self efficacy expectations on career behaviour (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1996; Hackett, 1995; Hackett and Lent, 1992; Locke and Latham, 1990). Self efficacy according to Bandura was the individual's judgements of his or her capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986:391). Individuals with a high degree of self efficacy firmly believe in their performance capabilities. Bandura proposed that an individual's self efficacy was made up of three dimensions: magnitude (level of task difficulty an individual believes he/she can attain); strength (whether the belief regarding magnitude is strong or weak), and generality (how generalised the capability is across different situations) (Bandura, 1982; 1977).

Mager was also interested in self efficacy. He was particularly interested in the relationship between self efficacy and performance and self efficacy and career choice and enaction. Writing in 1992 he suggested self efficacy had five main effects on behaviour. These included:

> 1. Choice behaviour. Our choices are often affected by how efficacious we feel towards the options... (This principle) may influence the career I select in the first place, since people who believe that they will do poorly in a field will be less likely to choose it.
>
> 2. Motivation. People with high self efficacy will mobilise more effort than those with low self efficacy. That is those who believe in their ability to perform in a given area will be more likely to strive harder to succeed.
>
> 3. Perseverance. People with high self efficacy will persevere even in the presence of obstacles and negative outcomes. They are better able to continue, to bounce back, in the face of disappointments and frustration. They will perceive a failure as only a temporary set back rather than a final result.
>
> 4. Facilitative thought patterns. People with high self efficacy towards performing a skill or a range of skills say to themselves "I'm going to figure out how to solve this problem". Those with low self efficacy say "I can't do this thing" interpreting their current lack of success as a lack of ability. This self-talk is influenced by self efficacy. Those with high self efficacy run off success scenarios: those with low self efficacy run off failure scenarios.
>
> 5. Vulnerability to stress and depression... Those with high self efficacy approach stressful situations with the assurance that they will be able to handle them and so do not distress themselves before a performance begins (Mager, 1992:33-34).

In examining the career stories of contemporary HRD practitioners evidence of various aspects of each practitioner's sense of self efficacy relating to his/her career and work practice or his/her self concept more generally may become apparent and provide an explanation for the shape of his /her on-going careers in this field.

vi) The interconnection of work roles and other than work roles in career construction

As shown in earlier commentary in this chapter there has also been a call in much of career literature to recognise the interconnection of both work and other -than -work experiences. One of the first theoreticians to advance the notion of the importance of other-than -work roles was, once again, Donald Super. Super recognised that life in the information age could not be grounded in solely occupational roles. He advanced the notion that an individual possesses multiple life roles that variously impact on each other at various stages of that individual's life span. Hence Super postulated that roles such as the parent role would impact on how a career was being enacted, similarly the individual's role as a "leisurite' may also impact on the shape of a career (Super, Savickas and Super, 1996).

This position, while seen as quite radical when initially expounded, is now widely accepted amongst career theorists. Chen (1998:439), for example, asserts:

> Although definitions between career theorists seem to differ slightly with their emphasis on working regarding the concept of career, they appear to echo similar characteristics and variables. That is instead of viewing career as narrowly defined, isolated work related aspects of one's life, career is seen as an integral active and essential component of a person's life. While one's career experiences always intertwine with their experience in life, the person's life experience can well reflect a general picture of his or her career development.

The relevance of such a position for those with careers in HRD will be explored as part of this research project.

vii) Understanding the relationship between job satisfaction and career construction

An additional area that has been the source of some investigation in examining the construction of careers has been the area of job satisfaction. This is an area that has been of particular interest to both organisational and motivation theorists. Herzberg (1966) attempted to determine the factors that influenced worker motivation in organisations. He argued that the two sets of activities that are related to a person's needs include: (1) those which were related to job satisfaction and (2) those related to job dissatisfaction. Those factors that he saw

as affecting job satisfaction he called motivators. These included recognition, responsibility, advancement or promotion, the work itself and the potential for personal growth. Herzberg argued that all of these are related to the job itself. When these factors were present Herzberg argued employees tended to experience satisfaction and seem motivated. However, if these factors were not present in the work, employees would lack motivation but would not be dissatisfied with their work.

Those factors related to dissatisfaction Herzberg called maintenance or hygiene factors. They included pay, supervision, job security, working conditions, administration, organisational policies and interpersonal relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates on the job. These factors could be seen as being related to the environment or context of the job rather than the job itself. If these conditions were not present employees would be dissatisfied.

One group of career researchers also attempted to examine the dimension of satisfaction within the context of careers conducted prior to Hertzberg's work. These researchers, Scott, Dawis Lofquist and England (1960 cited in Dawis) proposed a developmental theory of "work adjustment — person correspondence" to explain an individual's career behaviour. Work adjustment has been defined as success (or satisfactoriness) and satisfaction on the job. Dawis (1996:76) explained this concept as follows:

> work adjustment is inferred from two primary sets of indicators "satisfaction" and "satisfactoriness". Satisfaction includes overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with various aspects of the individuals work environment. It includes the satisfaction of (one's) needs and the fulfilment of one's aspirations and expectations.
>
> Satisfactoriness is indicated by (one's) productivity and efficiency and by the way (one) is regarded by one's supervisor, co-workers and the company or institution for which one works (Dawis, 1996:76).

This theory postulates that "correspondence" occurs when the worker is both satisfied and satisfactory. It also recognised that correspondence is the ideal state that does not last because one or both parties change. Dawis argued that, with change, dissatisfaction may be expressed which may result in either the worker attempting to improve his/her satisfaction or diminish his/her dissatisfaction or the worker leaving the environment. Conversely the work environment

may attempt to improve the satisfactoriness of workers which may require the worker to leave. Such attempts are labelled adjustment and may involve either the worker attempting to change the work environment or to change him or herself to become more correspondent with the environment.

Such positions about workplace satisfaction and employment patterns suggest the need to examine if issues related to job and work satisfaction have impacted on career construction of HRD practitioners in the empirical research studies conducted as part of this project.

2.3.3 Some conclusions

The above discussion details some of the dominant themes from the careers literature. In so doing it presents some of the positions advanced by prominent career theorists about dimensions shaping careers. This literature reveals that the emergence of the post-industrial economy has generated or at least accelerated the need for new ways of both studying and understanding careers. As such this literature has emphasised:

1. the need to recognise both the objective external features and the subjective experiences or internal features that contribute to the shaping of a career;

2. that careers both generally and in specific occupations can be understood in terms of career types or stages or phases;

3. that a range of self agency variables may assist in the explanation of how a career is shaped;

4. the need to recognise that careers are shaped by work roles as well as other-than -work roles.

Such findings and positions from this careers literature contribute to an understanding of the context of this research. As questions have emerged from the literature of HRD practice which need to be answered to better understand of HRD as a career field, similarly questions have emerged from positions advanced in this careers literature which need to be answered in order to have a clear picture of human resource development as a career area. For example, this literature clearly acknowledges the changing context of work and its impact on career formation and enaction and have shown that notions of the

uninterrupted career have become questionable in the post industrial era. Such positions need to be considered in relation to careers in HRD. Other questions for this research project, which this careers literature has surfaced, include: can patterns in movement between positions be seen in careers of HRD practitioners; do practitioners have similar feelings/attitudes about their area of work practice? Answers to such questions or identification of the existence such themes in career stories of practitioners are required to further illuminate this area as a career field.

2.4. Informing themes from the organisational literature

Human resource development is an area of occupational practice that is undertaken within organisations. HRD practitioners work either as employees of organisations or in sponsored or contractual arrangements with organisations. Given this relationship it is arguable that HRD practitioners and their careers are significantly affected by what is happening within the organisations with which they are working.

The following section identifies some of the themes addressing what is happening in contemporary organisations that are prominent in the organisational literature that could be relevant in determining the nature of careers and the professional practices of practitioners from this field.

2.4.1 Impact of change in organisations

One theme that dominates the current organisational literature and has potential to impact on the careers of HRD is concerned with organisational change. Such change in organisational functioning and practice has been associated with the movement from an industrial age to an information age bought about by advances in technology and the advent of turbulent and competitive globally driven economic conditions. These conditions have both enabled and demanded increased productivity from organisations and their employees. In the process there have been changes in the nature and organisation of work, the nature and management of the employment relationship and the experiences and expectations of employees. These dimensions of change could be seen as being relevant in understanding careers of those who practise in organisations.

2.4.1.1 Changes in the organisation of work

Over the past two decades there has been significant change in the way work is organised. Organisational restructuring is one aspect of such change. Sometimes made possible by advances in technology, at other times driven by a need for greater efficiency or increased client or customer responsiveness, such restructuring or re -engineering of the work process has often resulted in a downsizing of organisations. Downsizing initiatives have resulted in the removal of staff employed by organisations by reducing the number of hierarchical layers that have constituted the shape or structure of the organisation, the removal of organisational functions or the elimination of product lines or services. In some organisations, as a result of such change, employees who remain have been provided with more autonomy in decision making within the workplace and about work processes and have been subject to less direct supervision. Such reorganisation has also often been associated with the establishment of supposedly more collaborative structures. These usually take the form of work teams in which team members are expected to assume greater responsibility for achieving specified performance outcomes than in the past (Bassi, Cheney and Van Buren, 1997; Littler, Dunsford, Bramble and Hales, 1997; Osterman, 1996; Tomasko, 1992).

Such re-organisation of work processes has also been aligned with the introduction of new technologies. These include the introduction of continuous improvement and quality assurance systems which, according to much of the rhetoric, create new opportunities for learning for employees as well as increasing performance and fostering best practice and hence competitiveness amongst the organisations.

Casey (1999:26) describes what she sees as the change outcomes resulting from the use of new organisational technologies when she states:

> Advanced management information systems and attention to the generation of organisational cultures of team productivity and mutual care lead to a high degree of social integration within the organisation that surpasses the need for bureaucratic control. The work conditions associated with more traditional technologies and industrial relations have been definitively altered by the de-differentiation capacities of advanced information technology. This has led in some cases to a reduction in the level of industrial conflict

> and to the appearance at least of closer relationships between management and the workforce.

Not all commentators on change however are as comfortable about the impact of the changing work structures, practices and technologies that are being used in organisations. A report prepared by the Tavistock Institute 1998 referred to research that has revealed a growing disparity between the skills and working conditions of professional, managerial and technical jobs on the one hand and those of the growing peripheral forms of employment on the other. Further, this report cites the work of Ostenk (1997) who, from his studies in Dutch companies, reports that where lean production (a new work technology) prevails it appears that the learning that is encouraged is restricted to learning a series of low level short cycles just by mere repetition. Although continuous improvement is actively pursued in this type of organisation it seems that there is no real rise in skill level but rather a broadening of the available range of low level skills. This enhances the flexibility of production and usability of labour power but not the level of competence (or market value) of the employee (Tavistock, 1998:14).

Rifkin (1996) also argues that changes in structure resulting from technological change further increases the growing divide between the knowledge rich and the knowledge poor. He argues that technology is changing the nature of work in the contemporary work context claiming:

> The worker is rendered powerless to exercise independent judgement either on the factory floor or in the office and has little or no control over outcomes dictated by expert programmers (1996:182).

While disputation amongst organisational theoreticians and researchers about the impact on the changing nature of workplaces and processes remains, there is a general acceptance that such changes have had a significant impact on work life and career expectations of both white and blue collar workers (Casey, 1999; Osterman, 1996; Moss Kanter, 1989). There is certainly sufficient evidence in the organisational literature that in many organisations individuals are being expected to work within different structures, assume different work related responsibilities and use the new technologies as a result of the new ways of organising work. Some aspects associated with how work life is changing are discussed below.

2.4.1.2 Changing expectations and relationships with staff

Much of the literature addressing changing worklife discusses the changing nature of workplace expectations and relationships. One strand of the discussion about the changing workplace expectations and changing employer/employee relationships is about using staff more flexibly. Achieving flexibility has frequently involved the elimination or casualisation of staff in, or the outsourcing of, so called non-core organisational functions. In some organisations the HRD function and its practitioners are seen as non -core. As a consequence, organisations taking this approach have begun to take on new structural forms, new workplace practices and to have established differing employment relationships with staff than have been common in the past.

One prominent theorist examining the changing nature of work, and new forms of employment relationships and career shapes is the British writer Charles Handy (1990, 1995). Handy proposes that a new form of organisation is emerging with the more globalised and more competitive economy. This form of organisation relies heavily on outsourcing arrangements for non-core functions. Handy uses the three leafed shamrock as a metaphor for the type of organisational structure that he sees as becoming common in the post-industrial economy. The first leaf of the shamrock represents the organisation's core workers, the people who are essential to the organisation. The second leaf represents those in the contractual fringe who are self-employed consultants to the organisation, paid for results not for time and who have little loyalty to a specific organisation. The third leaf represents the flexible labour force, the part time casual workers used by the organisation.

In Handy's "shamrock" model of organisational structure, the traditional notion of an upwardly mobile career linked closely to one organisation is no longer the norm. The norm is much more likely to be a career comprised of non-standard jobs based on different forms of employment relationships. Handy's position, which highlights the growth in non-standard work and non standards jobs, is also supported by other authors. Martin and Butler (cited in Marginson, 2000) for example, found "widespread agreement" in the literature that the old employment contract was dead or dying. In its place a variety of non standard work forms (part time, self employment, temporary, contingent and contract) are reported as increasing. Martin and Butler report that almost 30 per cent of the US workforce in 1995, worked in a non-standard work arrangement.

Buchanan et al (2001) in a study completed for the New South Wales Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) have also provided some insights about the changing nature of organisations and relationships between employers and employees and the growth of non-standard work in Australia. This study for example showed that the proportion of the workforce that is engaged on a casual or contractor basis has risen by just over a quarter (27%), and permanent part time workers now constitute around 10 percent of the employed workforce. The BVET report states,

> This means that full time permanent employees now account for only around half of the employed workforce This trend was clearly evident in all six of the case study industries. In no industry studied were full time, full year jobs based on permanent employment on the rise or even stable in number (2001,17).

These changes have had considerable impact on the capacity of employers to provide proper training. According to the authors of this study while the impact on training has not been uniform in some of the case study industries (IT, banking metal and engineering and family support services) understaffing and work intensification resulting from changing forms of organisation and employment appeared to be reducing levels and quality of on the job training because they limited the ability of experienced employees to teach co-workers. The report also indicated that in some of the case study industries there appeared to be an emerging ideology that continuity of employment and career advancement within one workplace was not possible. In some industries the report continues employees are told,

> They need to accept that the best they can hope for in the labour market are "opportunities" to get ensembles of "experiences" and not coherent careers as such. (17-18)

Such a position aligns with position advanced by some of the radical commentators who watching such change argue that the notion of the job is gone. Bridges (1994:50) argued for example:

What is disappearing is not a certain number of jobs. What is disappearing is the very thing itself: the job. That much sort after much maligned social entity, a job is vanishing. (It is) a species that has outlived its evolutionary time.

Other research, however, refutes such a radical stance. A review of research (The Changing Nature of Work, 1999) concludes: "Nothing in the data examined supports the conclusion that all the changes in today's workplace add up to 'the end of Jobs'." This report continues,

> (despite) public perception of large growth in non-standard times and workshifts, the changes are more modest than people think. Since 1983 there has been no great change in median number of years people work in their current job although job tenure has decreased for men over 35 (The Changing Nature of Work, 1999).

Some writers and theorists addressing the changing nature of work are focussing on other dimensions of change rather than the disappearance of the job. Hilltrop (1995), for example, has summarised the work of a range of organisational theorists who have reflected on the changes in contemporary organisations. He posits from a review of this literature that, as organisations are becoming more demanding places to work, work roles are becoming less well defined and secure and that employees' responsibilities are becoming more ambiguous. He suggests that employees no longer sign up for careers with employers who assume a long term caretaking role for employees' personal income; that individuals need to plan their own development and manage their own career and learning and, that promotion is the motivational currency of the old era having been replaced with the need for employees to seek positions which provide opportunities for job enrichment and skill development for future employability (Hilltrop, 1995; Arnold, 1996; Handy, 1990). These features of contemporary employment practice lead Hilltrop to suggest that what could be seen as a new psychological contract of employment now exists between employers and employees.

Thus, while there certainly is considerable contestation about the nature and the amount of change that is occurring in the way work and employment is organised and debate the impact of newer approaches to work and employment on individuals and their careers, there is sufficient evidence to show that, in contemporary organisations, work and employment practices are changing. As a consequence it is arguable that the work of the HRD practitioners and the basis of their employment in organisations is potentially changing as is the nature of their careers. These possibilities, however, need further exploration through empirical research.

2.4.2 Rise of the knowledge workers

A major strand of discussion in much recent organisational literature has been about the need for organisations to build their knowledge capability and for individual workers to recognise the importance of becoming knowledge workers. Most forms of work are being seen as becoming more knowledge based. The term "knowledge worker" was first coined by management guru Peter Drucker (1969) to refer to man or woman who applied to productive work, ideas, concepts and information other than manual skills or brawn. Drucker, at this stage asserted that all work was becoming increasingly knowledge based. His assertion of the late 1960s can be seen as coming to fruition. There is considerable evidence of the disappearance of a number of occupations and former job categories predominantly in the traditional or craft skills areas and similarly many categories of manual labour have been eliminated by advances in automation.

Casey (1999:21) reinforces Drucker's position when she reports the work of Hirschorn (1984) and Zuboff (1988) stating that:

> The fundamental requirements of industrial work, bodily exertion, manual dexterity and endurance, have been increasingly displaced by requirements for rapid perception, attentiveness and the ability to analyse problems and make decisions. The rudiments of industrial work have visibly shifted from physical effort to the manipulation of electronic symbols through monitors, key boards and press buttons.

In such an environment semi-skilled workers who once were relied on by employers as providers of physical labour are now responsible for manipulation of key boards and monitors for much of their work and as a result have been required to attain more abstract, higher order skills. There has been a steady rise in formal and abstract skill levels in other areas and new areas of organisational practice e.g. computer technologists, financial managers. Such workers have become what Reich referred to as the "symbolic analysts" (Reich, 1991 cited in Casey, 1999). They are the workers who use what they know to produce often intangible products (Sofo, 1999) and frequently make extensive use of information and electronic technology and undertake varied, abstract and non-routine tasks.

This theme, foregrounding the importance of knowledge as an ingredient in organisational effectiveness, is also generating more attention to knowledge management strategies and processes used in organisations. The emergence of knowledge managers as executive positions in major multinational companies is one manifestation of this new attention. These positions typically involve the visualisation and facilitation of processes of creating, capturing, analysing, sharing, storing, renewing, disseminating, deploying and leveraging knowledge to enhance organisational performance (Sofo, 1999:22). In the pursuit of such endeavours, organisational experts and theorists are also directing their attention not only to the formal and explicit knowledge that organisations possess or require but also to more tacit forms of knowledge embedded within individuals about their workplaces (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Marsick and Watkins, 1999). Davernport, De Long and Beers (1998) report a range of knowledge management projects being undertaken in several organisations. These include: creating knowledge repositories (which capture both structured document based forms of knowledge as well as the knowledge residing in the minds of people usually through some sort of community based electronic discussion); improving knowledge access and facilitating transfer between employees and organisational units (often based on utilising expert electronic systems but also through the use of low tech knowledge transfer sessions), and enhancing the knowledge environment and managing knowledge as an asset.

This theme potentially is important for this research. The HRD practitioner has the capacity to be actively involved in the fostering of knowledge and the building of knowledge capability within organisations. Some evidence of this direction may be apparent from interviews with practitioners. It may be that there is a degree of role reframing occurring as these practitioners strive to establish their crucial role in this aspect of organisational change.

2.4.3 Learning as an imperative for organisational effectiveness

A further theme in the organisational literature as well as in the HRD literature as discussed earlier is the importance of learning for organisations. Learning, while seen as pivotal in skill formation in the HRD literature, has become a feature of the organisational literature and is being seen as crucial in fostering both organisational and individual effectiveness. In this literature there is frequent reference to organisational learning, the learning organisation and the building of learning cultures within organisations. This literature also presents an extensive range of options in terms of what constitutes organisational

learning. For some organisations the attempt to build a learning organisation has stimulated an increased effort in traditional models of technical upskilling. In other organisations there has been an increased emphasis on developing what are often termed the soft skills e.g. team building, communication, conflict resolution. In still other organisations, promoting or establishing a learning culture is more aligned to establishing new work designs or structures e.g. team work or quality improvement initiatives. In some organisations, all of the above approaches are used (Johnston and Hawke, 2002 (a); Gerber, 1998; Denton, 1998; Galagan, 1994). Dobbs (2000) even advises the importance of providing for and recognising that continuous information training occurs through deceptively idle chatter, lingering coffee breaks and discussion in the hall as being part of the organisational learning process.

The prescriptive organisational learning literature attempts to advise how such a culture should be established. Other literature which addresses this theme tends to highlight the importance of processes such as developing organisational structure, policy and strategy with a learning orientation; developing business plans which recognise the role of learning; establishing a conducive industrial relations climate; establishing participative approaches to decision making, and building a supportive technological infrastructure as determinants of fostering a learning culture (Denton, 1998 Coopey, 1996; Field and Ford, 1996; Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, 1989).

The presence of this theme in both the organisational and HRD literature suggests that it may be a very important strand for examining the careers of HRD practitioners. Its prominence suggests the need to examine empirical data for evidence that shows that practitioners are being actively required to assist in building a learning organisation or fostering a learning culture to maintain their careers in this field. Its prominence, and at the same time the lack of consistency as to what is involved in establishing a learning organisation, also suggests the need to examine the skills individual HRD practitioners need if this is seen as part of their role and therefore a needed career skill.

2.4.4 Some conclusions

The above section briefly reviews some of the key themes in the organisational literature that provide some indications about the nature of careers in HRD. Some of the themes, findings and positions reported in the literature discussed potentially may resonate with some of the findings that emerge from the

empirical data gathered and analysed for this dissertation. Some findings that may be particularly relevant for understanding the nature of careers in HRD include:

1. Organisations have been sites of significant change. As a result work in many organisations is arranged differently and is frequently carried out by fewer employees and requiring different and often more analytic skill sets. Such changes potentially impact on tasks and audiences of HRD practitioners as well as how they enact their careers.

2. Organisational structures and employment relationships have also changed as organisations seek to strengthen core competencies and buy in non-core competences on an "as needs" basis. The emergence of this theme and the practices associated with this theme in organisations potentially suggests that empirical evidence may reveal that HRD practitioners have moved outside organisations or are working with organisations with changed contractual relationships.

3. A third prominent theme in the literature that may surface in empirical data is the perceived importance of learning at both the organisational and individual level for fostering of organisational effectiveness. As indicated in the above text, this theme is extremely prominent in the organisational literature. Evidence from the empirical studies which shows how in recent years the nature of practitioners' work has moved to extending from an individual upskilling role to a much broader sometimes more nebulous role could therefore be expected.

4. A fourth theme that may emerge in the data is the appearance at least from some of the data of a focus of knowledge creation and management as part of the HRD role.

2.5 Unanswered questions requiring further investigation

This chapter has reported research findings and theorisation from literature addressing HRD practice, career formation and development and aspects of organisation change. The literature considered arguably can be seen as providing some insights into the nature of HRD practice, the skills required for HRD practice in contemporary organisations by practitioners and the nature of both careers and work more generally in a post-industrial age. As such, findings

and positions foregrounded from these literatures can be seen as providing a backdrop or a contextual framework against which empirical data about HRD careers gathered for this research project can be mapped.

Furthermore, questions needing to be addressed to have a more complete understanding of HRD from a career perspective have also become apparent from each of these sets of literature. Some of these questions have been highlighted in the concluding paragraphs included at the end of sections on each strand of literature considered. By way of a conclusion to this chapter it is, however, useful to further underline some of the overarching questions which have emerged from the literature considered that need to be answered to form a more complete understanding of careers in HRD and which can be seen as driving the empirical components of this research project.

Perhaps the most fundamental question needing to be answered through further empirical research is whether HRD can be seen as a coherent career field. Such a question arises because of the plethora of theorisation, if not research, that focuses on the divergent nature of definitions of the field, philosophies underpinning practice, and scope and models of HRD practice. In such literature, difference in this career area rather than consistency or coherence seems to be the norm and makes the notion of a coherent career questionable. Similarly some of the literature on careers also considered makes questionable at least a traditional notion of career.

Such diversity, however, is to some extent balanced by evidence from both the HRD and change in organisations literature revealing the coherence in the direction in which HRD practice seems to be moving. For example, there is an emphasis in both the research detailing HRD competences as well as the organisational literature on the need for more strategic, business-focussed, performance oriented HRD practice. Such positions would seem to suggest that those who seek to establish or maintain a career in this field would also need to be seeking to practise in ways moving in this direction and recognise that the purpose of the this occupational activity moving in this direction. Thus the empirical research associated with this project needs to address this question of coherence. In so doing such research also needs to examine factors that are contributing to the nature of careers in this field. Recent organisational literature particularly emphasises the changing nature of organisations as one of the factors that influence the nature and shape of careers. While this is acknowledged in the career literature, attention is also given to a range of self -

agentic variables and other subjective variables that may also influence how an individual enacts a career. The empirical research undertaken needs to seek answers to questions therefore about what forces can be seen as consistently contributing to the nature of careers afforded to those who practise in this field. In answering this question attempts should also be made to highlight any properties that can be seen as characterising careers in HRD. Many studies of careers in other professional or practice fields have identified a range of characterising properties, some of which can be seen as contributing to a sense of professional identity amongst practitioners. Research yielding evidence of the existence and nature of such characterising properties is therefore required to provide a more complete picture of HRD as a career.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has considered and reported literature which indirectly presents some images of the field of HRD and the careers of practitioners from this field, however, empirical research that yields findings that can be used to address at least some of the questions foregrounded in preceding chapters and which describes the nature of careers of HRD practitioners more directly, is required as part of this research project. As a consequence, research methodologies capable of producing such descriptive data need to be used. This chapter describes the research strategy used to achieve such ends. In so doing it positions the research strategy theoretically and then describes and justifies the methodologies used to gather and analyse such data.

3.2 Research traditions and the empirical studies presented in the project

The research strategy and methodologies utilised within this project draw on competing research traditions as well as methodologies. In so doing the research approach used, avoids the limitations posed by "grand narratives and single overarching ontological and epistemological paradigms" (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994: 575) by relying on several sources of data to advance the argument of the research.

The first data source used, as discussed in the preceding chapter, is literature from three overlapping conceptual areas. These sources of literature were investigated for relevant theorising and research for this project. Findings from such an examination yielded a rich picture of the context in which this research project is being conducted. This was important because the research approach sought to avoid presenting "a disembodied and disembedded timeless perspective" (Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997: 210-211) about HRD as a career field which was a possibility if little attention had been given to the context in which the research was taking place. The relevant extant literature also surfaced areas and questions that needed to be explored as part of the empirical component of this project. Further, the resonances in the themes emerging from the various sources of literature, much like secondary evidence in

historical study, were seen as potentially providing both a backdrop for the various career themes that could possibly emerge from the empirical findings as explained below, and a source of possible explanations for findings from these empirical studies.

The empirical research component of the project gathered data using research methodologies from different research traditions. In so doing, however, the empirical study component of the research project does not purport to produce findings from triangulated results. Put another way, findings from data gathered using a methodology from one tradition are not used to confirm or verify findings from the second set of data gathered using methodology of another research tradition. The empirical component of this research project could be seen as using the two different sources of evidence to provide different insights, or, to explore the phenomenon under scrutiny using different lenses. Findings from these different sets of data are also juxtaposed against a backdrop of prominent themes from relevant extant literature that were discussed in the previous chapter in the final chapter of this research dissertation. Such a research approach provides what Burrell (1996:655) has referred to, as a "collage or montage" of the organisational phenomena under scrutiny. The literature acts as the background of the montage with potentially overlapping data gathered through empirical research being positioned against this background.

3.3 Theoretical positioning of the research project

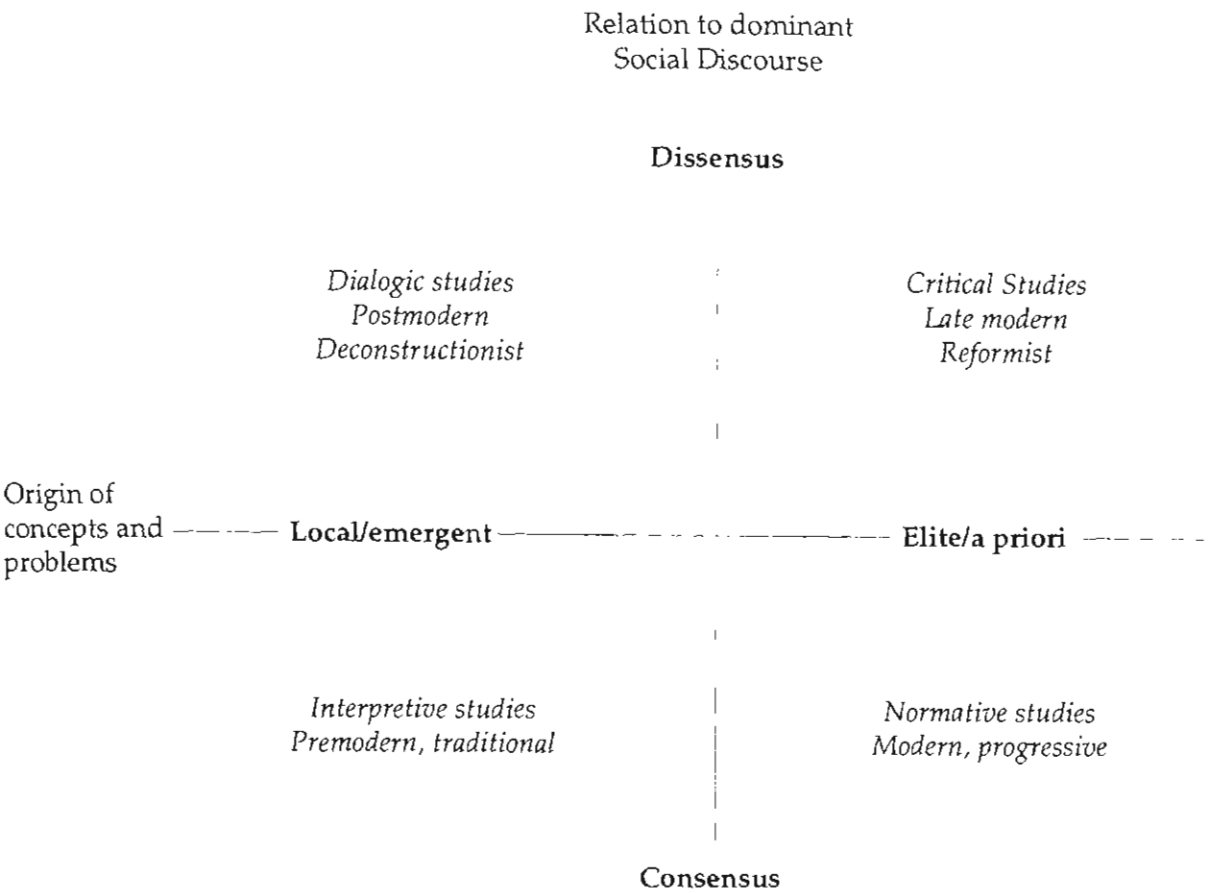
The theoretical positioning of this research endeavour could, to some extent, be seen as problematic. Firstly, the area of investigation, while obviously grounded in the social sciences, could be seen as transdisciplinary. As shown in the previous chapter, it can be informed both substantially and methodologically by research frameworks and models used in the field of organisational studies as the subjects of investigation, the HRD practitioners, practise within the organisational context. It can also be informed by research models and discourses that are common in research examining education as the practice of HRD practitioners is about the processes associated with education. It can also be informed by the methodologies and research frameworks relating to career development and vocational/career counselling as the notion of career is pivotal to this area of study. Each of these discourse areas provides legitimate

and often overlapping or closely related models for both researching and explaining careers in HRD.

Furthermore, the existence of alternative research paradigms for exploring phenomena related to each field is recognised. For example, Gage, (1989:4-10), suggested that three alternative research paradigms were challenging the dominance of positivism with its use of scientific method in the investigation of human affairs in academic research generally. He named these competing paradigms as anti-naturalism, interpretivism and critical theory. Closely aligned with this contestation in educational and other social science academic research endeavours has been the battle between those advocating the appropriateness of using a quantitative research approach as opposed to those who argue the need for a qualitative approach to academic research.

The questioning of the dominant research paradigm in the social sciences has had a fairly lengthy history. For example, ten years before Gage's argument about the existence of competing understandings of the research process, Burrell and Morgan (1979) had advanced their four paradigm grid which defined alternatives for researching and analysing organisational phenomena. In their 1979 model they proposed interpretivism, radical humanism and radical structuralism were legitimate alternative paradigms to structural functionalism for the process of organisational analysis. They developed a grid to show the relationship between what they saw as competing and incommensurable paradigms. Deetz (1996:191-2), while arguing that this paradigm had gained an "almost hegemonic capacity to define the alternatives in organizational analysis", also advocated that "a deeper and more interesting understanding of contemporary research practice is possible by focussing on other dimensions". His schema revealing these "other dimensions" for locating organisational research is illuminated in the following model. This schema, as discussed in a later section of this chapter, provides a useful explanatory mechanism for the locating of the research strategy employed in this study. Use of this schema as a mechanism for locating or theoretically positioning the research is seen as appropriate, for, while this research does not directly focus on analysis of an organisation, it is a research undertaking which addresses a practice or a phenomena that is enacted within the organisational context.

Fig 3.1 Contrasting Dimensions from the Metatheory of Representational practices
Source: Deetz, 1994



i) Deetz' explanation of discursive spaces

In his explanation of this schema for understanding organisational research, Deetz argues that organisational analysis can be categorised as fitting into one of four discursive spaces — normative, interpretive, critical and dialogic. He differentiates such studies as follows.

- In normative studies there is an emphasis on the centrality of codification, the search for regularity, normalisation of experience and for strategic/directive control orientation.
- In interpretive studies there is an emphasis on the social rather than the economic view of organisational activities. Interpretive studies accept much of the representational and consensual view of science seen in normative writings but shift the relationship between theoretical conceptions and the talk of the subjects under study. People are not considered to be objects like other objects but are active sense makers like the researcher. Theory is given a different role than in normative studies. While theory may provide important "sensitising" conceptions it is not a device of classification nor tested in any simple and direct manner. The key conceptions and understandings must be worked out with the subjects under study.

- Critical research positions organisations in general as social, historical creations accomplished in conditions of struggle and domination, a domination that often hides and suppresses meaningful conflict. In such studies organisations are largely described as political sites; thus general social theories and especially theories of decisions making in the public sphere are seen as appropriate. Either explicit or implicit in critical work is a goal to demonstrate and critique forms of domination, asymmetry and distorted communication by showing how social constructions of reality can favour certain interests and alternative constructions can be obscured and misrecognised.
- Dialogic studies focus on the constructed nature of people and reality, those which emphasise language as the system of distinctions which are central to the construction processes. Deetz claims the dialogic studies focus on fragmentation and potential disunity in any discourse. Like critical studies the concern is with asymmetry and domination, but unlike the critical studies' predefinition of groups and types of domination, domination is considered mobile, situational, and not done by anyone. In place of active political agendas and the utopian ideals therein, attention in a dialogic study is given to the space for a continually transforming world by recovery of marginalized and suppressed peoples and aspects of people. Studies are usually done in the field and are based on a prolonged period of observation and in-depth interviewing.

ii) Dimensions determining research positioning

As can be seen from the representation of the model above, the grid is formed from the intersection of two axes, each of which represents a dimension of the research. From this intersection the four discursive spaces described above emerge with positioning within the discursive space created being dependent on alignment of research to the various poles of each of the axes.

One dimension of research, according to Deetz, is where the research can be located on a dimensional axis that allows inclusion of studies which range from those which are seeking primarily local and or emergent findings through to studies driven by elite/a priori assumptions. Research according to Deetz can be located at the elite/a priori pole of this dimensional axis when it is heavily theory driven with careful attention to establishing definitions prior to the research process. Whether intentional or not, in research of this kind, the conceptual system of the researcher is considered better or more clearly

represents what really is the case than that of everyday people and seeks generality beyond the various local systems of meaning hence the use of the label elite.

The local/emergent pole draws attention to researchers who work with an open language system and produce a form of knowledge with less lofty claims. Central to their work is the situated nature of the researcher's attention, and, descriptions that are worked out as a play between communities. The knowledge form is more often one of insight rather than truth. Such insights may be particularistic regarding both time and place even though the emerging analytic frame is designed to aid in the deeper understanding of other particular settings. Cumulative understanding happens in providing stories or accounts that may provide insight into other sites rather than cumulative universal aspiring claims. This type of research attends to the feelings, intuitions and multiple forms of rationality of both the researched and researcher rather than using a single logic of objectification or purified rationality. The study is guided more by concept formation than concept application.

The second dimension is concerned with the Consensus - Dissensus elements of the research. The axis representing these dimensions draws attention to the relationship of the research to existing social order. The consensus pole of the axis draws attention to the way some research programs both seek and treat order production as the dominant feature of natural and social systems. With such a conception, the primary goal of research of this kind is to display a discovered order with a high degree of fidelity. The descriptions hope to "mirror" entities and relations that exist out there in a relative fixed state reflecting their "real" character. The dissensus pole draws attention to research programs that consider struggle, conflict and tensions to be the natural state. Research itself is seen as inevitably a move in a conflictual site. Research aims at challenging the mechanisms of order maintenance to reclaim tensions. Dissensus work does not deny the significance of an ordered observed world, rather it takes it as a powerful (and power filled) product and works to break objectifications to show fuller potential and variety than is immediately apparent (Deetz, 1996:197-98).

One feature of Deetz' argument that makes this schema valuable for the theoretical positioning of this research study is that this schema allows for the incommensurability of the various research positions and approaches in

research endeavours. This schema allows for tensions within each category and for edges to the various theoretical spaces established that are not demarcated. Deetz (1996:199) claims:

> Most researchers and teachers do not cluster around a prototype of each but gather at the crossroads, mix metaphors, borrow lines from other discourses and dodge criticism by cooperation. Often practising researchers happily move from one discourse to another without accounting for their own location. They operate like other organizational members borrowing from discourses that suit their immediate purposes and fashions of the movement.

iii) Locating this research study within Deetz' schema

This research project could be seen as being located more closely to the consensus pole than to the dissensus pole on the consensus –dissensus axis. It attempts to gather data that provides a "mirror" of the careers of HRD practitioners. This study is therefore very much a research undertaking that seeks to discover order and display such order with a high degree of fidelity. In so doing however the research also allows for the discovery of difference if this is the case for this career field.

Location of the research project at a fixed position at one pole of the local /emergent -elite /a priori axis is, however, more difficult. The project essentially is attempting to produce a knowledge form that is more one of insight than truth. It is also building cumulative understandings from stories and accounts that potentially will provide insights rather than providing purified rationality. Objectivity in the study also arises from the interplay between researcher and researched and the constant ability of the researched to object and correct. Such attributes could be seen as positioning the research towards the local emergent pole. At the same time aspects of the research are looking for dimensions of consistency, and to some extent there has been definitional work to establish understandings of key areas even if fairly broadscale and elastic before the data have been collected. Such work has been driven to some extent by researcher understandings and secondary supporting literature which certainly could be seen as elite / a priori knowledge, rather than completely emerging from the data as it is collected. These attributes would align the research more closely to the elite /a priori pole. Given these competing positions, the research would need to be seen as being located

towards a mid-point of this axis and certainly as borrowing from the traditions supporting each pole on the axis.

Thus, in summary, the study could be theoretically positioned as a consensus study in that it shares the concerns of consensus studies and makes no attempt to adopt the concerns of dissensus type critical studies. The study also falls predominantly in the domain of local emergent studies yet, at times, there are orientations that could locate it within the elite /a priori quadrant.

3.4 Research methods utilised in the study

This section provides a description and justification for the choice of specific research methods used to gather empirical data for this project.

The first set of empirical data is derived from a survey of HRD practitioners: the second from a series of in-depth interviews.

3.4.1 Study 1: Survey

One major source of empirical data for this project came from a study conducted by Chappell and Johnston as part of an ongoing research project for the Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training (RCVET), University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) in 2000 and 2001. This multi-phase project, which was examining the emergence of new forms of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) professional resulting from the changing post-compulsory education policy context, was supported by Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) funding. One phase of this research project involved gathering data about training and development practice occurring in the workplace from a large Australia-wide sample of training and development practitioners who worked in organisations. Access to such a sample for the ANTA project was gained by working in partnership with CCH Australia, a Sydney based training and development/human resource publication provider which had a large Australia wide publication subscriber data base. CCH Australia is a well established publication house which since 1969 has been a supplier of reference work on HR management to HR professionals by way of an annual subscription service which can be accessed by organisations as well as individuals. Amongst CCH Australia publications are titles such as Human

Resource Management, Australian Employment Law Guide, Managing Training and Development, Australia and New Zealand Equal Opportunity Law and Practice, Managing Leave and Holidays, Recruitment and Termination Guide, Equal Opportunity Training Kit. Subscription to one of the titles in the suite offered by CCH Australia usually entitles the subscriber to a one or two volume publication of commentary on aspects related to the overarching theme of the chosen area, as well as updates to that commentary and regular newsletters (at least 10 per year). Subscribers to the service come from throughout Australia and represent both large and small organisations. The RCVET established a loose partnership arrangement with CCH Australia in 2000. This provided the RCVET with an additional arm for dissemination of its research and CCH Australia and its subscribers with access to findings of research projects of the centre.

i) Appropriateness of joint survey research for this study

At the time of the survey was being designed for the RCVET project it was seen that the instrument being developed could be used not only to inform the larger RCVET project but also to reveal some insights about training and development in organisations/ HRD as a career field and hence generally inform this doctoral research project. More specifically, it was seen that certain questions could be asked as part of the survey that would provide insights as to whether this field could be seen as a coherent career field. Similarly, some questions, while primarily designed to gather data about current practice, would also reveal insights into the properties of continuing careers in this field. As such, some of these questions could potentially be used to probe the notion of the existence of a common occupational identity or at least the existence of common sets of values and beliefs about the nature and purpose of this occupational field amongst responding practitioners. Access to a large number of practitioners working in a range of organisations Australia wide was also seen as useful for both projects. Thus, the use of this methodology was seen as providing one lens for exploring aspects of HRD as a career field even though the very nature of the questionnaire would limit the type of data that could be gathered, how it would be analysed and the nature of conclusions which could be drawn.

(ii) My role as researcher in the survey study.

Decisions about the design of the survey which was to inform the RCVET project as well as provide some insights for this doctoral research project were generally made jointly by Chappell and Johnston. Similarly, the decision to work with CCH (Australia) as a means of obtaining an Australia wide survey population and for survey distribution was taken jointly.

Several factors influenced our decisions. Firstly, there was a fairly tight time frame associated with the completion of the RCVET project. This meant data needed to be gathered by the end of the year 2000. There was also a need for comparatively rapid coding and reporting of results. Secondly, a decision was taken to adopt a similar survey style in terms of the question / response format and the survey length to previous research surveys examining aspects of Training and Development in organisations which had been supported by the CCH Australia in 1991 and1996. We took this decision having been advised that the survey style had generated a worthwhile response rate when these surveys were conducted in previous years. (For discussion of research of the findings from these earlier survey studies see Chapter 2, 2.2.3.iii). In taking this decision we also recognised that the data we received would be dependent on responses only from those organisations or individuals who subscribed to this publication house. Hence we recognised that we would be using data from what could be seen as somewhat biased population. Despite this bias, which obviously would be a limitation of the study, we believed that the strength of using this source to gather data was that it would provide us with cross industry, Australia wide data which was collectable within the required timeframe for the larger RCVET project.

The design of the survey was also undertaken collaboratively by Professor Chappell and myself however, as the following section of this chapter indirectly shows, as the researcher seeking to gain data about careers, I especially considered how the questions we were asking could be utilised in attempting to come to an understanding of HRD as a career field.

The distribution and collection of the survey was completed by CCH Australia as discussed in more detail in following section. Completed anonymous surveys were then presented to me for coding and initial analysis using an Excel program. Results of this analysis particularly in terms of frequency of responses

to various survey questions and methods of reporting findings given the data available were then discussed with Professor Chappell.

iii) Survey design

As indicated above, because of the time frame required by the larger RCVET project, along with the need for distribution and reporting of results within time frames appropriate for the sponsoring publication house, it was necessary to design a survey that would allow for both gathering of data which was not ambiguous and which allowed for comparatively rapid coding and reporting of results. The researchers were also very aware of the need to keep the survey comparatively short and user friendly to maximise chances of completion by subscribers. As a consequence the survey predominantly comprised forced choice or listing questions and questions yielding demographic data about the nature of organisation for which the respondent worked.

Gathering data about the respondents' organisations was seen as necessary given there is now substantial evidence that suggests that the nature of training or human resource development that occurs within an organisation (and hence the way the career of a practitioner may be enacted) is influenced by the nature of that organisation (Van der Krogt, 1998; Hayton, McIntyre, Sweet, McDonald, Noble, Smith and Roberts, 1996; Smith, 1999; Rowden, 1995). It was believed that demographic data (gathered from questions 1- 9) would reveal some picture about size of organisations in which careers in HRD could be forged. Several of these questions also potentially would reveal insights about the size and structure of human resource development/training and development functions within organisations. These questions would also provide insights into the existence of career ladders within the area, about the labelling of positions within this career area and about the education or qualifications required by those who practise and establish careers in this field. These are all areas often explored in attempts to understand an area as a career field (e.g. see Osterman, 1996; Bierema 1996; Onyx, 1993; Maclean, 1992).

Later questions in the survey were designed to investigate current skill requirements for practitioners (e.g. Questions 12-16). These potentially would assist in revealing skills required for careers in this area.

Other questions in the survey were relevant for this smaller career study because they had potential to reveal commonality in values and beliefs held by

practitioners about their area of professional practice. For example, the survey sought information from respondents about perceptions concerning practice areas of importance, areas of practice change and beliefs about purposes of this area as an organisational practice. All of these questions were seen as having the potential to reveal either consistencies or inconsistencies in both practice and beliefs about this area of practice and could be seen as contributing to the existence of a consistent occupational identity amongst practitioners in this area (Questions 19-20).

iv) Survey distribution

The survey was distributed with the assistance of CCH Australia. As indicated earlier a CCH Australia subscriber database was used. Access to such a large population of T and D/HRD practitioners would not have been easily obtained by other means given the unregulated nature of the HRD profession. The publication house further encouraged participation in the survey by offering chance for respondents to win a lottery awarded prize. The survey was mailed to respondents. The issues of validity and reliability of sample were maximised with the distribution to a sample of practitioners who worked in a range of industry sectors and in organisations of varying size which were located throughout Australia.

v) Analysis of survey data

Rigorous scientific methods were used to collect and analyse data. Firstly respondents were anonymous participants. If they wished to be part of the draw for the prize for participating they did so by returning a detachable sheet to CCH. One hundred and ninety seven (197) anonymous responses were received by researchers representing a sample of 16.5 per cent and data analysis was completed using an Excel program. While this was not a large response rate, it still could be seen as providing valuable data about the field in that responses came from a wide range of practitioners or managers of HRD practice. Respondents to the survey were either human resource development practitioners or human resource practitioners supervising HRD practice or employing HRD/training and development consultants. This sample could therefore be seen as an informed sample. Hence it was seen that from this data potentially some tentative conclusions about practice trends could be drawn which may resonate with positions advanced in the organisational and HRD literature which show trends in practice and practice competencies. These data also have the potential to illuminate the intersection between new practices and

other developments in the field and to show what ongoing professional development is required for HRD practitioners as organisations respond to the need for change.

The number of responses to this study certainly allows for some tentative generalisations to be made about the nature of practice and perceptions of practitioners about potential change in their career field. At the same time it must be acknowledged that there is the potential for this methodology to conceal difference between practitioners.

3.4.2 Study 2: Case studies based on interviews

i) Appropriateness of career biography interview research for this project
The second source of data for this project was derived from career biographies built from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 purposively selected HRD practitioners. This method was chosen because it provided an opportunity for practitioners to present detailed and authentic stories that showed how they constructed their own career stories. This approach was seen as appropriate as the research endeavour generally was to complete a study that was illuminative in intent. This therefore made it imperative that one component of the research yielded as full a description as possible of the phenomena under investigation which in this case were careers in HRD.

This approach, which allows participants to provide a full description of their own careers used in this component, aligns with the position being accepted by many contemporary career researchers discussed in Chapter 2 who argue the need to recognise that "it is through interpretation and subsequent construction of narrative and stories that individuals make sense of their career and the world" (Collin and Young, 1992:2). It is also similar to a position advanced by Herr (1990) when he states:

> Individual careers are better understood after the fact than before in ipsative rather than normative terms and in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. In such a premise biographical and case study methodologies have potential richness and explanatory powers that many quantitative processes do not.

This component of the research presented in this dissertation could therefore be located within an interpretivist tradition. It draws on constructivist understandings of reality and makes use of narrative/biographical research techniques as a way of constructing and analysing the case studies both individually and collectively in order to illuminate dominant themes in careers of practitioners.

ii) Sample selection

The initial basis of sample selection for this component of empirical research was through the researcher's knowledge of practitioners. As an academic working in this field and having had an interest in the area for many years, I, as researcher, have a large number of contacts with whom I have worked professionally, taught in university classes, or met through other research projects or through membership of professional associations. This was the data source on which I drew when inviting participation in the interview study.

In selecting such practitioners for interview, efforts were made to ensure that what could be called a purposive sample went some way towards capturing the scope of this field of practice and potentially increased the chance of providing a balanced view. As part of the selection process I initially compiled a list of possible interviewees based on my awareness of the careers of such practitioners. I then selected interviewees from the list who, from my limited knowledge of their careers, had had a variety of career experiences and differing work backgrounds. I continued to add names of practitioners who potentially could be interviewed over the approximate two year period of this part of the research and to select interviewees. I also made selection decisions based on the degree of access I had to the potential interviewees.

As such then, the practitioners who were invited to participate had varying years of experience in the field and were practising, at least at the time of invitation, in different organisations and varying industry sectors. An attempt was also made to select both males and females. It was seen as necessary to seek such difference in the sample given the danger of unintentionally representing an extreme view that can occur when using a narrative biographical approach with representatives of one professional group (Carter, 1991:72). This component of the research intentionally chose to study those practitioners who, having entered the field of HRD, had chosen to remain within this field.

iii) Data gathering and analysis processes

After accepting an invitation to participate, respondents were interviewed about their career in a naturalistic setting, usually their own workplace or a place convenient to the respondents. Each interview was between one and two hours in length and was tape recorded by the researcher. I also took notes during the interview particularly noting any forms of emphasis. Some interviewees supplied me with their resumes to which they had referred during the interview. I rephrased the information provided by interviewees on occasions to ensure meaning intended by interviewee was captured as accurately as possible.

Before the interview, interviewees were provided with an interview guide (see Appendix 2) that indicated areas that could be explored as part of the discussion. The design of this schedule could be seen as being influenced by the approach to interviewing described by Quartz, discussed below. Participants were advised that there was no need to confine themselves to the areas in the guide as the interview schedule was designed to act as a trigger to assist respondents' thinking or as an "aide memoire" rather than a schedule of questions that needed to be answered. The interviews were conducted over approximately a two year period.

As part of the interview process an attempt was made by the researcher to follow Casey's suggestion and abdicate the position of having a monopoly of expertise on the area of careers in HRD in order to elicit authentic stories from the speakers. Thus an approach which Quartz (1992) refers to as an "emic" approach was used in the interview along with the schedule design as discussed above. Quartz describes this approach as follows:

> The "emic" approach requires the interviewer to eliminate as much as possible the urge to apply external structure to the interview. Instead of a formal interview schedule which has all the questions planned ahead of time, the interpretive interview must be a process which is flexible enough to follow the lead of the interviewee while not losing sight of the object. The typical interview might begin with what Spradley and McCurdy (1972) call the "grand tour" questions. Such questions are designed to be directive enough to require concrete and precise responses, yet open enough to allow the interview to go in any direction... Such questions allow interviewees

> to recall anything they think might be important or amusing. On the basis of their usually very lengthy responses to this initial question the interviewer should have a wealth of material to begin more specific questioning. In this way, a typical interview has been structured by the interviewee, but is clarified by the follow up questioning of the interviewer...
>
> ...Later after exploring the world as the interviewee presents it, the interviewer can produce memory jogs like pictures or stories that others have told or events that historical documents have recorded (Quartz, 1992:189).

In a similar vein Fontana and Frey (1994) have also urged the "forgetting of rules" in creative interviewing suggesting that this is necessary in order to allow the research subjects to express themselves more freely and thus have greater voice in the research process and in the research report. Therefore no attempt was made to rigorously follow the protocol when interviewees wished to expand on aspects of their career.

Furthermore Bujold's (1992:59) words can also be drawn on to justify both the data gathering and analysis approaches used in this study. Bujold has advocated the usefulness of a "leaving behind the rules" approach for career research arguing that biographical hermeneutical methodologies:

> Give us access to the continuous flow of actions that always happen in a given context, and consequently, to the phenomena that are at the heart of the individual's lives. It also involves the development of conceptual schemes to understand these phenomena.

Bujold further argued that in gathering life stories as a research technique the process needed to be seen as more than one of collecting data. He cited Berthaux (1986) who argued this approach involved a number of phases that include the exploratory, the analytic and the synthetic. Bujold explained these three phases of the processes as follows:

> The exploratory function consists essentially of interviewing people in order to first collect facts on as many aspects as possible of the problem being studied and in subsequent interviews to focus on

> some points that seem of particular significance. At the analysis stage the researcher attempts to develop a preliminary theory to make sense of the observed phenomena and checks the material collected by trying to find contradictory data. To this end he or she tries to interview subjects who do not fit the preliminary model in order to refine or modify it. In Berthaux's view the result of this stage is the construction of a coherent theory that can account for the processes under study without using a "representative" sample as in traditional approaches. Finally the synthetic or expressive function is rephrasing the stories while retaining the essence of their content. If the researcher does not have the opportunity to go through the expressive state while being once again in interaction with the interviewees he or she can rewrite the stories in such as way as to bring to light the theory that has emerged while, again providing a true synthesis of the content that has been collected.(63)

Another writer who advanced a similar theme in relation to researching in the life history tradition was Le Gall. Le Gall (1987) suggested that those whose research could be located within the life history tradition need not work within a strictly defined framework. He did however suggest that there were four phases in the research process when using life history approaches. These included:

a) the elaboration of a priori hypothesis
b) the collection of life stories
c) their transcription, and finally,
d) the phase of analysis- interpretation involving the use of concepts and notions that seem appropriate to the subject matter

Thus methods used in this component of the research could therefore be seen as loosely mirroring those advanced by both Bujold (1992) and LeGall (1987). Consistent themes and stories were to be allowed to emerge from the data as part of the analysis. At the same time a number of prominent themes surfaced in the literatures of the preceding chapter could be seen as providing at least some tentative a priori assumptions about the field of HRD and potential features of careers in this field. It was anticipated that these themes would help shape the analysis of interview data.

More specifically, the following steps were used in the analysis phase of the interview research. Initially each interview was transcribed by the researcher soon after the completion of the interview. This allowed for any needed clarification of terms or issues shortly after the interview had been completed. While a very time-consuming process these transcriptions provided me as a researcher with a reasonable familiarity and sensitivity to prominent concepts within each career story. These transcripts became the basis of analysis.

After a small set of transcriptions had been completed these transcripts were subjected to multiple readings. During this process a familiarity with the contents across the stories began to emerge with areas of consistency and dissonance in the themes in the career stories becoming apparent in line with le Gall's (1987) comments about conducting "interpretation involving the use of concepts and notions that seem appropriate to the subject matter". Towards the end of the interviewing and transcription phase, I began the process of manually coding transcripts according to prominent themes which were emerging across the interviews and highlighting specific illustrative examples of concepts about careers to be discussed in findings chapter. This process involved identifying commonly occurring themes but at the same time also being watchful for significant differences. It was at this point I began what Berthaux (1986) would refer to as the synthetic process with the construction of career stories which have been included as Appendix 3 .

In using this approach each career story can be seen as a case study of a career in the field of HRD. This labelling is appropriate as the data gathered could be seen as meeting the definition of case research advanced by Miles and Huberman (1994) who see a case as being some sort of phenomenon occurring in a bounded context. In this research the object/phenomenon being studied is career and this is bounded by the individual's perceptions of how that career has been constructed.

Stake's (1994) position would also allow this approach to be described as a case study approach. He suggested that there are different types of case studies. He distinguished three main types: the intrinsic case study where the study is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of this particular case; the instrumental case study where the study is undertaken to give insight into an issue or to refine a theory, and, the collective case study where the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases to learn

more about the phenomenon, population or general condition. This component of the research for the dissertation arguably makes use of collective case study techniques in the search to learn more about the phenomenon of careers in HRD.

In working within this approach the research for this component of the doctoral project therefore was seeking to understand from an analysis of interview talk how individuals have made sense of (constructed/interpreted) their own careers, and how they have responded to their own understandings of critical events and episodes. Such a position, in line with interpretive research tradition, accepts that subjectivity is crucial to the emergence of understanding and explanation in the social world. It further accepts that inquiry and understanding involve the investigation of the sense making interpretive frameworks of others (the participants), using the investigator's own interpretive scheme. Schutz, a seminal thinker from the interpretive tradition, explains this notion of sense making as follows:

> The constructs used by the social scientist are, so to speak, constructs of the second degree, namely constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene whose behaviour the scientist observes and tries to explain in accordance with the procedural rules of his science (p.293).

As a consequence this research study did not require the establishment of tightly defined organising thematic categories before the analysis of data. The shaping influences for the investigator's interpretive scheme or what have been referred to as loosely formed a priori assumptions or sensitising concepts are recognised. Such concepts have given, using Patton words (1990:391), "a general sense of reference" and provided "directions along which to look"(Blumer, 1969:148) .

3.5 Criteria for judging knowledge claims produced from this research

The earlier sections of this chapter have established the broad framework from which the present research was approached and how it can be located within or aligned with a range of research traditions. This section will consider issues related to criteria by which knowledge claims emerging from the empirical

findings and discussed in the following chapters of the dissertation can be judged.

The first component of the empirical research, the survey of practitioners, as shown earlier is most easily located within a functionalist research tradition. As such findings from this set of data can be evaluated in terms of internal and external validity and reliability. While this study was to some extent using quantitative approaches to data collection in that it had numerical elements and some data that could be reported numerically, other data collected was not primarily numerical and analysis using inferential statistics was not attempted. This study was designed to shed some insights and gather descriptive data rather than data that needed to be analysed inferentially. In so doing, however, principles of collecting both reliable and valid data were adhered to.

The second study, based on interviews, could be located within the interpretive/ narrative tradition, and needs to be judged by other methods. The aim of this study has been to identify and illuminate the common career experiences of individual practitioners and the common meaning they have made about events within their careers. No attempt was made to ensure that the sample selected for interview was representative of the field and as such the study does not seek and has no warrant to make firm generalisations about careers in the field on the basis of the representativeness of the sample. The study and its tentative findings, however, can be judged as acceptable for a number of reasons. For example, firstly the study was concerned to ensure that the sample had sufficient scope and balance. For this reason very different types of practitioners were included in the sample thereby providing opportunities for "contradictory voices". This study also ensured those interviewed were authentic HRD practitioners and that the accounts of career gathered were synthesised fairly and with insight. This was by reviewing information with interviewees and allowing for rephrasing or redescription. There was also an attempt to ensure that the accounts, as a whole, had achieved the complexity of representation, had provided sufficient exemplification of perspective and concepts along with quality interpretation of data in providing insights into the patterns in this career landscape. Such characteristics McIntyre (1998) suggests are appropriate criteria for evaluating the quality and the claims made by interpretive research.

Finally, in identifying criteria for judgement of knowledge claims, it is also appropriate to consider the notion of reflexivity and the research process.

Reflexivity is concerned with the notion that when researchers undertake their research activities they become part of the world that is being researched. This notion came from the recognition that such research cannot claim for itself an unmodified and unfiltered record of immediate experience and an accurate portrait of the "other" (Vidich and Lyman, 1994:41). As a consequence researchers must locate themselves within the research and recognise their role in the construction of data.

This research study has located itself in terms of research traditions earlier in this chapter and revealed some of the assumptions and viewpoints that underpin it in the preceding chapters. The researcher was also conscious of the principles that there can often be an imbalance in the power relationship between the researcher and the researched in ethnographically oriented research (Marcus, 1994) which can distort meaning or provide the researcher with what he or she wants to hear, and that all claims to knowledge can only be partial and thus require response (and engagement) from others positioned differently (Marcus, 1994: 572). Attempts have been made to overcome difficulties associated with such impacts particularly in the interview component of the study

Firstly, in the interview component of the study, distortion resulting from any power imbalance was minimised as researcher and researched had no direct relationship apart from an interest in the field of human resource development. Many of the practitioners interviewed had substantially more practical experience than the interviewer and all were educated practitioners, making any perceived differences in expertise based on education minimal. Many of those interviewed were operating with greater seniority within their organisations than the researcher was experiencing in her organisation. All agreed to participate voluntarily and were given opportunities to review or amend their stories. Anonymity was guaranteed. As explained earlier in the chapter interviews were held in participants' workplaces or in other places nominated by the participants and participants were advised that while an interview guide was provided that, , it was to be seen only as a guide.

The notion of attaining partial stories is acknowledged. At an individual level the partiality of stories cannot be completely avoided given the interview approach adopted where participants take the lead. However, the approaches used go some way to creating an environment where stories become more

complete. Secondly, by focussing on the collection of case studies for findings and tentative generalisations rather than individual stories, some of the partiality of individual stories may be minimised.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter started broadly by identifying a model which allowed what some may have argued were incommensurable empirical research approaches to come together for the purposes of revealing clearer insights into the problem being investigated. This model used the idea of discursive spaces to locate particular research orientations. This schema was then applied to the empirical research undertaken for the research. The next section described and justified the specific research methods used to gather and analyse data gathered. The final sections identified the criteria against which the knowledge claims to be made from these research studies could be judged, and attempts were made to further explain the position of the researcher in terms of this research.

Chapter 4

Mapping the field — Reportage and discussion of findings from survey research

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design associated with this research project and approaches used to gather empirical data to answer questions needing to be explored in this project. The following two chapters report findings from these data gathering research initiatives. This chapter focuses on findings from a survey-based study that examined the role of the learning practitioners' working in Australian organisations. This survey, as explained in more detail in following paragraphs, was designed to provide data for a larger research project. The responses to the survey, however, certainly yielded data relevant for this research project. For example, findings revealed that there was considerable consistency in HRD practitioners perspectives about current and anticipated skill requirements for work in this field and therefore by inference for establishing or maintaining a career in this field. The findings also showed considerable consistency in practitioners' perspectives about the importance of various practice areas for contemporary practice in this field suggesting at least a degree of consistency in scope of practice in HRD. Some of the demographic data gathered also yielded information about properties of careers in this field. Such findings which are discussed in more detail in this chapter certainly could be seen as providing some insights into the coherence of this field as a career area and as a consequence establish the relevance of this survey for this research project as well as the larger project discussed below. The chapter, which follows, presents a very brief overview of the context that generated the research design for the survey. It then discusses the relevance of specific questions and research findings produced from the survey study for illuminating HRD as a career field.

4.2 Specific context of survey research

As indicated in the preceding chapters there has been considerable change in vocational education and training systems and related skill formation policies in recent decades in both Australia and in many developed countries throughout the world in response to the pressures of the more competitive global economic environment. In the Australian context, reforming some

aspects of the vocational education and training systems has also resulted from the fear that this country would face significant skill shortages as it attempted to compete in an increasingly knowledge based economy if the existing system remained unchanged. To better meet some of these challenges successive Australian federal governments have attempted to design and implement vocational education and training policies that foster the integration of the various forms of work related learning into a coherent skill formation system. Governments have also urged organisations and industries to participate more actively in the training and development of their employees and industry members. This activity comes at a time when, within the writing about organisations, there is at least the assertion that workplace learning is a key determinant for organisational effectiveness.

A further facet of this increased recognition of the need for learning in the workplace have been attempts to establish mechanisms for nation wide data gathering and reportage about the contemporary training and education market. This reportage is providing greater transparency about the complex nature of skill building in the Australian workforce and certainly has provided insights about the nature and rate of participation of learners and organisations in skill formation programs. There has, however, been little reportage about how these changes have impacted on the nature of work, careers and professional identities of the practitioners responsible for the delivery of such learning. Chappell (1999) has in part addressed this gap by examining the impact of changing vocational educational policy on TAFE teacher identity formation. Similarly Smith et al (2000) have also argued that the introduction of competency based training has significantly impacted on the relationship of TAFE teachers with their students. The impact of such VET policy change, however, is still under researched and undertheorised for those who practise within the widening range of educational institutions now providing vocational education and training qualifications. It is even more under theorised as suggested in earlier chapters for those whose prime role is fostering learning in the workplace within organisations (Harris and Simons, 2000).

The gap in this area of knowledge and theorisation was recognised by the Australian National Training Authority. As a consequence, in recent years, this organisation has funded a number of research projects and programs that have explored issues related to this area. One such research program was undertaken by the Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training (RCVET) from

the University of Technology Sydney in 2000–1. This project entitled the "New VET Professional" sought to investigate the changing role of the VET professional given the context of change in both workplaces and educational sites. In this project the term "VET professional" was used as a "catch all" term to refer to those practitioners who engage in a variety of education and training and development activities that focus on preparing or developing workplace capability. It recognised that such practitioners often worked in diverse sites and settings that extended well beyond the classroom laboratory or workshop of a TAFE institution. For the purposes of this program of research the term "New VET Professional" was therefore being used to include those who work in organisations whose primary function is to enhance individual, group and organisational learning within enterprises. These professionals usually work with positional titles such as Training and Development, Learning and Development or Human Resource Development officer, co-ordinator or consultant. It is also being seen as including those who work in the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector providing vocational or work related programs, those who manage or work within registered training organisations (RTOs) and those who deliver vocationally related courses in the school sector. This large project involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and comprised a number of interrelated studies which examined perspectives from those working with VET institutions as well as VET professionals working within the organisational sector. As such, some of the data, particularly that generated from the survey component of this large research program, was seen as being directly relevant to the research required for this research project.

4.3. Background to the survey study

As indicated in the preceding chapter the survey component of the "New VET Professional" study sought to gain an understanding of human resource development/training and development practice in contemporary organisations by tapping into perspectives of practitioners or those who were responsible for HRD practice in organisations. It aimed to present a picture of the qualifications, skills and competencies that organisations expected of HRD practitioners, of the perceptions of these practitioners about the purpose of practice and their predictions about the future directions of HRD practice in organisations. It also sought to gain an understanding of who was providing

training and development services within organisations to better understand the possibilities of specialist HRD careers within organisations. Such data arguably not only has the potential to present one picture of the landscape of this field. It was seen that such data would also reveal current and anticipated practices which were important for HRD practice in organisations. Furthermore, it was anticipated that this data would provide some indications about the possible properties or shapes of careers of those practising in the field by highlighting the skills HRD practitioners currently require to attain or maintain careers in this field. This study also attempted to elicit some insights about commonly held values of practitioners (or those interested in practice) as one way of investigating the possibilities of the existence of a common professional identity or elements of a common professional culture amongst practitioners.

The survey, in which the terms Training and Development and Human Resource Development were used interchangeably, was designed to gather broadbrush data (see Appendix 1). It consisted of 20 questions. Some questions had several sub questions. As indicated in the previous chapter most questions required forced choice, listing or ranking responses from respondents. Additionally there was a small number of open questions.

The next sections of this chapter report on responses to questions that were relevant to this study. In so doing, it discusses the perceived relevance of these questions and then reports results and discusses findings in relation to each question.

4.4 Discussion of results from survey revealing insights about careers in HRD

4.4.1 About response rate and respondents

Twelve hundred surveys were circulated to subscribers to the CCH Australia publication "Managing Training and Development". Usable responses were received from 197 respondents providing a response rate of 16.5 per cent. While there was no opportunity for respondents to indicate their state of origin in the survey form presented to Johnston of the RCVET, CCH Australia representatives confirmed that cover sheet data (which was retained by CCH Australia) showed that respondents represented metropolitan and regional

organisations from all states of Australia. Thus this sample, while small, was considered a useful one and worthy of analysis for this phase of both the research process for the RCVET "New VET professional" study as well as for the doctoral study. Not only was this sample seen as representing practitioners Australia wide, it was also seen as an informed sample. Question 1 asked respondents to identify their organisational position. Such a question was designed to elicit and in fact did reveal that responses were coming from practitioners or practitioners' supervisors or the person responsible for the development taking place in the participating organisation. In other words, responses to the first question arguably indicated that respondents, given their work positions, were informed about this area of practice and the skills or attributes required of HRD/TD practitioners.

4.4.2 About the organisations in which survey respondents worked: questions and responses

The next five questions asked respondents about their organisations. For example, questions were asked about the size of the respondent's organisation, the sector in which the organisation operated and whether the organisation could be classified as "public", "private" or "not -for -profit". The survey also investigated if the respondent's organisation had sought RTO status and respondent's perceptions about the organisation's growth possibilities.

Received responses, as had been anticipated given the nature of subscriber membership database, were mainly from medium and large organisations and represented a range of industry sectors. The following data summary tables (Table 4.1 and 4.2) and the following discussion provide a profile of respondents.

Table 4.1 Summary of size of respondents' organisations (n=197)

Size of Organisation	0-19	20-99	100-199	200-1000	1000+
% of responses (no of responses)	6% (7)	16% (32)	16% (32)	43% (85)	21% (42)

Table 4.2 Summary of industries represented in responses (n =197)

Industry	No and (%) of responses
Building and construction	2 (1%)
Financial services	31 (16%)
Communication and Information Technology	10 (5%)
Community Services	14 (7%)
Education	9 (4.5%)
Energy (electricity, gas, water)	6 (3%)
Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality, Personal Services	9 (4.5%)
Manufacturing	30 (15%)
Primary productions	10 (5%)
Public Service and Administration	35 (18%)
Transport and storage	14 (7%)
Other (including conglomerates)	27 (14%)

Further profiling data came from responses to Question 4. This data revealed that one third of the respondents came from the public sector with 57 per cent of respondents identifying themselves as working within the private sector and 18 respondents (10 per cent) indicating that they were from a not-for-profit or other category of organisation.

The survey sought also to determine whether respondents worked within organisations that had sought Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status (Question 5) and if their organisations could be seen as being in a period of expansion, stability or contraction (Question 6). Such data potentially could indicate whether the organisations that had sought RTO status (and therefore were authorised to award qualifications linked to the national qualification framework) were more actively engaged in training and development than those organisations not seeking such status. Information about state of expansion, stability or contraction of respondent's organisation could also reveal something about the amount of training being provided, given that studies of organisations have shown that the nature of organisation impacts on the type and nature of training (Allen Consulting Group, 2000; Smith and Hayton, 1999).

Responses showed that approximately 29 per cent of the organisations from which the respondents came were operating as registered training organisations (RTOs). This finding immediately calls into question the level of active engagement or interest in at least some aspects of government skill formation policy by many organisations as, at the time of completing the survey, more than two thirds of those participating were not directly concerned with many of

the tasks associated with achieving RTO status or providing nationally accredited training and nationally recognised qualifications. The establishment of mechanisms enabling the provision of nationally accredited training by Australian organisations has been a centrepiece of vocational education and skill formation policy of successive Australian governments.

Just under half of the respondents from the enterprises that were RTOs reported that their organisations were in an expansionary state. A further 35 per cent of respondents' organisations suggested that they were operating in a period of stability. Only one third of the non RTOs participating in this survey reported that they were operating in a period of expansion.

This demographic survey data therefore could be seen as establishing the usefulness of the data collected. While this data comes from quite a small sample of practitioners from this field of organisational practice, it does represent the views of organisational members from a range of industries from various sectors and of varying sizes and various stages of the growth cycle. The large number of responses (14%) that could not be clearly located in one sector, however also suggests that using the industry sector as a unit of analysis is somewhat problematic.

Findings about achievement of RTO status by participating organisations were also illuminating. The fact that only approximately one third of organisations had sought RTO status could be seen as indicating that skills related to RTO practices and government driven vocational education policy are not essential for those pursuing a career in HRD. The majority of participants in this study were not directly working with the skill set required for RTO practice.

4.4.3 Perceptions about priority organisations afforded training and development HRD practice

Respondents were also asked to indicate the priority training and development activity was currently being afforded in their organisation and the degree to which activities associated with T and D/HRD had increased or decreased in the preceding three years. A large majority of respondents reported that they worked for organisations in which the priority given to training had increased or at least remained the same over the previous three years. Responses also show that in most of the organisations where there was a high priority for

training this had also increased in the past three years. Only a very small percentage of respondents perceived that training had a low priority in their organisation and that training activity had decreased in the previous three years. The relationship between these two organisational dimensions is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Amount of and priority afforded to training and development within respondents' organisations within the past 3 years.

Organisational priority for training	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same	Unsure	Total
High	67	2	15	1	85 (43%)
Medium	42	8	39		89 (45%)
Low	4	8	10		22 (11%)
Total	113 (58%)	18 (9%)	64 (33%)	1	196

The above data would suggest that most respondents believed that there had been an increase in training and development in the three years preceding the completion of the survey (1997–2000) and that their organisations were placing a high priority on training.

Interestingly, further analysis of data shows that there was little difference between those organisations which had become RTOs and those which had not in terms of the priority given to training. The data reveal that respondents from 42 per cent of RTOs believed their organisations afforded a high priority to training. The remaining 58 per cent indicated the priority given to training was either medium to low. Interestingly a similar percentage of respondents from "non RTOs" (43%) also indicated that training and development had been afforded a high priority over the past three years. This finding once again supports the argument that active engagement with policies of vocational education and skill formation was not the only indicator that the organisation was active in human resource development practice and by implication that careers in the field were not only available in organisations with RTO status.

4.4.4 About the use and qualifications of specialist v non specialist T and D/HRD employees

The survey also sought information about employment practices associated with HRD. Questions such as the extent to which organisations employed specialist T and D/HRD staff (Question 9, 9.1) and the nature of qualifications needed/held by such staff (Question 9.2), yielded useful insights for understanding the nature of careers in this field. Similarly, questions which examined positional titles for such staff (Question 9.3), reporting relationships for HRD staff (Question 9.4) and positioning of T and D/HRD as organisational functions (Question 9.5) all provided further detail about possible career structure.

The results showed that 88 per cent of respondents reported specialist training and development/human resource development staff were employed by their organisations. Most of these organisations employed one to two T and D/HRD staff members. These results could be seen as indicating quite clearly that a career as a specialist T and /HRD practitioner is available in organisations although most organisations only employ a small number of such specialists. It should also be noted that responses to later questions in the survey showed that organisations also often use non-specialist training and development staff in implementing T and D/HRD programs. As expected respondents from some of the very large organisations (>1000) employed large numbers of training and development specialists.

Being a specialist practitioner, however, was not dependent on attaining a qualification related to this field. At least one third of respondents indicated that a qualification of degree level was expected for practice in their organisations. It should be noted, however, there was not an expectation that this should be a degree directly related to training and development/human resource development. A further third of the respondents indicated that they would normally expect specialist training staff to hold a Certificate IV in Assessment and Work place Training, a qualification that has frequently been identified as a minimal qualification for practice in delivering accredited courses. Interestingly the third most common response from a list of qualifications presented to respondents as part of this question showed that there was no expectation for specialist training staff to hold any form of qualification. This lack of minimum qualification for practice in this field certainly highlights the lack of regulation

pertaining to this field of practice. It also suggests that specialised qualifications are not seen by organisations as essential for those seeking a career in this field.

On the other hand, the fact that at least two thirds of respondents hold recognised qualifications, even if not specialist T and D qualifications, could be seen as suggesting that there is a greater expectation for practitioners in this field to hold some form of post-compulsory qualification. This seems particularly important for those seeking to become specialists in the field given the findings about the frequent usage of non-specialist staff in HRD/T and D delivery.

As discussed in the preceding paragraph several other questions in the survey also sought information about expected qualifications of staff contributing to the human resource development practice in organisations (Question 9.7; 9.8; 9.9). For example, one question sought to determine whether non-specialist training and development staff members were used to present training within the respondents' organisations. A large number of responses (86%) to this question showed that such non-specialist staff were used to deliver at least some training in participating organisations. Responses to another question showed that fifty eight per cent (58%) of organisations using non-specialist internal staff to deliver training and development services or activities did not expect these staff to have any qualifications in workplace training and assessment. When organisations using non-specialist T and D staff to deliver training and development activities did require that such staff were qualified, the most commonly expected qualification was a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training.

To briefly summarise, findings from this set of questions reveal that while there is a role for and career opportunities for HRD/T and D practitioners in organisations, few organisations employ a large number of specialists. There is also evidence of employees with minimal qualifications (if they hold any qualifications) in areas related to HRD/T and D providing human resource development services within organisations at least on a part time basis. Such findings could be seen as suggesting that full time careers for those with specialist knowledge and skills in this area exist but that they may be limited.

4.4.5 Positional labels for this area of organisational practice

The lack of consistency in expectations about qualifications was also repeated in a lack of consistency in the labelling of positions in the area within organisational settings. This confirms writing about positional labelling in this field referred to in Chapter 1. The most frequently used descriptors for positions in training and development/HRD included Human Resource (HR) manager, officer, consultant/co-ordinator; Training or Training and Development (T and D) officer/consultant/co-ordinator or consultant. Other descriptors included Learning and Development, Human Resource Development, Employee Development and Staff Development officer/manager/co-ordinator or consultant.

The prominence in the use of the more generic label HR manager as the label for the position that is responsible for learning and development tasks and activities as well as human resource management tasks could reflect the position that boundaries between what was once seen as a personnel role and the training and development role are blurring (McGlagan, 1999; Sofo, 1999; Ulrich, Losey and Lake, 1997).

There was a linkage between training and development and Occupational Health and Safety in several of the responses to questions about "position labelling". Such a linkage provides some indication of the major emphasis of staff development activity in some organisations. Several responses also identified team leaders/site managers/line managers as other positions with a training and development responsibility. This finding, which can also be seen in findings from later questions in the survey, was not unexpected given the shift to team based structures in many organisations and the rethinking of the role of manager and team leader as reported in literature on organisational change. In such literature there is considerable evidence of team leaders and or managers being expected to assume a responsibility for developing the competencies of their team (Sofo, 1999; Dunphy, Turner, & Crawford, 1997; Bassi, Cheny and Van Buren, 1997; Stace and Dunphy, 1996).

It could therefore be argued that data from this survey about labelling indicates that the boundaries shaping careers in this area are blurring with some labels denoting a range of human resource or other roles which are included as part of the development role. This could be seen as implying that a development

career requires some skill sets that come from outside what has been traditionally thought of as human resource development.

4.4.6 Positioning HRD within the organisational structure

To further ascertain possible career structures for HRD practitioners, respondents were asked about reporting relationships of T and D staff. Such information about reporting structure can reveal the existence of a linear career path for HRD practitioners. There were two very frequent responses to this question. One of these responses suggested that T and D staff reported through their Training and Development Manager (if they had one) and then to the Human Resource Manager. These data about reporting lines clearly established the possibility of a career structure or career line/ladder which allowed an individual to move from a training and development officer role to a position of a training and development manager. These data also located HRD as a component of the Human Resources Portfolio in most organisations.

The other fairly frequently occurring response to this question was that T and D staff reported to line managers or site managers. Such a response may be an indication that there are no real career progression opportunities for training and development/human resource development practitioners within organisations especially those which position HRD in this way. In this type of organisational structure, T and D/HRD practitioners report to a line manager not a T and D Manager and hence line management as opposed to T and D management becomes the next rung in a career ladder.

On the other hand, such findings may say more about the structure of respondents' organisations and location of staff (as opposed to line) functions in such organisations. The requirement for HRD staff to report to a line manager rather than an HR/HRD manager would suggest that the organisation was structured along decentralised/divisionalised lines.

The survey also attempted to ascertain whether the HRD function was more commonly found to operate at line level or as a centralised function. This information was sought once again to determine the existence of career pathways. Approximately 60 per cent of responses to this question indicated that training and development activities were provided by T and D staff operating as part of a centralised function as well as at the division or business unit level.

No attempt, however, was made in the survey to determine which HRD activities were arranged at the central level as opposed to the line level. As a consequence, no real inferences can be drawn in terms of career possibilities other than that opportunities could be seen to exist in this field working in either or both a centralised as well as a line based function.

4.4.7 Perceptions of current skill requirements of T and D practitioners

Several questions attempted to reveal respondents' perceptions of current and future skill needs of T and D specialists. Such information was seen as providing insights into perceptions about the nature of the HRD role in organisations as currently practised and how practitioners see this role as evolving. Responses to one question in this vein revealed that organisations currently rated the following skills as being highly important for specialist T and D practitioners:

- the capacity to conduct organisational training needs;
- to evaluate training outcomes;
- to facilitate team building and communication;
- to manage learning activities, and
- to provide customer service and client service training.

It is interesting to note that capacity to "present training" was not frequently rated as a skill of high importance for T and D practitioners in organisations with only 30 per cent of respondents rating this capability as being of high importance. Slightly more respondents rated skills of "liaising with external providers of training" as being of high importance for organisations. These findings raise questions about the perceived importance of some of the more traditional roles skills usually required of internal training and development specialists. They perhaps could be seen as indicating that careers for HRD specialists may exist more commonly outside of the organisation.

The survey also attempted to explore the degree of involvement of HRD practitioners with on line/e-learning approaches. Although 38 percent of respondents indicated that they were using this approach to learning in some of their training programs, only 25 per cent of respondents rated the capacity "to design on line/e learning activities" as highly important for their organisation. Responses to a later question in the survey revealed that external providers

were developing the e-learning/online programs being used in organisations in most respondent's organisations. It seems that this training innovation remains the province of specialist e -learning or informational technology providers.

4.4.8 Perceptions about current and future importance of various T and D practice areas

A further set of responses also provided insights into the nature of current practice areas and expectations about what will be important areas of practice in the future. From such responses some understanding of current and future skill requirements for HRD practitioners becomes possible and potentially provides some insights into the nature of what will constitute careers in this field.

Table 4.4 provides results of responses to these questions about current and anticipated future training and development activity.

Table 4.4 Current and predicted importance of training and development in particular practice areas

Activity	High (current)	*High in coming 3 years*	Medium (current)	*Medium in coming 3 years*	Low (current)	*Low in coming 3 years*
Induction of new employees (n=190)	**114**	*108*	**52**	*62*	**22**	*19*
New product/ equipment training (n-185)	**56**	*70*	**91**	*90*	**38**	*21*
Management Development(n=190)	**48**	*119*	**78**	*64*	**64**	*8*
Occupational health & safety(n=191)	**79**	*93*	**72**	*71*	**41**	*24*
Computers/IT training(n=191)	**50**	*76*	**82**	*81*	**59**	*32*
Recruitment/ selection / promotion(n=188)	**12**	*38*	**66**	*96*	**110**	*53*
Performance appraisal (n=187)	**37**	*82*	**81**	*82*	**69**	*25*
Technical skill development (n=177)	**45**	*75*	**93**	*90*	**39**	*18*
Quality processes and procedures (n=186)	**35**	*62*	**66**	*84*	**85**	*42*
Change management/ re-organisation (n=189)	**25**	*74*	**54**	*79*	**110**	*36*
Customer/ client service(n=187)	**40**	*85*	**67**	*75*	**80**	*27*
Team building/ communication (n=188)	**32**	*91*	**81**	*73*	**74**	*21*
Introduction of new technology(n=183)	**32**	*61*	**75**	*74*	**76**	*47*
EEO/ AA Programs (n=180)	**21**	*35*	**59**	*90*	**100**	*59*
Performance improvement(n=188)	**34**	*61*	**78**	*93*	**76**	*22*
Other						

The above data presents some interesting findings both in terms of the picture they provide about current areas of training activity and perceptions revealed about the areas in which training and development will become important within the next three years.

One of the first areas of interest from an analysis of the responses to this question is the nature of activities that have been nominated as activities of highest practice for the year the survey was completed (2000). It would seem from the results that induction of new staff members, occupational health and safety training and development, new product training and computing IT training were areas of greatest T and D activity in respondents' workplaces.

At the same time, training related to selection, recruitment and promotion, EEO/AA programs and change management programs received comparatively low nomination as areas of T and D activity. Some of the areas rating low nominations e.g. change management could be seen as quite surprising given the frequent reference to change in organisations and references to the need for T and D practitioners to have the capacity to act as change managers and drive change management programs in both the HRD and organisational literature discussed in Chapter 2. It is also quite surprising that the comparatively low rating of management development activity given the focus on the need for management development as reported in Karpin report (1996) and suggestions of increased activity in this area in research by Collins and Hackman in the early 1990s. A further area of some inconsistency in these findings can be seen in response to the importance attributed to communication and team building activities as an HRD practice currently, even though, as seen in earlier findings, respondents indicated that the facilitation of communication and team building activities are amongst the skills most required by HRD practitioners.

Responses to this question could be seen as suggesting that the focus on management development has been slow to infiltrate the thinking of T&D professionals or at least T and D practice in responding organisations. Responses, however, shown in Table 4.4 suggest that this area of HRD practice will become more important for organisations in the near future. In a similar vein, respondents expect the introduction of new technologies and structural and cultural change management to be areas of requiring increased T and D activity in coming years even though they were less prominent T and D activities at the time the survey was conducted. Further, the perceptions of increased importance of practices associated with team building and communication, customer and client service and performance appraisal in the coming three years point to areas in which HRD practitioners in which need to develop skills for the continuance of their careers.

A further question asked respondents to rate a list of T and D activities in terms of whether they were becoming more important, had remained at about the same level of importance or were not important. This question was attempting to look how change has occurred in this professional area rather than predicting changes to come. Such findings could be seen as providing some indications about how careers in this area of practice may have changed.

Table 4.5 Perceptions of changes in importance in T and D/ HRD activities

Activities of T and D/HRD specialist	More important	Remained the same	Not Important
To provide proactive services that identify and resolve problems	**114 (60%)**	**65 (35%)**	**10(5%)**
To bring about improvements in individual performance	**123 (65%)**	**63 (33%)**	**4 (2%)**
To gather evaluative data about outcomes from T and D activities	64 (34%)	107 (56%)	18 (10%)
To define performance problems for business units/ functions	82 (43%)	90 (47%)	18 (10%)
To assist in developing performance solutions for business units	**113(60%)**	**65 (35%)**	**10 (5%)**
To work closely with organisational customers and clients	98 (52%)	68 (36%)	24 (13%)
To facilitate and support change management activities	99 (52%)	72 (38%)	17 (9%)
To negotiate with external providers of training	58 (31%)	103 (54%)	28 (15%)
To manage the learning activities of organisations	92 (48%)	90 (47%)	7 (4%)
To utilise IT in the implementation of T and D activities	89 (47%)	80 (42%)	17 (9%)
To design and deliver training sessions	65 (35%)	105 (55%)	18 (10%)
To manage the dissemination of organisational knowledge	87 (46%)	84 (44%)	16 (8%)
To integrate learning with normal work activities	**122 (64%)**	**67 (35%)**	**1 (0.5%)**
To provide accredited training programs to employees	91 (48%)	75 (40%)	23 (12%)

As the above table shows activities that were most consistently seen as more important were activities that helped:

- to provide proactive services that identify and resolve problems;
- to bring about improvements in individual performance;
- to develop performance solutions for business units; and,
- to integrate learning with normal work activities.

It is important to note that in a number of the above activity statements there is an emphasis on both finding solutions to organisational problems and to improving performance of individuals and business units. This perhaps indicates the greater level of accountability and outcome achievement expected by contemporary organisations from HRD, a requirement reported widely in literature about this field as shown in Chapter 2. It is also interesting to note that perceptions of the growing importance of integrating learning with normal work activities could be seen providing further recognition of the value of work-based learning. This feature is also reported in the literature about the field of HRD and the changing nature of organisations.

While the above results do indicate areas of perceived change it is also worth noting that a small majority of the respondents also perceived that the level of

activity in terms of designing and delivering training sessions, gathering evaluative data about outcomes from T and D activities and negotiating with external providers of training remained about the same. These results perhaps suggest that traditional practices are still common and skills associated with them remain important. The results also suggest that new less traditional practices have become more important for HRD practice once again pointing to the need for a broadened skill base for those wishing to gain or acquire a career in this area.

4.4.9 Perceptions of occupational purpose

This survey also attempted to gain some understanding of how the respondents saw the purpose of training and development/HRD. In so doing this survey was attempting to gain some insights into respondents' beliefs about the purpose of this area of professional practice. Results, as shown below, could be seen to indicate that there was considerable agreement by respondents to statements about the purpose of training and development within organisations. The following lists show the percentage of respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed with a list of statements describing the purpose of training.

Table 4.6 Perceptions of purpose of training and developments contribution to organisations

The purpose of training and development is to contribute to	% agreeing	Rank
Organisational and work performance	95%	1
Individual development of employees	93%	2
Maintaining technical skills	88%	3
Building productive work teams	87%	4
Introduction and use of new technology	87%	4
Job satisfaction	87%	4
Career development of employees	85%	7
Managing organisational change	82%	8
Developing a positive working environment	79%	9
Sharing organisational knowledge	79%	9
Organisational competitiveness	78%	11
Succession planning	74%	12
Solving organisational problems	72%	13
Increase qualification level of workforce	70%	14

It could be argued that the high level of agreement amongst respondents about contribution of Training and Development to the range of nominated areas of organisational activity (95%-70%) reveals a fairly consistently held belief

amongst practitioners that HRD/T and D has a broad scope and makes a contribution to the performance of organisation that extends beyond the provision of orthodox training sessions. In making this claim it should be noted that the conflating of the agreement tables (strongly agree - agree) intensified to some extent the level of agreement with nominated activities.

4.5 What do such results show us about role of HRD practitioners in organisations?

The findings from the survey data exploring the role of "the New VET Professional" provide some insights about the role /purpose of HRD in organisations and the skills that practitioners need to enact their occupation. In so doing such findings also reveal dimensions of HRD as a career field.

The survey yields findings showing that respondents perceive that training/HRD is increasingly being afforded a high priority in Australian workplaces. While this survey did not seek information about hours or financial resources devoted to training and development in participating organisations, the survey findings did reveal that 80 per cent of respondents worked in organisations that employed specialist training and development staff. Findings also reveal that there was a perception on the part of many respondents that their organisations were making an increased effort in terms of T and D/HRD activity. Such findings suggest, then, that despite the outsourcing of many organisational functions and the changing nature of workplaces, there remains a role within organisations for specialist training and development /HRD staff.

There was considerable consistency in findings from this survey about current skill requirements for practitioners. This consistency could be seen in the skills respondents identified as important for current practitioners, the skills that had become more important for practitioners over the past years and the skills not seen as highly important in the process of workplace upskilling.

There was also reasonable consistency in perceptions about areas of practice which are of high importance to organisations and predictions about future areas which would be of high importance to organisations. Such consistency emerges even though respondents have come from enterprises of differing size

and from different sectors. This consistency could be seen as providing some indications of areas in which trainers and developers may need to acquire more skills if they are to maintain their careers in this field. Such findings could generally be seen as indicating that training and development practitioners need to acquire a range of skills that extend beyond training presentation skills in either technical or procedural areas. Responses to several sections of the survey revealed a need to develop the skills associated with diagnosing and solving organisational performance problems and improving organisation and work performance.

The survey responses also suggest that there is a relatively commonly held sense of the purpose of this field of professional practice which could arguably be seen as possibly indicating a sense of common professional identity.

Aspects relating to this area of organisational practice where there was less consistency emerged from findings about qualifications needed to forge a career in HRD. The second area of considerable inconsistency was evident in labelling of position in this field

The findings from this research about qualifications needed for HRD practice reveal that although organisations employ specialist training and development staff, there is not, at least on the part of commercial organisations, much consistency in level or type of qualification required by such specialists. Data revealed that while an undergraduate degree is generally a commonly expected qualification for such specialist practitioners, there is no expectation that this should be a degree that is specifically related to training and development or human resource development. Secondly, the most commonly expected specialist qualification is the sub degree level Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. There is also ample evidence from the data that many workplaces do not require specialist qualifications for T and D/HRD staff. These findings raise questions about the extent to which organisations see the need for their specialist trainers to possess some form of specialist knowledge. Such lack of demand or expectation for practitioners to hold a specialist qualification at a time when many other occupation groups have increasingly required practitioners to hold specialised qualifications could indicate that as a professional field HRD is still in an emergent state at least as perceived in Australian organisations. Such lack of expectation about specialised qualifications is not matched in the related occupational fields of school

teaching or in vocational education. These areas of practice have required their practitioners to hold increasingly higher qualification levels i.e. a degree level qualification for those in practice in schools and at least certificate qualification for those in practice in vocational education. To some extent the lack of consistency in required preparation for T and D/HRD field of practice could be seen as contributing to a lack of a consistent sense of occupational identity.

Secondly as indicated earlier in this report, the naming or labelling of the profession as practised in organisations is certainly not consistent and could be seen as an indicator that this is still an evolving field of practice in organisations. Such variability in labelling may help to explain some of the lack of understanding of this area as a professional field by those outside the field. It may also help to explain some of the diversity associated with HRD in terms of practices or emphases in practice in various organisations.

Such findings could be seen as indicating that, at least in some of the participating organisations, the model of HRD or HRD orientation adopted within an organisation may be based on a broader understanding of how HRD/T and D can and should contribute to organisational performance. Responses in this study show that at least in some organisations practices associated with a broader set of professional activities are common. Such findings, however, can only be reported very generally as much more extensive analysis of practice of organisations would need to be conducted to firmly establish that HRD practice had reached this position in Australia. The prominence of such items in responses, however, could be seen as suggesting that HRD practitioners need to have a broad array of skills for the maintenance of a career in this field.

4.6 Some conclusions: what this research reveal about careers in this field

Findings from this study show that what could be seen as a career path does exist for those who practice in the area of human resource development. Organisations do employ specialist training and development/human resource development staff. Some larger organisations, employ human resource development managers to manage or co-ordinate the work of human resource development staff. Specialist qualifications expected of these staff members are neither regulated by a professional body nor consistently required by

organisations. This study certainly shows that achieving qualifications in HRD as a specialist area could not been seen as the formal entry point for careers in this field. This survey research, however, gives no indication of how entry to the field as a career area is achieved. Findings do show that entry to and transition through the field is not via a set of clearly defined and consistently labelled positions (e.g. intern, resident, consultant; lecture, senior lecturer, associate professor, professor). There is, however, evidence of Training/Learning and Human Resource Development officers reporting to HRD Learning and Development/Training and Development Manager revealing, albeit very short, a small career ladder in HRD. In a similar vein, the variety of reporting lines for HRD practitioners and the HRD function could be seen as suggesting the nature and direction of careers within certain organisations may vary given differing organisational structures which are obliquely apparent from this study.

There are some consistent findings from this survey concerning this area as a field of practice and as a career field. Consistency can be seen in the findings about current areas of HRD practice and the importance of such areas; from findings showing perceptions about skills which are of high importance for practitioners from this field; from findings about practice areas which have grown more important in recent years, and from responses showing beliefs about the purpose of this field of practice. This study shows that there is a consistency in perceptions about the organisational activities that HRD professionals currently need to be able to perform along with a consistency in perceptions about the activities which the HRD practitioner will required to undertake as part of their work within coming years. The study also shows that there is consistency in the skill areas which respondents rank as being of high importance. Arguably these identified areas could be seen as constituting the core skills needed to form and maintain a career in HRD. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there are also areas where ranking in importance of the identified skill area is very inconsistent (almost equal numbers ranking identified area as both highly important and of low importance)

Furthermore, the study reveals reasonable consistency in respondents' perceptions about the way this field of organisational practice has changed in recent years. These findings about change in this field by implication suggest the skill areas that HRD practitioners need to have acquired to remain in the field.

Finally, the study also shows that practitioners or those responsible for practitioners have relatively similar views and beliefs about the purpose of HRD work for organisations. This could be seen as suggesting that this field of practice is on a trajectory to developing some form of an "occupational culture" or professional identity in that there is some common sense of purpose amongst practitioners of this field despite real difficulties in coming to terms with a consistent definition or philosophic orientation about their practice as shown in Chapter 2.

The survey data reported above provides some insights about HRD as an occupational and career field. Data, however, is broad brush. It provides information about qualifications and skills required for a career in the field. These could be seen as the necessary properties of an HRD career. It provides evidence of the types of activities currently undertaken by those with a career in this area as well as predictions about important practices for this field in future years. In so doing, it provides tentative perspectives of the landscape of this practice field for the years to come. The survey data also provides what could be seen as elements of a loosely constructed occupational identity being held by HRD practitioners. The survey, however, does not allow for more detailed inspection of how individual practitioners entered and moved about the field of HRD in enacting their careers in this field. Nor does the data provided by this survey allow any insight into how individual careers have looked or were shaped. More detailed examination through in-depth analysis of a number of specific careers might yield more light on such questions. These careers will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Mapping the field: Reportage and discussion of findings from career stories

5.1 Introduction

Interviews conducted with 12 HRD practitioners provided a substantial amount of data for this research project. In these interviews practitioners were able to present detailed and authentic stories that showed how they had constructed their own careers up to the time of interview. As indicated in previous chapters, the interviews were based on a loose interview protocol, which in part had been shaped by findings emerging from relevant literature as presented in Chapter 2. Interviews were then transcribed and the transcriptions used as a basis for analysis. Quotations included in the following chapter are taken from these transcripts. Names of participants have been changed to provide anonymity. Summaries of each of these transcriptions are presented as career stories in Appendix 3.

The next section of this chapter includes a table that summarises some of the data from career stories of interviewees (Table 5.1) and a collection of vignettes also developed from career stories which are presented in Appendix 3. The vignettes, which portray aspects of the careers of three practitioners interviewed for this study, are not presented as absolute models of careers in this field. They do reveal, however, some of the features that characterise HRD as a career field and that are further discussed in later sections of this chapter. The table and the vignettes are therefore primarily included in the introductory section of this chapter to provide the reader with a general awareness of the careers of HRD practitioners interviewed for this study. The table and vignettes also provide some illumination of the structure of HRD as an area of professional practice. More substantial insights into careers of individual HRD practitioners interviewed for the study are available from the career biographies included in Appendix 3. This introductory section of the chapter is then followed with an analysis of the career stories presented in interviews and an examination of features characterising this area as a career field.

5.2 A perspective of participating HRD practitioners

Practitioners were selected purposively for this interview-based research study. An attempt was made to gather data about careers in HRD from individuals who had been practitioners for different lengths of time, who had worked in a range of industry sectors and within different types of organisations and who had carried out a range of roles within the field or who had had positions in HRD with differing role scopes. The intention, when gathering data from such a sample of practitioners was to allow for the surfacing of differences in practitioner stories. Initially when selecting and inviting practitioners to participate in this research, as a researcher I had some idea of the participants' career experiences. At the same time I was unaware, as a researcher, of much of the detail of the careers of these practitioners before each interviewee told his or her story. Hence the degree of variation in career scope of participants, while hoped for, was not completely planned or able to be controlled. The following table summarises some dimensions of careers of those practitioners who were interviewed.

Table 5.1 Dimensions of career of participating interviewees

Name	Yrs. Exp/ No. of tran sitions	Initial work role and industry	Current role/industry	References to learning + Quals. at time of interview	Employment	Entry pathway
Maria	10+ >3	Family business logistics	Independent consultant	Referred to learning much from father M. Ed	-Ind consultant -Public Sector Trainer and Business adviser -Ind. consultant to SMEs	Expertise in logistics business Began HRD career on part time basis
Donald	30+ >6	Teaching and Counselling	Land D Director Multinational Business solutions organisation	Referred to learning from colleagues in all roles BA Dip Ed MA (Psych) Grad Dip Bus Admin	Teaching, Counselling Counsellor training Project management L and D Manager/Director	UG degree Teaching / Counselling expertise
Frances	30+ >5	Teaching	Manager Employee relations /L and D Public Sector organisation	Referred to learning from specific colleagues BA Dip Ed MA	Teaching, Curriculum and Project management	UG degree Teaching
Cecily	5 + >4	Secretarial Business Service	Performance Improvement consultant	Cert. 1V Assessment and Workplace Training and Part UG degree	Computer program training HR Administrator HRD Co-ordinator. Performance Improvement Consultant	Expertise in Computer programs Began HRD career on part time basis

Elizabeth	6+ 2	Expertise in security area	Training Officer Management Development Public Sector	learning from trainees and work and training network colleagues Cert. IV Assessment and Workplace Training UG degree	Technical trainer Management trainer	Expertise in technical area
John	30 >5	Expertise in aspects of financial services industry	Training Manager Financial Services	Referred to learning from work colleagues Cert. IV Assessment and Workplace Training UG degree	Technical /procedural trainer Customer service/sales Training manager	Expertise in technical area
Amy	20 >4	Expertise in procedural/ technical area in aviation	Independent Consultant	Cert. IV Assessment and Workplace Training UG / PG Degree in Adult Education	Technical /procedural training part time in organisations in aviation and hospitality industry Customer service/sales Train the trainer, tourism training in partnership Ind. consultant /training, career coaching, mentoring	Expertise in technical/ procedural area Began HRD career on part time basis
Emma	20+ > 6	Research officer	Executive Development Manager Financial Services Industry	Referred to learning much from others including consultants early in her career UG degree (psychology and sociology) PG diploma M.Ed.	-Researcher. -Training officer designer and presented public sector. -Education officer Community sector -Sales Training Manager Information Industry -Training Manager Manufacturing Sector -Group Training/ Executive Development Manager. Financial Services	UG and PG Diplomas Research Officer/ reviewing training program
Alana	30+ >3	Independent consultant	Independent consultant	UG degree in Behavioural Science M.Ed. in Adult Education	-Sales /service sector -Part time counselling Part time training -Training program sales -State Training Manager in recruitment organisation -Independent consultant	Part time counselling Began HRD career on part time basis
Paul	20+ 2	Agricultural engineering	Independent consultant	Referred to learning gained from specific colleagues PG Diploma	-Education Officer Agricultural extension -Teaching in Agricultural College -Staff Development Manager Manufacturing organisation -Ind. consultant	Offering agricultural extension programs

Susan	5 2	Clerical / secretarial	Group Training Manager	Learning from work colleagues, training network Cert. IV Assessment and Workplace Training HR Dip. B. Ed in Ad Ed.	Senior Clerical/ Administration HRD administrator Associate Training Manager Corporate Training Manager	Designing and delivering computer training programs Began HRD career on part time basis
Sylvia	30 >6	Health sector	Independent consultant	Learning from and being encouraged by work colleagues UG degrees in Psychology and Social Work, Master degree in Arts Management Ph.D.	Administration, Health sector Research into HRD initiatives t for public sector utility. -Independent consultant in Asia in health programs and training provider in commercial practices -Career counsellor tertiary education Institution -Manager of training, management and organisational development – public sector utility organisation -independent consultant	Through role in Health administration and UG studies

5.2.1 Selected Vignettes of HRD careers

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the following vignettes are offered at this point in the dissertation to provide the reader with a "sense" of the careers of those interviewed as part of this empirical component of the research project. These vignettes (and all the career stories included in Appendix 3) have been compiled from interview data collected through interviews. The career stories of these practitioners were also chosen for inclusions at this point of the chapter because they were seen as illustrating the variety of career possibilities available to HRD practitioners. Furthermore, when read as a group, the vignettes included in the next section also revealed some of the consistent patterns that can be found when studying careers in this field and which are described in more detail later in the chapter. These vignettes can further be seen as illuminating some of the forces shaping careers in this field as well as some of the properties characterising HRD careers. No one vignette presented below or in Appendix 3 could be seen as being absolutely archetypal of careers in this field but each of the individual vignettes that follows and all when using an across case approach to analysis contribute to an understanding of this field.

Donald's career story

Donald has had a long career actively involved in developing human potential. This career has involved employment in both the public and private sector as a teacher, student counsellor, counsellor trainer, educational leader and policy developer, manager and learning and development manager.

He began this career as a secondary school teacher having graduated from university with an Arts degree majoring in psychology. After several successful and what Donald refers to as happy years of teaching and the completion of a post graduate psychology degree he moved into psychological counselling and was subsequently promoted into a position that saw him responsible for the development of other school counsellors. In this role he designed and delivered training programs for counsellors as well as liaised with University personnel who also were involved in such counsellor preparation. Donald then moved to the tertiary education sector and established a student counselling function that he managed for several years before returning to his earlier counsellor training role. Dissatisfaction with the political environment and work climate saw Donald move into the private sector and begin work with a large multinational organisation. Initially this transition required him to design personal skills development programs for new employees. Change in the work environment, however, resulted in Donald moving into a senior project manager role in which he had responsibility for leadership and management training and the management of other organisational development activities. After approximately eight years Donald moved to another multinational organisation which operated in the information technology and business solutions sector. Here he led a learning and development team based in Australia but which also functioned as part of the Asia Pacific region of the organisation.

Donald argued that the skills he required for his role in HRD included relationship and network management. He also recognised that, as well as people management skills, he needed skills in understanding the business and business drivers and hence the capacity to work strategically. He indicated that he particularly enjoyed the "stretch" associated with new projects.

To better equip himself for his role in the private sector Donald undertook formal postgraduate studies in business management. He also acknowledged the valuable informal learning gained from some of his work colleagues. He

explained that some of the transitions he has made have been the result of being "in the right place and the right time". He also saw part of his career story has been about enjoying the "stretch" of the different work environment and work roles and about being able to identify the skills he had and market them in different environments.

Cecily's career story

Cecily's movement into the learning and development career field was not a predictable career move. Cecily had left school at quite a young age having not enjoyed her years in secondary school. She embarked on a secretarial career following her training at a business college but after several years found herself becoming bored in clerical/secretarial roles. She first ventured into a training role in a part-time, fairly tentative manner when she offered computer training classes to some of the clients from the business services company for whom she was working. She remembers a feeling of enjoyment from these early training experiences, much akin to the feeling she had felt from being in amateur dramatics, when she saw the "look" in the eyes of her learners saying that they knew how to use the "package" after participating in her training classes. Fairly soon after this experience Cecily sought employment in a computer training company. She admitted to not really knowing how to conduct training in those early days but almost intuitively felt that if she built up some clerical scenarios and exercises based on using certain programs and packages this would help learning for those she was training. Initially, Cecily was quite comfortable when she was training learners on packages which were useful for clerical work or which she herself had used in her secretarial/clerical role. She was less comfortable, however, when required to train others in use of programs she had not used herself. As this type of work increased she decided to make a career move and sought a position with a manufacturing organisation initially in human resources administration which she used as a stepping stone into a position as Human Resource Development Co-ordinator. It was while she was in this position that Cecily began undertaking accredited courses in workplace assessment and training and in leadership to better equip her for her HRD role. After some time in this role Cecily was made redundant as a result of an organisational restructure. Cecily very briefly took on a sales role but rapidly returned to training and development when she gained a role as a performance consultant. This position required skills in both training in use of computer technology and in the provision of leadership development programs. In this role Cecily worked as a consultant to a range of companies assisting staff with

acquisition of computer skills as well as assisting employees understand how to better achieve business solutions and streamline business practice using various forms of computer technology. Cecily worked to build her skills in HRD through the completion of undergraduate studies and by taking on tasks that have sometimes "stretched" her initially outside her comfort zone. She believed she grew in confidence as she has engaged in many facets of the business process through her performance consultancy role. Transitions in her career have allowed her to develop training competence that extends beyond provision of technical training. Cecily now works with a range of organisational problems and seeks to provide development related solutions.

Susan's career story

Susan has had a comparatively short career in HRD having worked in this field of organisational practice full time for four years at the time of interview. During this time, however, she has been able to make a number of career moves. Susan moved into HRD from a position as a senior clerical and sometimes part time human resource staff member in a small manufacturing organisation. In this organisation she had on occasions, initiated, designed and delivered training courses to clerical staff throughout Australia on software programs used by the organisation and very much enjoyed the experience. When her organisation relocated to another state Susan took the opportunity to seek employment in an organisation that would afford her opportunities to move into an HRD role. To equip herself for such a move she had completed some studies in human resources. She moved to a larger multinational organisation initially in an administrative role but fairly quickly sought out opportunities to move into HRD. Initially she had some difficulties and so began specialised studies in HRD to help her effect such a move. Eventually with support of her manager she took up a newly created position as a Group HRD Co-ordinator. This was, in her words, initially more of an administrative role than a full HRD role. Susan learned about training by attending and sometimes sharing the various group training sessions being presented within this part of the organisation. This learning was further supported with learning from undergraduate studies which by this time she was undertaking. She also drew on her expertise with computer technology and established a learning centre in the organisation. This bought her into more contact with senior members of staff and, as she provided training in this area to these staff members, she grew in confidence. After approximately two years Susan was promoted to position of Associate Manager Group Training and Development.

This required Susan to become much more active in training design and delivery. A further promotion followed and Susan became Group Training and Development Manager. In this role she developed programs for supervisors and managers who worked across the various functions in the organisations. This role also involved her in working with those in similar positions in other countries throughout the Asian Pacific region.

Susan's career in HRD began quite late in her working life. She has, however, effected a move from her initial area of expertise in computer technology training into broader field of training and development. She also has been able to progress up a career ladder available to her while remaining in this field and working within one large organisation. Susan very much enjoys training and development. She stated, "I don't mind the administration. I love the creative side of putting programs together and I like to see the finished package, but I get a real buzz out of standing up in front of people and delivering a program because I really like to talk to people and draw out their expertise."

(Note: Career stories of all participants synthesised from interview data are available in Appendix 3)

5.3 Analysing and interpreting the career stories

Two approaches have been used to analyse and interpret the vast amount of data collected as part of the interview process. Firstly, all interviews were read several times and common themes within each interview and consistently occurring themes, which appeared in the transcripts of most, if not all, interviews, were noted. Secondly, further reading of transcripts using questions identified from the literature as needing to be addressed to further understand careers in this field as discussed in Chapter 2, as a basis for data categorisation was then undertaken. The questions and prominent concepts from the literature had therefore helped probably both subconsciously and more consciously to shape what were seen as "sensitising concepts"(Patton, 1990) used for searching for meaning from the data.

The following sections report the common themes, which emerged from the interview data. Each section also presents a picture of some of differences between interviewees within these themes.

5.4 Findings from interviews about entry to HRD as career field

5.4.1 Entry to an occupational field

As was shown in Chapter 2, many studies of specific career fields or occupational groups have reported data about how individuals enter a specific field of occupational practice. This literature shows that entry into at least some occupational areas (e.g. for teachers, nurses, technicians) usually follows some sort of perceived interest about that area which often had originated in childhood or as a result of a desire to emulate an admired role model (e.g. Zabusky and Barley, 1996; Osterman, 1996; Maclean, 1992). Those whose interest then extends to seeking a career in the field usually complete a period of formal education or training from which they learn the basic requirements of the practice area. Such training may take place in some form of educational institution e.g. university or specialist college, and sometimes requires some supervised practice in the field in which basic mastery must be demonstrated before the individual gains professional qualifications. The award of a qualification from an educational institution in itself does not always license the graduate to move into practice. Practitioner licensing for many occupational areas is a process provided by a recognised registering body that has been established by the profession itself rather than by the educational institution providing the qualifying education and training for occupational aspirants. It should be noted, however, that most preparatory education program providers ensure that their programs meet the requirements of appropriate licensing bodies to ensure their graduates can in fact enter the profession following successful completion of formal studies in the educational institutions. This model of formal study and licensing for practice is closely associated with the development of professionals and their entry to professional fields of practice e.g. law, medicine, school teaching.

To some extent, a similar procedure is followed in the development of trades and crafts people. This should not be unexpected given that many of the so-called professions emerged originally from a trades/crafts base. Preparation of trades/ crafts practitioners, however, usually involves both an employment and an educational arrangement. The aspiring career entrant is employed by a master trades/craft practitioner who accepts responsibility for the development of the skills required for practice within the area by the learner/apprentice/ trainee. The new entrant to the field learns from working closely with a master

practitioner in a workplace setting and, as has evolved more recently, sometimes is required to complete some of the learning in an educational institution. On completion of the required learning the practitioner then can apply for a licence to practice from a recognised body and then begin work as a registered tradesperson.

In summary there are therefore usually consistent entry to professional/ occupational practice requirements for most professional and trade based occupations. These requirements can be a barrier for those without the required formal learning and accredited qualification, which entitles the holder to be registered by a professional or other body for practise in the field. Such a registration body also sometimes imposes a requirement for ongoing certification or continued professional development to ensure relevance and currency of practice skills.

5.4.2 Entry to the field of HRD -implications of unregulated field of practice

Entry to the field of human resource development or learning and development as practised in Australian organisations does not present those seeking a career in this field with barriers of the kind discussed above. This is an occupational field lacking a professional registration body. It is also a practice area not represented by any registered industrial body or other dedicated industry body dedicated specifically to the work of HRD such as the Australia Teachers' Federation, which represents teachers, or the Australian Medical Association, which represents doctors. Some HRD practitioners especially those working within the public sector are able to be covered by a range of unions e.g. the Public Service Association but this is not an industrial body which solely represents and protects members of this occupational area.

Human resource development is therefore essentially an area of organisational practice that is unregulated by any external body. In making this assertion it must be acknowledged that, as discussed in Chapter 2, from the mid 1990s what could be seen as a regulatory requirement was imposed on some aspects of practice in the field. This occurred as part of the then Federal Government's rethinking of the vocational education and training system which led to the opening up of the training market to private providers. To support this move there was seen to be a need for some form of regulation of those who provided such training to ensure quality of provision and consistency in the skills being

acquired by learners. As a consequence, governments and training bodies introduced a requirement that any individual providing training that resulted in the awarding of nationally recognised qualifications up to degree level should be qualified at least to the level of a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. This certificate was based on trainers being able to demonstrate competency in processes of workplace training and assessment as defined in a set of nationally recognised occupational standards. This requirement has led to the proliferation of public and private agencies providing training in Assessment and Workplace Training (Certificate IV) and/or services which have allowed for formal recognition of required competencies associated with this certificate which may have been previously acquired by the practitioner. There has been considerable questioning of the value to the professional field of this regulatory move (Johnston and Hawke, 2002(b); Smith, E., 2000; Hawke, 1998) and as discussed in Chapter 2, not all organisations or practitioners have required staff to be qualified in this way, particularly if they are not involved in the provision of accredited programs for employees (Harris, Simons and Bone, 2000).

While HRD, as an area of professional practice, is virtually unregulated, at the same time, it is an occupational area which is supported by a number of professional associations which provide development and networking opportunities for practitioners (e.g. Australian Institute of Training and Development; Australian Human Resources Institute). These associations have also played an increasingly important role in providing an impetus for the changing nature of this field of practice (Dunphy and Griffiths, 1998:122). Further, it is an area of professional practice for which aspiring members can prepare and current practitioners can update their skills. This is evident from the number of courses available in Australian universities and the TAFE College and private college system which can prepare or upskill practitioners for work in HR generally and HRD specifically as evidenced in University and other tertiary institution calendars and handbooks.

Despite the availability of these upskilling opportunities and specialist academic qualifications which could be seen as signs of this area of organisational practice professionalising (Thijjsen, 1988) the freedom to practise in the field in organisations remains virtually unregulated by any overarching body such as a professional association or body unless practitioners are delivering accredited courses. This is, however, not unlike many practice areas in organisations. For

example marketers, personnel/HR practitioners and some IT staff or managers are not legally required to hold specific qualifications for practice within the specific practice field in which they are working. Some employers, however, expect their employees to hold specific qualifications which may have been acquired from universities or other educational institutions or be licensed to operate specific programs e.g. computer training programs where licensing arrangements are held by the owner of program, personality testing programs, aptitude testing programs.

Such lack of regulation has a number of potential consequences for this area as a professional and career field. Some of these are discussed below:

1. There is not a clear coherent pathway into this field of practice that has been determined by a professional body or registering association or even an industrial association. This is very different to the closely related professional field of school teaching where there is a very clearly marked entry point. Such a lack of a consistency in entry point or pathway could be seen as a major cause of the field of HRD being seen as being without coherence as a career field and as lacking an orderly occupational structure.

2. Without a specific entry point or other career point markers there is also much less clarity as to what beginners in this field, and possibly more mature practitioners, may be expected to do within organisational settings. This may therefore contribute to the variation in the scope of models of practice pursued in organisations as discussed in Chapter 2.

3. There may also be much less knowledge about what constitutes HRD as an occupational area for those seeking to enter or progress within the field. As a consequence, therefore, it could be argued that planning for entry to or progression within this field may be less in evidence than in some other areas of occupational practice.

One of the issues investigated in this chapter is the way in which people entered the field. The following section of this chapter reports findings from interviews with HRD practitioners, which yield some insights into these issues.

5.4.3 Patterns of entry from the career stories of HRD practitioners

As could be expected given both the lack of regulation determining professional behaviour in this field of practice discussed above and the diversity of scope of practice in this occupational area as discussed in Chapter 2, stories told by practitioners reveal a range of entry patterns.

i) Entry following study in tertiary institution

One common pattern of entry to this field evident from the interviewees' career stories was through the completion of tertiary study which prepared these interviewees for future work in either occupational areas indirectly related to HRD such as teaching or social work, or disciplinary areas related to understanding human behaviour or behaviour in organisations e.g. sociology and psychology. While no interviewees with this entry pattern told an entry story that indicated that they had any coherently thought through plans of moving into HRD on leaving school or even on leaving university, their career stories show that they progressed into the field of HRD fairly easily after a period of time in either teaching of some form or research and project management.

Sylvia (Appendix 3: 12) for example described her entry as occurring as a result of her obtaining research contracts while completing her studies in psychology and social work through the university vocational guidance centre. She stated:

> Once I got my foot in the door of the corporation I did not have to apply again. After that they came back to me each year to do research for them.... It was research targeted around various initiatives they were putting through their HRD staff. There was some uneasiness about my being a bleeding heart social worker in the corporate arena and why wasn't I downstairs working in the employee assistance team. So I said that I considered the employee assistance program part of the overall HRD function. But that was not where I wanted to be. I wanted to work in the preventative end which is training and development and organisational development...(Sylvia)

Another interviewee (Emma, Appendix 3:8) also described her entry to this field from a research role she attained on leaving university, recalling a feeling of being thrown in at the "deep end" in completing her first HRD tasks.

She described her experience as follows:

> In my role as a researcher I was put in a role of revising all the training for new ... officers. He (her first manager) basically threw me in at the deep end so that's how I started. I wasn't allowed to bring in consultants initially. So I devised a program which included a week on human behaviour which I devised and wrote. I thought after all why not use my research skills to decide what should be done... (Emma)

ii) Entry following developing expertise in workplace skills/procedures
A second pattern which could be seen from the stories of the majority of interviewees was the pattern that showed practitioners moving into human resource development practice with no training or education in fields directly related to HRD but with skills in an area of technical/procedural expertise. These interviewees had entered the workforce from school or a short period of post-school training. Some in this group had indicated that they had initially hoped to pursue a teaching career on leaving school but for various reasons had not met entry requirements for such a career.

Interviewees in this group had developed a set of skills through work experiences in a range of areas including banking, transport and logistics, small business, travel procedures, security practice and computing programs through their work experiences in these areas. Most of the technical or procedural skill areas in which the interviewees were recognised as being expert, were, at the time when the interviewees acquired the skills, not associated with formal qualifications. The interviewees for the most part, however, were recognised for their expertise within specific technical areas by their employing organisations and were invited or requested to provide training/development opportunities for others in the organisations for which they were working. It was this technical expertise skill set rather than skills related to training or teaching that in fact provided the genesis of a career in HRD.

iii) Full time versus part time entry patterns

Sometimes this shift to some form of HRD practice happened initially almost informally and the individual did not see this as an area they specifically wanted to pursue full time immediately following the experience.

Maria, for example, acquired sets of business skills in logistics and the marketing of logistics organisations. When she sold her business, quite unexpectedly she was asked to advise other businesses in her industry and to help them in the process of upskilling of their staff using the new processes and procedures she was recommending. While she enjoyed this process and was successful, several years and other life circumstances intervened before she re-assessed where she was going. She then deliberately sought out a position that allowed her to help others in small business and to train small business people and their staff in work skills (Appendix 3:1).

Amy and Susan also provided training and development programs in their areas of specialisation but initially did not leave their organisations to seek full time work in this field even though they enjoyed their part-time efforts in HRD (Appendix 3; 7 and 11).

Susan (Appendix 3:11), for example, who was in a senior clerical/HR role in small electrical manufacturing organisation had her first HRD experience delivering a computer training course to staff across her organisation. She described her entry to the field as follows:

> When I was in the HR role I suggested to the Director at the time I would run a program on a computer program being used in the organisation and I put together the work book and actually ran the program and thoroughly enjoyed it (Susan)

Susan only made the move to full time HRD when the organisation in which she had done her first training work relocated in another state. Having to change organisations was a catalyst for Susan seeking employment in an organisation that could ultimately afford her a career in HRD.

Amy also made her entry to the field on a part-time basis. Quite early in her career when she was working in the aviation industry she ran programs initially in a procedural area after her normal workday. She stated about her work at this time:

> I had no training qualifications whatsoever. I was one of those people that the employer said 'because you can do it (the procedure) well just do the training'. Somehow I seemed to be able to do it quite well not knowing what I was doing and I eventually started running after hours workshops for people because I wasn't happy with the training they were getting, and we weren't paid for it, but people were coming along to my workshops. (Amy)

iv) Almost accidental entry versus planned and keenly sought entry

For several respondents the move into this field would have seemed almost not predictable. Alana (Appendix 3:9) stated that her entry to the field came as she was trying to gain some work experience while she was studying in the behavioural sciences area so she could become a psychologist. She stated:

> I wasn't aware of consultants or HRD at that time but I became a group leader for the stress management program being conducted as part of a Department of Health's Healthy Lifestyle program, with a view that this would help me in my psych work. While I was conducting this program people would say to me "You ought to come into our organisation and talk to people in our organisation about this." (Alana)

Paul's entry into this field may also have seemed unlikely. He, for example, cited an example when he was presenting material at school, which led him to believe teaching of any sort was not for him as "everyone in the class was asleep" (Appendix 3:10). Similarly Cecily's memories of school were certainly such that in her mid teens she wanted to avoid a learning/teaching situation (Appendix 3:4). Both these practitioners, however, made the move into a "development" role almost accidentally and then very actively sought to work in this field albeit initially using their technical skills as a base for their first human resource development practice.

Cecily made this shift when bored with her role as secretarial service provider. She realised that there was a market in providing classes for those seeking to use certain computer programs. As a result she set up classes for some of the clerical clients. Her experience "moonlighting" gave her "the buzz" she was not

getting from her day job which led fairly rapidly to her seeking to move into this field full time.

Paul's shift into a development role was initially through his work as an agricultural extension officer. In this role he provided agricultural engineering advice and training to farmers.

Others interviewed for this study entered the field of HRD full time having developed a reputation for excellence in their professional practice. They then were invited or selected for positions within the organisations in which they were working which allowed them to formally teach or arrange the development of a similar or required skill set in others. One participant who could be seen as typifying this category of practitioners in terms of entry to the field had an experience in the training area and deliberately sought to move into this area full time. John (Appendix 3:6) described how he moved into the field as follows:

> I went to my first supervisors' course at the organisation's training facility. It was one of the best experiences I had had. I thoroughly enjoyed it and the interaction with the trainers. And at that time I made a decision that was what I wanted to do, so, for the next 6 months I harassed and harangued my manager to nominate me for an opportunity to go to the training department. (John)

This pathway usually was possible where the interviewee at time of entry was working for a large organisation that had a comparatively well-developed HRD function.

The interviews can be seen then as yielding the following findings about entry to the field of HRD.

Firstly, the interviews show that entrance to this field can be made as either a full time commitment or through a part time or temporary commitment to this area of practice. Neither starting position stopped interviewees ultimately from pursuing a career in this field. While some entrants to this field made a full time commitment to a role in HRD almost at the start of their career in HRD, for others, the entry to the field was more tentative with their HRD practice being sporadic. The difference in entry patterns is perhaps partially explained by

the opportunities provided within the organisations for which the individuals were working when they made their first foray into this field. Some workplaces provided an opportunity for the full time commitment: other organisations did not. When there was little opportunity for ongoing HRD practice, the interviewee invariably had ultimately moved to another organisation to gain the full time experience.

Secondly, findings show that entry to the field can be made consciously and as a planned event, or can come almost accidentally through happenstance. In summary, some made an entry to the field having very consciously sought out the opportunity to practise in the area, whereas others entered the field almost by accident having been asked to provide a training or development program.

Thirdly, the interviewees certainly show that entry to their career was by various pathways. For some it was closely related to the type of learning they had done as part of their formal post school education. Such learning had both directly and indirectly prepared them for HRD as a career. For others initial entry was mainly the result of informal learning of procedures and techniques they had learned while on the job. Hence the knowledge base was not about the processes of learning but the product needing to be delivered.

5.5 Findings from stories about transitions in HRD Careers

5.5.1 Overview of studies of career transitions

Many investigations of specific occupational areas, of careers of individuals, as well as studies of careers in general, examine how individual members of an occupational group move between jobs within that career field. Put another way, these studies examine the possible transitions individuals can make between jobs without leaving the professional or occupational field even though they may move between jobs or change employers. In making such an examination, many researchers reveal not only a picture or what Slocum (1966) referred to as the "career lines" of individuals, they also reveal additional insights about the structure of an occupation and the career opportunity structures within an occupation field within a given time frame (Dowling and Fisher, 1997; Osterman, 1996; Maclean, 1992). Attempts to examine or codify such career lines when studied across a number of practitioners in a field

therefore yield insights about possible career patterns available within an occupational field.

Perhaps the most commonly studied career lines in career research have been the clearly delineated lines comprising the positions through which individuals can be promoted within an occupation or within an organisation. Studies of this kind are often referred to as studies of vertical mobility within an occupational field or organisation. A second aspect of career mobility sometimes studied is horizontal mobility. Horizontal mobility is possible when an organisation or occupation or career field offers opportunities for incumbents to move between positions not in search of promotion but in order to find a work environment and/or work role more to their liking.

In some occupations both the vertical and horizontal elements of the career field are very transparent and these offer their incumbents the possibility of highly structured and orderly careers. This was and, to some extent remains, particularly true when work careers are built within bureaucratic organisations (Glaser, 1968, 1964) or for those in the traditional professions or relatively high status occupations (Jackson, 1970). Career moves in such career fields are rarely completely random as individuals generally seek out and follow established career lines. Careers in defences forces, paramilitary organisations, government departments, or large corporate organisations both in terms of specific career lines within functions and across the whole organisations could be seen as being characterised by a structured and ordered patterning.

Other occupations, however, are not necessarily characterised by consistency, regularity or orderliness in career lines. Some writers have referred to the patterns that emerge as being "messy" (Van Maanen, 1977). This is certainly the case in new and emerging occupations or occupations enacted in non-bureaucratic organisations or in organisations with non-traditional structures.

There was little evidence in the literature as discussed in Chapter 2 of an investigation of career lines or career patterns available to HRD practitioners. Interviews with practitioners completed for this component of the research project, however, certainly provide some insights into this dimension of this career field.

5.5.2 *Career transition stories of HRD practitioners*

Findings from all interviews clearly indicate that this is a field of practice in which there are opportunities for mobility. All interviewees in this study indicated that they had made some structural transitions in their HRD career following entry to this career field. Such moves can be seen in Table 5.1 at the beginning of this chapter. Generally, and perhaps not unexpectedly, those interviewed who had had the longest time within the career field and who had worked as HRD employees in organisations rather than as HRD consultants for organisations, tended to have made more career moves than those who had only been in practice for a shorter period of time. It should also be noted that some of those interviewed who had been in practice for a longer time, while they had made more moves than those with less experience, also had spent more time within specific organisations and roles than those with little experience.

Career moves identified by interviewees included:

i) Moves to other positions in HRD within the same organisation.

ii) Moves or transitions to HRD positions in other organisations or to a different industry.

iii) Moves between organisations into roles that required the practitioner to carry out other technical/ functional roles as well as an HRD role.

iv) Moves out of organisations to sole operator HRD consultancy practice roles.

Some evidence of each type of transition gained from interviews with practitioners is discussed below.

i) Moves to other positions in HRD within the same organisation.
Moves within the same organisations usually occurred when interviewees were working in large bureaucratic organisations which obviously supported larger HRD units and hence the organisation afforded participants or employees opportunities for horizontal mobility. Some participants in the study had made moves of both kinds.

To illustrate, a description of some of the moves or transitions made by participants in this study follows.

John, for example, had worked in at least two organisations in which he had moved positions within the HRD function. While he had made such career moves within organisations, he essentially was involved in the same type of work, engaging with the same model of practice but working with different content areas, in different geographic locations and with different audiences with each internal move. In some of these moves John was moving upwards on a career ladder in that with some of these moves he was responsible for supervising staff. On other occasions, he made transitions that could be seen as horizontal transitions in that his move did not elevate his status or position in the organisation (Appendix 3:6).

Similarly, Elizabeth while only in HRD practice for five years had had two different positions within the field within her organisation. Elizabeth also was working for a large public sector organisation with a well-developed HRD/ training function (Appendix 3:5).

Susan also had had three different positions within one organisation. In her case however two moves had been vertical moves requiring different work practices and the acquisition of increased organisational status, and one had been a lateral/horizontal move (Appendix 3:11).

She described her transitions as follows:

> From then on for about two years I was promoted to Associate Manager and I was starting to write programs myself. In this role I was working with a wider and more senior range of staff members and I was trying to put together manuals of substance. I was then promoted into Corporate Training Manager position with responsibility for training in the whole corporate function (Susan).

ii) Moves or transitions to HRD positions in other organisations or to a different industry

The transitions made by other interviewees also involved moving to different industry sectors. Sometimes such moves saw the interviewee carrying out a role that was similar to his or her preceding role: on other occasions the

interviewee was carrying out an HRD role with a different role scope to that of the previous position he or she had held.

Emma, for example, moved from working as staff development officer within the public sector, to working with a community sector organisation developing group leaders and committee members. This was followed by a position in which she organised sales training in the IT sector and then to a role when she managing the training function within the food manufacturing industry. Her next move was to an executive development role in the finance industry. Not only was she able to effect transitions between various industry sectors, she also was able to carry out roles with their relatively different role scopes as part of this transition process. In some positions, as she progressed through her career, she had management responsibility for a small number of staff. On other occasions she accepted positions without direct management of staff responsibility but with greater accessibility to senior members in the organisations and hence possibly more strategic influence (Appendix 3:8).

Cecily (Appendix 3:4) also effected moves between industry sectors. She made her first foray from a small business, clerical service base into working with a larger provider of computer training. This was followed with work in an HRD role in a manufacturing organisation working firstly in HR systems for a short period of time and then into an HRD co-ordination role. She then moved into a project management/consulting role with an IT/ sales organisation. In this final position she was involved in helping the business analyse its business systems and streamline the business tasks as well as providing training using specific technology to help educate organisational members in the process. Cecily described an example of her work at the time of interview stating:

> The best day I had out of this project was when management took on my suggestions. I put together a whole formula of how they work as a team and a strategy and some of the managers actually took hold of this idea and it turned around their business. It was that they were changing their business and it was my ideas that had created the change (Cecily).

Donald also made transitions. Initially working in counsellor development in the public sector he moved into private sector HRD work by joining a multinational organisation predominantly working in the construction area. In

this position in the commercial sector Donald was involved initially in designing interpersonal skills training programs for trainees. Very quickly, however, the role evolved into a management development/organisational improvement role and from this position Donald made a move to another multinational company managing the organisation development function in Australia (Appendix 3:2).

Sylvia also made a number of moves between HRD positions within different organisations and in different sectors. She, for example, moved between development roles within public utility organisations, into financial services organisations and with organisations in the cultural industries sector (Appendix 3:11).

iii) Moves between organisations into roles, which required the practitioner to carry out other technical/ functional roles as well as an HRD role.
Several respondents discussed career transitions that saw them only partially in a development role. John, for example, initially moved into HRD work in the bank. His role, however, was only temporary and after several years he returned to general banking before he moved to HRD in the retail sector. Some of John's positions in the retail industry required him to take on roles that were a combination of sales and training roles (Appendix 3:6). Alana also discussed at least two positions where she saw her role as being primarily about selling HRD programs. These positions provided her with only a small amount of training delivery/HRD work (Appendix 3:9).

iv) Moves out of organisations into HRD consultancy practice roles
Several respondents also moved from organisational employment as HRD practitioners to operating as HRD consultants contracting their HRD services into organisations. Sometimes interviewees worked in consultancy organisations. At other times they worked as single owner operators although on some occasions they partnered or joined with other practitioners for larger jobs. For example, both Amy and Alana (Appendix 3:7,9) discussed their moves into consultancy roles as starting with an agreement to work within consulting organisations. Both later in their careers moved on to working as independent consultants.

5.5.3 Reasons for career movements

Transitions in interviewees' careers occurred for a variety of reasons. These included:

i) Organisational restructuring

Some career transitions reported by interviewees resulted from restructuring by their employing organisation. John, for example made several forced moves as a result of internal organisational restructuring. He also made moves fearing the possibility of redundancy resulting from further organisational downsizing and restructuring (Appendix 3:6). Cecily also was confronted with retrenchment resulting from one organisational restructuring which led to moving to another employer (Appendix 3:4). Emma made similar moves when two of her employing organisations were restructured (Appendix 3:8). Paul, at the end of his career, accepted retrenchment resulting from restructuring. This retrenchment allowed him to move into a consultancy role where he contracted services back to his previous employer (Appendix 3:10).

ii) New opportunities, new pastures

Elizabeth's transitions were made when she actively sought opportunities to work within other areas of HRD offered by her organisations that were perceived to have higher status. She was consciously seeking opportunities to broaden her skill base and experience and gain a position with higher status if not a formal promotion. In moving from technical training to management development she was following a career line or career opportunities which existed within her organisation (Appendix 3:5). Similarly, one of John's moves provided him with a broader skill base in that, while working essentially in the same sector as his first position in training, he was working with different audiences and new products (Appendix 3:6).

Likewise one of Donald's moves resulted from being invited to take on a larger role. At the time he was thinking about how he could restructure the existing role he held in the organisation. Donald was ready for new opportunities (Appendix 3, 2). Paul also very actively sought a move away for what had been his area of specialisation in agriculture into a corporate role that would allow him to, he hoped, work in the areas of organisational change and strategic approaches to HRD. While he admitted the role he ultimately gained did not

always allow him to undertake as much organisational change work as he would have hoped, he remained with it for 18 years (Appendix 3:10).

iii) Dissatisfaction with work role/ employer work climate

In line with Dawis' thinking several of the interviewees made career moves to different organisations because of a level of dissatisfaction with the HRD position in which they were employed. John made at least one career move because of conflict with a work colleague (Appendix 3:6). Donald (Appendix 3:2) moved because he was dissatisfied with the broader political climate in which he was expected to work. He stated:

> I thought there is more to life than doing all this hack work for politicians for whom I didn't have a great deal of respect so I was feeling a bit restless and I just spotted an advertisement for an education something. (Donald).

Frances also moved from one employer because she was dissatisfied with her work environment (Appendix 3: 3). Similarly, Sylvia was about to seek a move because of tension in her workplace when a move by her partner provided her with the opportunity to move abroad and seek new forms of employment in the field (Appendix 3:12). Furthermore, Maria (Appendix 3:1) chose to move out of an organisation and work as a single owner operator because she disliked the internal climate of the public sector organisation in which she was working. She said of one of her workplaces from which she made a move:

> I loathed and detested the culture of the place. It was very much an old boy's network. I was the only woman business adviser and the men did not like you level pegging with them and I found I did not like working with anybody else but myself. (Maria).

Similarly Amy (Appendix 3: 7) described one of the moves she made was out of a feeling of being exploited. She stated:

> I started thinking I am doing an awful lot of work here for virtually nothing and he as partner is doing nothing but selling me ... You see I'd never had put a value on myself before as an employee .... Knowing that most people undervalue themselves I said to him I wanted 70% of what he sold me for. He said "your not worth that

much" I thought I was and that's where my husband and a couple of friends said "your being ripped off" (Amy).

As a result of this experience Amy moved into consultancy for herself.

iv) Other-than -work experiences

Several career stories also revealed that some career transitions were made for "other -than -work reasons". For example, approximately one third of the interviewees moved position as a result of job transitions made by their partners that led to interviewees moving interstate or overseas. Sometimes such moves or changes in interviewees' careers, driven by family circumstances, were moves or changes that interviewees saw as benefiting their own careers. Donald described his move into the private sector as being possible because his partner was in employment which allowed him a freedom to take risks with his own career (Appendix 3:2). Sylvia described several moves she made as resulting from interstate or overseas posting received by her partner that opened new doors for her and allowed her to take her career in new directions and into new industries (Appendix 3:12). Similarly Elizabeth's move into training/HRD was at least in part occasioned by her need for a position with regular hours for family reasons (Appendix 3:5). Likewise Maria indicated it was the death of her husband that led to her considering where she was and assessing what she wanted to do (Appendix 3:1). Some of the career transitions made by Frances early in her career because of her husband's employment opportunities resulted in her gaining positions which she was later able to build on in establishing her career in HRD (Appendix 3:3).

5.5.4 Career lines/ career patterns in the field of HRD as shown through practitioners' transitions

What does such evidence suggest about this as a career field? Firstly, from the data there is evidence that HRD is a field of practice that affords incumbents considerable mobility. Individuals, once they have entered the field, can move around in this field into different positions if they are working within larger organisations. They can also move into HRD positions in different organisations. The interviews also revealed that movement between industry sectors is possible for HRD practitioners.

Most often, the structural, or what have also been referred to as objective or external, moves or transitions made by interviewees in this study could be seen

as being horizontal transitions. There was however also some evidence of vertical transitions with interviewees moving to positions of higher status, or to positions giving interviewees greater autonomy or involving team leadership. These mobility patterns indicate that HRD as a career field does have a vertical structure as well as a structure that allows for horizontal mobility. Interviewees moved from positions with labels such as training practitioner, training associate, and staff development officer to training co-ordinator or team manager. Interestingly, in telling their stories only a few interviewees referred to their transitions as promotions in their career even though some had taken on jobs which were obviously promotions given that the new positions had provided these interviewees with more responsibility and greater accountability. In some cases such upwardly oriented transitions did not necessarily involve managing a team. In several examples interviewees moved into positions that gave them greater accessibility to organisational leaders and hence sometimes more strategic influence. This type of movement in some ways parallels comments in Chapter 2 by Zabusky and Barley (1996) about careers of achievement.

Donald (Appendix 3:2) describes a move he was attempting to effect in an organisation as a role that was what he referred to as a politically influencing role. He stated:

> I put together a new role, a politically influencing role, not just one of power over people but it was to be a central role where you help to implement the non-negotiables sent down from the Board that deal with people issues. You would have helped them dealing systematically, drawing on and acting as an adviser to the network and the various centres in Australian and overseas. You would bring the centres together and look at creating common agendas looking at interest and synergies in line with the non-negotiables. (Donald)

While these findings reveal that the two mobility dimensions exist within the field what is more interesting is that there are opportunities to move within the field to different types of practice.

Virtually all interviewees had made transitions that required them to work with different types of HRD practice. As a result the career transitions interviewees made had broadened the scope of their practice repertoire. This

pattern of interviewees attaining a broader scope of practice is illustrated in the following examples.

Cecily moved from being a computer program instructor to developing HRD programs for the rolling out of a new computing system in a sales organisation, and in the process helped in the analysis of the business systems utilised within the organisation (Appendix 3:4). Donald moved from counselling to management development (Appendix 3:2), Amy moved from training in travel procedures, through to provision of hospitality training, to mentoring and coaching small business operators for small business (Appendix 3:7). Emma moved from training beginners in a human services industry to executive development practice (Appendix 3, 8).

These transitions would suggest that once practitioners move into HRD it is possible for them to move into different spheres of practice and as a result have different practice experiences and learn different practice skills. In discussing the movement between positions only two participants talked about the need for any specific content upskilling even though a number completed more formal programs of study as part of their ongoing careers. Transitions between positions rarely seemed directly linked to a special qualification although all respondents had over the duration of their career, if not before they entered the field, completed undergraduate studies and some had completed postgraduate studies.

Qualifications were only directly mentioned by three interviewees as assisting in their career transition. In one case the acquisition of a specialist Diploma in HRD allowed the interviewee to acquire an HRD position within the organisation to which she had moved. In the second case the interviewee had completed postgraduate studies which helped her understand the cultural industries more completely and offer services to these industries both in Australia and overseas. Secondly this interviewee referred to a model of leadership development she had designed and explored in her doctoral studies as providing her with the basis for leadership development programs that she currently was providing as a consultant to the corporate sector.

There was, however, more evidence of interviewees, having found themselves in new positions, seeking out extra qualifications to support their career moves. Most often the qualifications they sought at this stage were directly related to

HRD practice but sometimes, particularly if the interviewees held undergraduate degrees directly related to HRD, the studies pursued were to strengthen the interviewees' awareness of industry in which they were working.

Thus qualifications are not essential to pursue a career line or position in HRD although all interviewees had undertaken formal study at some stage of their career in the field. The career line seems to start for most HRD practitioners from their an area of technical specialty even amongst those who entered the field with degrees or studies in fields related to training and development. From the area of specialisation that interviewees have gained through study or through work experience, they have then moved into other HRD positions where they have worked with a different audiences and different content. As a consequence the practitioners have broadened their knowledge, skill repertoire and practice flexibility. Several interviewees talked about the learning curve associated with the transitions they had made, but the learning curve they discussed was often more about learning to operate more strategically, or with an increased commercial or business focus, rather than in terms of learning new skills in program development or delivery.

In talking about career transitions, several practitioners talked about moving into positions where they were confronted with different models of practice. Elizabeth for example, discussed plans being made in her organisation for the management development unit to take on a performance consulting model of HRD practice, which began when she moved from a technical training unit into the management development unit. She saw this change in practice model used within her new unit as necessary to ensure the survival of the unit within her organisation (Appendix 3:5). Several other interviewees also reported a need for them to gain an understanding of different models of practice. Most commonly mentioned was a need for these practitioners to develop more business oriented or strategic focus as they moved through positions. Donald (Appendix 3:2) particularly discussed his shift into the commercial sector as providing him with an opportunity to develop an approach with his staff that was less dependent on delivery of a menu of courses when he stated:

> A lot of my work was core consulting work where the client might end up with a document that helped them implement a system say

> performance management, career development rather than recommending the group involved attend a course.

Paul similarly discussed how he deliberately sought to move into corporate HRD where he worked, to some extent, with a new more strategic model of practice. As his career progressed Paul worked mainly with senior level managers in driving a strategic approach to development, especially as line managers in his organisation took on more responsibility for basic training (Appendix 3:10).

Frances (Appendix 3:3) also discussed how she broadened her skill scope with a move to the position she was in at time of interview. She stated of the changes:

> It was a curriculum job at first. When I first arrived, competency standards for my industry had not even been referenced. So I moved onto the national committee as my organisation's representative. That was a fantastic experience for me. I would not have had that opportunity in my previous position. It was clearly very industrially complex and I learned a lot about the validity of the educational argument versus the requirement of the industrial argument. From that Training Packages emerged. Training Packages provided what I thought at a strategic level, was a fantastic direction for us. When I came here I found thousands of courses unrelated in any way to career paths.

As a consequence of these experiences, Frances, as an HRD manager, took on the task of building a qualifications framework which encompassed all courses based on training packages as well as other courses offered within her organisation which were linked to career progression.

5.6 Consistent experiences across HRD careers

Examining the nature of the interviewees' HRD practice also has the potential to provide some insights about the degree of consistency in careers in this occupation. A coherent career field could be expected to have considerable consistency in workplace practice or workplace experiences for those who work in the field. As indicated in Chapter 2 of this dissertation this is a field that is

characterised in the literature by diversity. It lacks, as evidenced in this literature, consistency in definition, philosophical and theoretical base and scope of practice. To some extent such inconsistency can be seen in the career stories presented by practitioners. For example, at the time of interview, all were working in different occupations and industries. They all had different role titles. However, some consistencies can also be seen from the stories interviewees told. These consistencies contribute to a picture revealing some coherence in HRD as a career field. Some of these consistencies are discussed below.

5.6.1 Consistency in early practice experiences

There is evidence of considerable consistency in how the interviewees experienced their early HRD practice. All interviewees in this research reported amongst their early experiences that they were responsible for some presentation and facilitation of training and learning programs. For most, quite expectedly as discussed in previous sections in this chapter, this presentation and facilitation of learning started with presenting learning and development programs in an area of their own expertise. To illustrate: Cecily and Susan were expert in computing and computing programs; Amy, John, Maria, Paul were expert in procedures associated with their specific work enterprise; Frances and Donald had professional expertise as educators and then were recognised as having expertise in areas of curriculum and counselling (Appendix 3:4, 11,7,1,10). Alana and Sylvia moved into the human resource development field as they sought to apply the knowledge they were gaining from their studies in psychology (Appendix 3 9,12). Thus first attempts in the field of HRD were in areas of interviewees' acknowledged expertise and resulted from their being recognised in their workplace for excellence in a technical procedural area or as a result of their knowledge base. Their early work in this area involved designing and for most part delivering what could be seen as traditional classroom-based training programs.

Many of the interviewees refer to the successful experiences they had in delivering these early programs even though they were not really sure of what they should be doing. Inexperience did not prevent them taking on tasks. In discussions about their early training and development experiences many interviewees discussed learning some skills from others with whom they were working.

Susan (Appendix 3, 11), for example, discussed completing formal studies in training and development but also attempting to learn how to do it by watching her boss.

> My first position in the field was really administrative – coming to grips with all the paperwork – using my computer skills to actually develop programs that the manager wanted. But I am fairly ambitious and knew I could do a more training oriented role so every time my boss trained I used to sit at the back of the room and watch him and learn that way. (Susan).

Paul (Appendix 3,10) also cited early work colleagues "who raised my awareness about training methods that might work more effectively and gave me some confidence".

Further, Emma discussed learning facilitation skills from an expert with whom she was working and Frances referred to a range of fellow work colleagues who assisted her firstly in her teaching role and then as she moved into other HRD related roles (Appendix 3:8,3).

Sylvia also acknowledged the importance of some of her supervisors in assisting in her career development, discussing several of her managers who "created opportunities and options for me to utilize my potential better" (Appendix 3:12).

5.6.2 Consistency in experiences resulting from transitions and growing maturity in the field

Interviewees' understandings about the boundaries to the field of HRD practice along with the HRD work experiences they enjoyed or wished to have, seemed to have shifted as they gained some maturity in practising in the field. As discussed in section 4.6.2. (Career transition stories of HRD practitioners), as the careers of all the practitioners interviewed for this study progressed they all developed a broader repertoire of practice skills and had a broader occupational role scope. Even the practitioner who had comparatively little experience in the field when she was interviewed for this study discussed her desire and efforts to move to broader areas of HRD practice than the area in which she first started

her HRD/training practice. Elizabeth describes how she had wished to move and eventually did move to management development training, a move that gave her more exposure in the organisation and a broader scope of practice (Appendix 3:5). Some of the career stories that illustrate this broadening of practice boundaries follow.

Cecily, for example, moved from delivering computer training on packages to a general HR and then an HRD co-ordinator role. This later role equipped her to deliver leadership training (Appendix 3:4).

John also broadened his base, moving from delivering programs focussed on procedures used in his banking organisation to "train the trainer" type training. He then moved into customer service training working for another employer. His career with this employer moved into designing and delivering training in a range of substantive areas and in a range of different organisational functions (Appendix 3:6).

Amy made an effective transition between delivering training related to one set of procedures used in the industry in which she was working to developing capacity to deliver training in a range of sets of competency required by this industry. This also allowed her to move into areas of customer service when she moved into the hospitality industry. This was broadened further into general tourism marketing by the time she had moved back and forward in and out of the aviation industry and the hospitality industry (Appendix 3:7).

Susan's (Appendix 3:11) comments illuminate this aspect of career that could be seen as characterising careers of most of practitioners interviewed when she stated:

> I now work within a broader range of context and audiences. One of the things that I really like is the number of programs we haven't done before.

Similarly, Paul (Appendix 3:10), as he approached the end of his career, referred to the variation in practice available to those in this field that was possible even when he had remained in one organisation for a long period of time. He stated:

> It's approximately 18 years since I went there but there were always things changing and I was in a company that was fairly up with things so you could move from one thing to the other. In fact you were developing new things and trying things out again and it was interesting.

5.6.3 Consistency in the way HRD practice approaches changed

The preceding section indicates that there is a degree of consistency in the way the scope of practice of HRD practitioners or, at least those interviewed, broadened over the development of their careers. A further consistency can be seen in the shift in HRD methods or practice approaches which were utilised by practitioners as their careers matured. One of the most obvious shifts in methodology that is apparent in most interviewees' reports is the change from a transmission -oriented approach to a more interactive approach.

Maria (Appendix 3:1) for example argued:

> I have changed much more from delivering information to trying to make it a lot more interactive.

Alana (Appendix 3:9) also refers to this shift describing it as follows:

> Quite a bit of my practice is still classroom based but what actually takes place in the classroom has changed a lot. The early days were about the giving of information in classroom mode, that evolved to sharing of information, to participants bringing in information and working with their information and you facilitate as opposed to present. You are also more about going around and interviewing managers about work, having focus groups. Now it has to be business related where as in the early days it was about running a training course. Today it's about how does it tie into business results. (Alana)

Elizabeth also reports moving to a more interactive facilitative style (Appendix 3:5).

A number of respondents also report moving from classroom based training and development sessions to other forms which foster learning. Donald, for example suggested that, particularly in one organisation, he really tried to move his practice and that of his team, away from the provision of a calendar or menu of courses and away from development being a "course attendance" mentality (Appendix 3:2). He said:

> A lot of my work was core consulting work where the client might gain an output that was a document that helped them do, for example, performance management or career development with people. (Donald)

Much of Amy's later work moved into mentoring and coaching activities where she worked on a one to one basis with clients as well as working within traditional training and development frameworks (Appendix 3: 7).

Many of the roles Frances assumed after leaving a teaching role required her to develop conceptual frameworks in the type of training and development required for an industry or for the projects with which she was involved (Appendix 3:3).

Sylvia also reports shifts in her work as she has matured in the professional field (Appendix 3:12). Talking of her private consultancy practice Sylvia stated:

> I only engage in projects that are long and deep. I don't do training programs- I haven't for a decade. I only engage in learning and development processes for individual organisational change.

The work Sylvia now seeks to undertake involves being able to "transfer the HR process or to do a skills transfer absolutely across and in the organisation" and to embed it if not in the practitioners, then at least in the organisational system and in the organisational culture.

This variation in processes reported by practitioners parallels the changes that have been reported in the literature of a shift from face-to-face training to other forms of development (e.g. CCH, 2002; Johnston, 2001; Sofo, 1999; Kostos, 1998; McGlagan, 1999). It may also be a consequence of difference in the types of organisations and client groups with whom the interviewees were working.

The interview data showed that most practitioners reported doing less face to face training later in their career than they had done in their early years of work practice especially those who had taken on a HRD manager role. There was, however, still evidence that most of the interviewees still did some design and presentation of training sessions even though they were also using different modes within this framework.

5.7 Offshore experiences

A further consistency in experience that has also started to emerge in career stories of practitioners is that many of them have had work practice experience which involves either delivering development courses or working with off-shore HRD practitioners or in locations overseas. Several of the respondents worked in the Asia Pacific division of multinational organisations and so frequently attended meetings and presented strategic reports with others from the Asian Pacific countries. Some others work or had worked with branches of their organisation based in the UK and New Zealand. Some of the consultants interviewed had accepted contracts to work offshore on a short time basis. This shift, involving more extensive off-shore work, potentially reflects the changing nature of organisations and the impact of the globalising economy. It, however, also indicates the need in the preparation and ongoing development of practitioners for some form of training in intercultural understanding. Such a position is also emerging in some of the literature about practice in this field.

5.8.Consistency in skills acquisition

Another dimensions of investigating the degree of coherency in this occupational area as a career field involves examination of how practitioners had acquired skills and knowledge for practice. It is well recognised that construction of knowledge is mediated by the social and cultural contexts in which learning is taking place and the socially and culturally derived norms of the community of practice (Lave, 1990; Lave and Wenger, 1991). The skilling process for many occupations therefore is shaped formally and informally by the community of occupational practice and this process in turn partially contributes to formation of the culture of an occupation. Hence this skilling

process is closely associated with the development of an occupational identity. Practitioners in most professional fields are seen to gain consistent knowledge about their field of practice when undertaking their initial training. This is often undertaken in a cohort group with the group having consistent experience as part of their entry to the occupation (McLean, 1992). As discussed earlier, the lack of consistent entry point or qualification could be seen in part as contributing to some lack of coherence in this field. Human resource development practitioners do not gain their initial preparation from an educational institution as a cohort group. Similarly they rarely enter this area as a practice field with a group of other entry level practitioners. Despite this relatively "unregulated" entry learning requirement, there is some consistency shown through interviews about how interviewees acquire skills to practise in this area.

Firstly, in all cases in this research study, practitioners had completed undergraduate degree studies in some disciplinary area. This finding suggests that at least some practitioners in the field of HRD attempt to gain tertiary qualifications while working in this occupational area, if not before entering the field of practice. Those who studied before entering the workforce had a variety of qualifications. The main qualification gained as pre HRD employment qualification was an Arts degree although several interviewees had completed education degrees. The remainder of the cluster had completed tertiary studies, usually in Adult Education or Social Work by the time of interview, that is after they had entered both the workforce and HRD practice. This undergraduate qualification sometimes, however, had followed completion of other forms of formal training e.g. secretarial studies, human resource certificates and diplomas or agricultural certificates. Some had begun their studies for this area of practice by completing a Certificate IV in Assessment and Work Place Training as discussed earlier in this chapter. While there has been much criticism of this qualification particularly when it is seen as the base level qualification for practice in the field (e.g. Chappell, 2000; Childs, 2000, 1997), this qualification had led several interviewees into further undergraduate level studies. Half of the 12 practitioners interviewed had completed post graduate studies usually in Education, although one had completed postgraduate studies in English literature, another in Psychology and one in Communication Management, one in Arts Management and one in Criminology. One had gone on to complete a Graduate Diploma in Business Management in a bid to better

understand the functioning of the commercial sector, and one interviewee had completed a Doctorate in Leadership Studies.

Interestingly while all practitioners had pursued academic studies after entering this field of practice only a small number specifically mentioned their formal studies as informing or even challenging their practice. Several did mention their studies confirmed what they did in practice. Where there was, however, considerable consistency was in the number of interviewees who referred to learning from individual people they had either met or worked with while enacting their career. Susan refers to a manager from whom she attempted to learn. She eventually decided that his way of training was not suitable for her (Appendix 3:11). Elizabeth referred to a colleague who assisted her (Appendix 3: 5). She stated:

> One of the guys who was in training was really supportive and a good guide and a good friend. We really worked well together. (Elizabeth)

Emma referred to a colleague from whom she had learned facilitation skills (Appendix 3:8). Frances referred to individuals that had either inspired her or from whom she had learned specific skills that she was still using from almost all of the positions that she had held (Appendix 3:3) John referred to specific colleagues he had known, particularly in his early days of training, from whom he had learned (Appendix 3:6). Paul made mention of people with whom he had worked, and others whom he had met in other professional groups, and from whom he had learned or who challenged his thinking about ways of practice (Appendix 3:10). It was obvious from the transcripts that some interviewees had been informally mentored by the individuals they mentioned. In no situation had this mentoring relationship been formally established and in most cases the learning relationship has been relatively short term usually occurring quite early in the career of interviewees.

Another area of relative consistency is the reference made by interviewees to their learning from networks and/or professional groups of which they were members. Elizabeth (Appendix 3:5) discussed a network she attended stating:

> I attend meetings for the Forum regularly. I was meeting people from other organisations and talking about training issues and national issues. That was a launching group and it was free and I attended a lot

> of those meetings and that broadened my outlook as well and helped me look at new ways of doing things. (Elizabeth)

Susan formed her own networking group. She was seeking specific information from HRD practitioners from like industries and so contacted a range of people from these industries (Appendix 3:11). Emma had been very actively involved with a professional association throughout her career until her last position (Appendix 3:8). Paul referred to learning from work colleagues and from fellow students in graduate studies he completed, and working with a professional association.

Several particularly referred to work experiences from which they had learned.

Elizabeth for instance stated:

> A couple of years ago I had a secondment and I found that was a key learning experience for me. In that time I learned what management prerogatives were and what it was like to work to deadlines and to be driven by the CEO and by events in Parliament. In this role I also worked with someone who is very, very good in HRD and she is very proficient and I learned a great deal. (Elizabeth, Appendix 3:5)

Alana (Appendix 3: 9) learned particularly from an experience she had when working offshore. She stated:

> The biggest learning curve for me happened when I went to New Guinea. I was asked to go to New Guinea with my wonderful semi-structured package. I went over there and spoke to the managers but when I started running my first program with a room of nationals I thought I have absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing to offer these people and that was a shock to me. I came back after the first trip and felt totally useless.

She went on to describe how on her return she moved away from materials she had been using and encouraged the trainees to talk about what life and work was like there. She argued that by the end of her second visit the nationals were presenting the information and she as trainer "was sitting back".

Skills acquisition for further practice in the field by many of these interviewees also seems to be somehow linked with the capacity for "stretch" that a number of the interviewees seem to have possessed. Many of them took on roles when moving between organisations for which, prior to assuming the new positions, they had had little training or experience, e.g. Cecily's shift to an HRD role in manufacturing, Amy's shift to hospitality, Emma's shift to sales training management, Donald's shift into the corporate sector and John's shift to insurance (Appendix 3:4, 7, 8, 2, 6). A difference in sector and role scope did not stop the interviewees undertaking tasks or seeking out new opportunities. Some mention the degree of stretch, the learning curve, or the demand on personal energy required by such leaping into unknown fields and tasks. In so doing, individual interviewees seem to possess a relatively well developed sense of self -efficacy which has allowed each interviewee to take on such roles despite the gaps in their experience. Perhaps it is the lack of regulation in the field, and of overt barriers to entry, along with observations of others taking on such roles both within the organisations and within professions, which allow this model of practitioner to survive.

5.9 Consistency in beliefs, values, attitudes and philosophies related to HRD practice

The literature about HRD discussed in Chapter 2 reveals that there is considerable diversity amongst theorists about philosophies driving HRD practice. This diversity has led some writers to see HRD as being eclectic in its theory base or at least driven by multiple theoretic positions. Data from interview components of this research certainly did not present a picture of a group of practitioners all driving or working from the same philosophic positions or professional value system. What did emerge from the interviews, however, were a number of consistent viewpoints about, firstly, what could be seen as good HRD practice, and, secondly, what was satisfying about practice in this field. Hence such viewpoints indirectly reflect something about the beliefs and attitudes interviewees have about the field.

As indicated earlier, many interviewees recognised that, as they became more experienced, their HRD practice became much more interactive. No longer did they see themselves as being expected to be the expert transmitters of all knowledge. Increasingly they recognised the value in working with learners or

the learners' managers to draw on learner experiences as part of the human resource development experience. This shift in the interviewees' HRD practice along with utilisation of newer, more innovative methodologies referred to by some practitioners could be seen as reflecting the development of newer understandings and beliefs about their role in facilitating learning and the role of HRD generally which match some of the shifts about HRD practice and skills required for good HRD practice cited in the Chapter 2.

A second cluster of beliefs about what practice should involve which emerged quite strongly from some of the interviewees' discussions addressed the need for HRD practice to make a difference within organisations and the need for practitioners to be commercially oriented. Alana (Appendix 3:9) reflected this position when she stated:

> If HRD is to be of real value, it would involve having a partnership between the organisation, where its heading, where its going, the organisational goals, the culture of the organisation and the people within the organisation and their needs and wants, and, pulling all those things together through some process that at the end of the day enables improvement.

Similarly, Emma (Appendix 3:8), in discussing good practice, picked up the theme of organisational performance and improvement and HRD practice when she stated:

> You need to be very results driven, very clear about whatever you're doing, what's going to be of benefit for the organisation. It needs to be all that stuff, results driven, adding value, totally customer focussed so you need to be very clear about the groups you are dealing with and meeting their needs so it fits in with the business needs as well.

John also reflected a belief about this field of practice when he argued:

> We are expected to be business managers. It has shifted from people who are instructors to people who are contributing to the bottom lines absolutely. (John, Appendix 3:6)

Thus, one cluster of beliefs, that seems to emerge from at least one third of respondents, is the belief that this practice area needs to be about helping develop the organisation and aligning practice with needs of the organisation. A further theme, which reveals something about consistency in terms of attitudes to this field of practice, can be seen in interviewees' discussion about what satisfies these practitioners about their role. For some the source of satisfaction in this career area seems to be about the relationships they form with the people involved in their training programs and their capacity to bring about a change in others.

John (Appendix 3:6) discussed his early feelings about this role and the reason he so actively kept seeking work in this area. He stated:

> In this role I felt I was making an impact on people and I could read that impact I was having on people. I could see the tangible results.

And later he described himself as still:

> getting the buzz from practice. I like getting a response from the audience. (John)

Elizabeth (Appendix 3: 5) also seemed to gain satisfaction from the relationships she had established with people as part of her role. She stated:

> My trainees become my friends. So I really enjoy seeing people that basically blossom from having done training and extended them. I really enjoy seeing them develop and that's a major source of satisfaction.

Maria (Appendix 3:1) also indicated she gained satisfaction from helping and working with people. She described her reasons for entering the field and then later what satisfied her about her work, stating:

> I have deep feeling for people and I want to do something to help them... It about being genuine and taking people with you and working to help them. So maybe I have been a frustrated teacher all my life. (Maria)

Similarly Susan argued:

> I love the creative side of putting programs together and I like to see the finished package but I get a real buzz out of standing up in front of people and delivering a program because I really like to talk to people and draw out their expertise. I don't like to impart my knowledge as much as for them to realise that they have the knowledge. They just didn't have the particular label for it. I love to see the light switch on for them to say "Oh I get that" (Susan, Appendix 3:11).

5.10 Other -than -work experiences

One additional dimension, which needs some consideration in an examination of this area as a career field, is how interviewees see other-than-work experiences as shaping their careers in this field. A number of interviewees mentioned experiences that they had had either before beginning work or in other careers before becoming HRD practitioners as influencing their movement into the field. Several interviewees, for example, referred to experiences they had had when they had been involved with community theatrical groups or other performance experiences that they saw as contributing to their interest in and skills in training, particularly when they first began their HRD careers. Others referred to activities from their leisure time that have equipped them with skills they brought to their role in HRD e.g. membership of public speaking groups, membership of sports clubs which entailed training in a sports field. Several referred to experiences at school or to experiences and encouragement of their parents to pursue a career. While little attempt was made to probe these areas, the existence of these themes in career stories certainly provides further evidence of career shapes being influenced by other-than-work experience and of life roles as the literature discussed in Chapter 2 suggests.

5.11 Some conclusions

This chapter has attempted to report some of the themes that emerge from the interviews conducted with practitioners. Dominant themes which have emerged in this data and have been reported include themes related to: entry to

the field; career transitions within the field; scope and types of practice available to those working within this career area; learning and skills acquisition for practice within the field; and to values, beliefs, attitudes and philosophies about practice in the field. From the data there is some evidence of consistency in terms of how individuals entered the field even though HRD has no body or organisation that regulates entry to the field of aspiring practitioners. This data shows that the field of practice allows practitioners considerable flexibility and diversity in terms of scope of practice. There is also evidence of some consistency in the way HRD practitioners' careers change as they gain experience in this field and in the values and attitudes they have about working in this field. Common thinking of this kind could be seen as contributing to the growth of a common sense of occupational identity. Such themes and findings therefore provide insights into what careers in this area look like. They also provide indications of possible career structures of this occupation field.

The following chapter will examine the consistencies and differences between the findings from this component of the project and those findings from the survey discussed in the preceding chapter. It will then attempt to look for resonance or dissonance between these findings and the literature that is relevant for this study and for addressing the questions driving this research project.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and implications from research

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter attempts to show the themes that have emerged from findings from the data used to answer the questions driving this research study. In so doing, the chapter begins with a summary of the principal questions that were the focus of the research conducted. This is followed by a brief summary of the prominent themes from relevant literature (reported in Chapter 2), key findings from the survey study (reported in Chapter 4) and from the career stories case study research (reported in Chapter 5). The resonances between findings in Chapters 4 and 5 and the key positions advanced in the literature reviewed (as considered in Chapter 2) are then considered. From such findings an explanation of the forces shaping the career structure for practitioners from this field is advanced. Additionally some suggestions about directions for the professional development of HRD practitioners based on the findings from this research study are also presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the limitations which potentially impact on the central argument of the research study and suggestions for additional areas of research to further illuminate an understanding of this area of occupational practice.

6.2 Summary of research questions and research approach

6.2.1 Research questions

This study set out to examine the nature of careers available to human resource developers. In so doing, it adopted broad definitions of the terms "human resource development" and "careers", an approach arguably justified in Chapter 1. Most specifically the dissertation attempted to answer the following question:

- In what ways and to what extent can HRD be characterised as a coherent career field?

To gain insights into such a question, a number of related questions needed to be answered. For example, exploring the notion of coherency in a career field

requires searching for consistency or commonality in both the "occupational events" experienced by, as well as in the skills and other attributes required by those working in this field. Thus this project has sought to answer questions such as:

- Is there consistency in the skill sets or personal attributes required by those who practise in this field?
- What have been the influences that have contributed to the shape and nature of careers of HRD practitioners?
- What properties do continuing careers in human resource development possess and, if such properties exist, do they contribute to the development of what could be seen as a commonly held sense of occupational identity by HRD practitioners?

The decision to explore this area of organisational practice from a career perspective in part arose from an awareness on the part of the researcher that there was little work directly examining this field of practice as a career field, at least at the time the research study was conceptualised. This was unlike many other related career fields (e.g. teaching, human resource management) for which career structures and career properties have been comparatively well documented. This gap in the knowledge about this field of practice exists even though there has been considerable research into the nature of and shifts in practice in this field and debate about its theoretical underpinnings. It was also seen that an examination of HRD from a career field perspective could contribute to the ongoing maturation of the field and would provide some insights into ongoing development needed by such practitioners in order to maintain careers in this field.

6.2.2 Research approach: theoretical investigation

To theoretically address the questions that this research study was attempting to answer, and to surface other relevant questions which needed to be considered to better understand and illuminate HRD as a career field, it was necessary to examine the literature addressing HRD. This literature was an obvious source for insights about the nature of theoretical understandings, skills, qualifications and personal attributes that may be required by individuals seeking a career in this area. At the same time, it was obvious that examining this one strand of theorisation and research was insufficient given the primary focus of this

research study was exploring careers in the field of HRD, as opposed to focussing solely on the practices associated with HRD. Hence the project examined recent writing about careers to surface contemporary understandings of the forces shaping careers and factors determining the on-going enaction of careers. This literature also yielded insights into a range of career properties which provided, what Patton (1990) has referred to as, "the sensitizing concepts" for the analysis of data gathered particularly from the career story component of this research. A third strand of literature that was also recognised as an essential source of secondary evidence when investigating HRD as a career field was the literature that addressed contemporary organisational practice. This strand was an important avenue of investigation for several reasons. Firstly, the focus of the research is on HRD careers, which are forged and enacted in organisations or with organisations as opposed to careers that develop human capability and performance in educational institutions. Secondly, much of the literature addressing HRD practice along with the literature examining careers in a post–industrial era emphasises the importance of the workplace as a shaper of both careers and occupational practice and, for that matter, individual identity (e.g. Casey, 1999; Chappell, 1999; du Gay, 1997; Moss Kanter; 1989). Hence changes in workplaces or workplace trends needed to be considered as such changes could provide insights to how careers in HRD may be formed, enacted and shaped. Such changes could also be significant in shaping or changing a commonly experienced sense of "occupational identity" held by practitioners.

These three strands of literatures were therefore examined, and from them, prominent themes that could be seen as contributing to an explanation of career formation and enaction in the field of HRD specifically were surfaced. Additionally, from an examination of this literature, questions emerged which could be probed through empirical studies about careers in this field. As such each of these literatures provided a lens for illuminating facets of careers in HRD.

It could also be argued that from these bodies of literature, strands of the key theoretical argument, advanced in this research project, emerge. This argument suggests that the nature and scope of a HRD career can be explained by the dynamic interplay of a range of forces. These forces include the individual's aspirations and sense of self agency, the evolving practices of the field of HRD itself and shifts in functioning and management of contemporary organisations. Such forces determine the direction and possibility for

movement within this field along with the shape of career patterns and properties of careers in this field.

6.2.3 Research approach: empirical investigation

One set of research participants in this study included nearly 200 anonymous practitioners (or their supervisors) from public and private sector organisations throughout Australia. This sample is not seen as sufficiently representative of the field of HRD practitioners or of an adequate size from which to draw firm generalisations about this field as a career area. Findings from the survey, however, are useful for this research project because those HRD practitioners who participated in the survey worked in a wide range of industry sectors and were from a range of geographical areas and did provide evidence of practitioners' views about current HRD practice. As a result, the responses gained from this survey study yielded some insights about this practice field and the directions in which the field is moving. As such these data provided a basis for tentatively drawing some conclusions about both the nature of careers in this field and the ongoing professional development needs of those forging a career in HRD. The responses to selected survey questions, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, indicated that there is some consistency in terms of work practices of HRD practitioners despite the diversity of the respondents' work locations. Furthermore the survey showed that practitioners have fairly consistent beliefs about the purpose and nature of the field of practice. The responses also revealed evidence of career structure and the existence of a "career ladder", although very short, which has been and remains available to those who choose to enact a career in this field.

The second source of empirical data came from interviews with 12 HRD practitioners. The career history of each of these practitioners was gained through interview and analysed. Career stories portraying essential elements of these histories are presented in Appendix 3 and analysis of this data is presented in Chapter 5. The data from this component provided a different lens through which to examine and map careers in the field.

Key findings which are relevant for the research questions driving this project from each of these data sources have been reported in detail in preceding chapters and will be briefly summarised in a later section of this chapter.

The empirical data for this research, as can be seen from the brief summary just reported and as discussed in detail in Chapter 3, has come from what have often been seen as incommensurable research methodologies which in turn have come from non-complementary research traditions. Justification for adopting such a methodology, however, can be found in the thinking of Deetz (1996) who has presented a research schema that arguably legitimizes embarking on a research project which gathers data and presents findings from non complementary research traditions. The justification for this approach is presented in Chapter 3. It is, however, appropriate to repeat in this conclusion that this study can be located, using Deetz' schema and terminology, as a consensus study which allows findings to emerge from local conditions in that findings were gained using interpretive case studies as a data source. At the same time, the research project also "steals insights" from what could be seen as normative study where data is drawn from a survey and analysed using loosely established a priori assumptions which were formed from an examination of relevant literature. Such an approach therefore allows for pluralism in the findings in that they are informed by research studies from more than one discursive space.

6.3 Key themes and findings

6.3.1 Prominent themes in HRD, careers and organisational literature

As indicated more substantively in earlier chapters, this research study, in attempting to answer questions about HRD as a career field, was embarking on a research endeavour which essentially had not been previously addressed. As such no direct research was located against which to test new findings about careers in this area. There was, however, substantial theorising and research from at least three related disciplinary fields that provided not only directions for the empirical research but also illuminated aspects associated with the research questions and generated further questions needing to be answered to better understand this career field. The following section highlights some of the prominent themes and key research findings reported in Chapter 2. The themes and findings highlighted here are those which provide insights into the area as a career field. These themes and findings, as will be shown in more detail later in this chapter, particularly resonate with findings from the empirical studies completed for this study and help explain how careers are shaped in this field.

Implications for preparation and ongoing professional development for HRD practitioners can also be drawn from such findings and themes.

Significant findings and themes emerging from this literature which need further probing through empirical research include:

- The field of human resource development is still evolving.
  As such there is considerable diversity in both the definitions of this area of practice as well as the understandings of the area's theoretical underpinnings. The models and scope of HRD practice as implemented in organisations also vary considerably and therefore, by implication so do the skills and attributes required by those forging careers in this field.

- HRD practitioners need to be able to improve the performance of their employing organisations and assist in the provision of solutions for organisational problems and meet workplace needs.
  As a result, based on the literature considered, it could be argued that the HRD practitioner's role is expanding and, as a consequence, the skill set which is needed to carry out the HRD role in contemporary organisations is also growing. Such skills arguably would extend beyond skills of design and delivery of traditional classroom based learning programs.

- A career is constructed from the dynamic interaction between the person and his/her environment. Such interaction is seen as determining the dimensions of career.

- Careers can be considered from
  - an examination of both the external objective features of career as well as from "people's subjective experiences of the sequence (of career)" (Arnold 1998: ix; Chen, 1998; Schein, 1980)
  - a pattern perspective (e.g. Driver, 1980; Schein, 1980; Morrison and Adams, 1991; Maclean, 1992). Such patterns may emerge from consistency in decision-making about career/job choice (Schein, 1980; Moss Kanter, 1989); consistency in patterns of career transitions and career moves (Driver, 1980; Zabusky and Barley, 1996; Maclean, 1992); patterns in the way practitioners think about their career in a field and about how they derive satisfaction from that career (Dawis, 1996; Herzberg, 1966), or, patterns of thought about practice in the

field as practitioners mature or progress in the career (Zabusky and Barley, 1996; Osterman, 1996; Maclean, 1992).

- An individual's sense of self- agency is pivotal in career formation and enaction.
  The individual's sense of personal agency, self -efficacy and set of vocational self -concepts have been seen as significant determinants of career shape or career determinants by many theorists (Lent Brown and Hackett, 1996, Amundsen, 1995; Miller-Tiedman and Tiedman, 1990; Mager, 1992; Bandura 1982; Super, 1970).

- That work roles and other -than -work roles are interconnected in shaping careers (Chen, 1998; Super, Savickas and Super, 1996).

- The contemporary organisation is a site of considerable change.
  Some believe such change has meant that individual employees need to assume greater responsibility and accountability for the achievement of expected organisational outcomes (Casey, 1999). Others refute this and suggest some workers are experiencing a diminution in individual power, skill and influence (Ostenk, 1997; Rifkin, 1995). Such difference in terms of what is happening in workplaces may be impacting on the nature of work carried out by HRD practitioners as well as their own careers.

- The psychological contract of employment between employer and employees is changing as workplace structures and cultures change.
  Much literature argues that employees are expected to accept more responsibility for their own on-going development and to manage their careers themselves rather than expecting employers to manage careers. This changed relationship is both the cause and the result of changing organisational structures which is producing increased outsourcing arrangements particularly for those working in non-core functions in organisations. Some have argued that such changes are resulting in the disappearance of the job itself and that the notion of career in one organisation is certainly a phenomenon of the past for most people (Sofo, 1999; Bridges, 1994; Handy, 1989).

- Learning has become an imperative in contemporary organisations. This has occurred especially as organisations recognise the importance of knowledge workers in the more competitive economic environment and the importance of building and maintaining the core competences of an organisation. While there is a much greater focus in recent organisational literature on learning, understandings of what constitutes the learning that is needed or valued by organisations varies considerably. For example, understandings of organisational learning or building a learning organisation orientation within an organisation, all lauded in this literature, often vary. These terms are frequently used in the organisational literature to encompass more than traditional understandings of learning, particularly in terms of how such learning is achieved (Johnston and Hawke, 2002 (a); Gerber, 1998; Denton 1998; Garavan, 1997).

The literature addressing both HRD practice and organisational change could therefore be seen as indicating that, while learning within organisations is being recognised as an imperative and in fact a needed core competence for contemporary organisations, exactly what needs to be learned or how learning takes place in an organisation is still subject of debate. At the same time there is ample and consistent evidence that suggests that practitioners responsible for fostering learning in organisations are expected to be able to improve the performance of organisations and provide organisations with solutions that link in with organisational strategy. As such the literature would seem to suggest that the HRD practitioner requires skills that extend beyond the capacity to provide a calendar of training events if they are to maintain a career in this field.

The literature consulted about careers and organisations strongly emphasises the changing nature of employment and careers in contemporary organisations. It can therefore be seen from this literature that no single "grand narrative" can be used to explain the shaping of careers in a post-industrial age. At the same time, recent careers literature has provided insights into factors that determine the structure and shape, and, what could be seen as providing forms of coherency in careers in general, which are relevant to the careers of HRD practitioners. These elements of career formation may not provide the rigidly defined objective career structure associated with some professional fields or career fields of a previous era, but they do contribute to a picture showing some consistency or orderliness in the careers of HRD practitioners.

6.3.2 Key findings from the survey of practitioners

Detailed reportage and discussion of this survey is reported in Chapter 4. The following section provides a brief summary of key findings from this survey study that are relevant for this research project.

- There are career opportunities in this field as organisations are employing specialist HRD/learning and development staff.
  It should be noted, however, that many survey respondents also reported that their organisations used non-specialist, often non-qualified staff for learning and development tasks as well as qualified HRD specialists. They further reported the outsourcing of some training and development activity especially in specialist technical areas. Qualifications in HRD/training and development are not essential for those pursuing a career in this field, however, there is evidence that the majority of HRD practitioners in organisations in this study have some formally recognised post compulsory education qualifications.

- Data about organisational reporting relationships of HRD staff reveal there is at least a short career ladder available to those seeking a career in this field. Many respondents who were T and D /HRD officers/co-ordinators /consultants indicated that they had a direct report to an HRD manager. Such a finding, while not unexpected, did confirm that at least a short career ladder that afforded practitioners upward career mobility was available at least in some organisations. The study could also be seen as reaffirming that for the most part the HRD function existed as part of the HR function as most HRD managers indicated they reported to an HR manager as opposed to a general manager. Such a position has been quite widely reported in HRD/HRM literature (McGlagan, 1999; Sofo, 1999; Ulrich, Losey and Lake, 1997).
  Other respondents indicated they reported to a line manager. This second finding could suggest that HRD activities are decentralised in some organisations and hence in those organisations there may be less evidence of a "career line/ladder" allowing practitioners upward mobility within the field of HRD.

- There is some consistency in respondents' beliefs about the HRD skills they thought their organisations rated highly. Similarly there is some consistency in beliefs about current and predicted importance of various training and development activities. (See Chapter 4 Table 4.4 and following discussion.)

- There is considerable consistency in respondents' perceptions of purpose of training and development/HRD as an organisational function.

Such findings provide insights into this area as a career field. The findings reveal or confirm that HRD is recognised as a specialist organisational practice area that affords at least a short career ladder for upward career progression for those who practise in this field. This study also shows that there is a common perception amongst practitioners that activities such as "providing proactive services that identify and resolve problems", "bringing about improvements in individual performance", "assisting in developing performance solutions for business units" and "integrating learning within normal work activities" will become more important activities for HRD practitioners. This suggests that practitioners themselves believe that by implication, they will need to develop and demonstrate skills that will allow for diagnosis of business problems and the development of business solutions, and that the focus of their work will be with the business unit. Furthermore, arguably, the HRD role is and will continue to be about integrating learning into the work of the organisation rather than providing a calendar of training classes that may not be specifically focussed on strategic need of units within the organisation.

While this study reveals few insights into the forces shaping careers and little about respondents' career histories, it does show that there is considerable consistency in how respondents perceive practice in the field. It also reveals insights about how practitioners understand the change in importance of certain practice areas and how they understand the purpose of the field and their occupational practice. This consistency in beliefs could be seen as suggesting that practitioners do have many commonly held understandings about their work, and the potential of and future direction of their work. This commonality in beliefs could be seen as indicating that some features of a common sense of occupational identity are discernable in this occupational group.

6.3.3 Findings from interviews with practitioners

In-depth interviews with practitioners yielded the following findings:

- There is no clearly regulated entry pathway to a career in the field of HRD and no clearly defined tasks that are assigned to novices to this field. Some practitioners enter the field on a full time basis quite purposefully. Others have moved into the field quite accidentally and tentatively as part-time trainers. The most common pattern of entry was through the development of expertise in a technical/procedural field that became the first area of interviewees' training practice. For some, the skills in this area had been acquired formally through university or other formal education studies. For others the expertise came from informal on the job learning of a technical or procedural skill which they as novice HRD practitioners taught to others in their organisations.

- While there are not very orderly or regular career pathways available in this field, HRD practitioners are able to make career transitions without leaving the field.
  Mobility available to practitioners as shown through the interviews included: moves within the HRD field within the same organisation (possible for those working in large organisation); moves to HRD positions in other organisations or industries; moves between organisations which required practitioners to take on some non-HRD tasks or tasks that were only peripherally related to HRD, and, moves into HRD consultancy roles which enabled practitioners to work with rather than within organisations. Reasons for career moves provided by interviewees included: transitions forced on individuals because of organisational downsizing or restructuring; the desire to seek new pastures and broader roles or to work in a different sector with a new group of audiences; dissatisfaction with existing work role or employer or work climate, and, reasons related to "other -than -work experiences". Some practitioners were promoted in this field. Others made moves that provided them with opportunities to work in a position with a broader scope than was provided by their previous positions and hence made horizontal career moves.

- There is considerable consistency in "occupational experiences" despite difference in areas of work. The first consistency appears in stories about early career events and feelings. Interviewees' stories reveal that they often

undertook work tasks in HRD/learning and development early in their career when they were not certain about what to do or how to do it. Secondly, practitioners consistently reported developing a broader range of skills as their scope of practice expanded from classroom based instructional activities. The most commonly reported skill change was the shift from transmission oriented/ trainer expert type presentation to more interactive learner-centred development approaches. Some of those with more experience also reported their practice taking on a more organisational focus. This shift in focus was driven by a need to produce results for the organisation for which they were working.

- There was some consistency in the stories practitioners told about how they acquired their practice skills.
  While all had qualifications, which is not typical of this field, few referred to their formal studies as the main basis for their practice expertise. More commonly mentioned was the learning individual interviewees had gained from other people or groups including training audiences. While several practitioners referred to learning from various network groups in which they actively participated, the main reference points for learning mentioned by most interviewees were one or two individuals whom the interviewees knew and whose advice they trusted and valued. These were usually colleagues from the HRD field.

- There were some consistencies in the beliefs and feelings practitioners hold about their work.
  One area of consistency was in the beliefs about changes in the field of practice and in the workplace held by interviewees. The most commonly reported belief of these practitioners was that practice had changed and there was a need to focus on achieving organisational goals and meeting business needs.
  Similarly, there was also considerable consistency in what respondents identified as providing them with satisfaction in their career. The most consistent responses in these areas were to do with having a sense of making a difference to the organisation and the pleasure gained from making an impact on people.

6.4 Resonances in findings from data sources and tentative positions derived from such resonances

The approaches used to explore the research questions were based on gaining knowledge from three different sources. One source was relevant extant literature. A second source was the comparatively "thin" data gathered from a survey of approximately 200 practitioners. The third source was "rich" data gathered from in-depth interviews with 12 practitioners. As indicated earlier in this dissertation, this research project, in using a number of different research methodologies, is not a triangulation study. The two empirical components addressed the area of HRD careers in this field from slightly different angles. They therefore were not designed to provide a methodology in which findings from one set of data confirmed or tested the findings produced by the other data set. Each set of data provided some findings that were germane to the research questions asked in this project. From these findings several themes consistently appeared. Additionally from these themes, it is possible to advance some tentative positions about this area as a career field and a general explanation of the forces shaping HRD careers. Furthermore, from these findings it is also possible to derive some suggestions about areas needing to be addressed in preparing and providing ongoing professional development for those constructing a career in this field.

A useful starting point for examining any thematic consistency in the data is by way of revisiting the questions driving this research. The next section, therefore, takes each of the sub-questions posed and explores themes emerging from data that show some insights about this question. In so doing, this section advances some tentative positions about this area as a career field.

Question1. Is there a consistency in skills or personal attributes required for HRD practice and by implication for forming or enacting a career in HRD?

Each source of data has something to say about this question. One of the most obvious findings related to this question that is evident in all sources of data is that which shows there is no one qualification that consistently provides a point of entry or career pathway into this field either in Australia, or as shown in literature, in other countries. All sources, however, show some evidence of practitioners seeking vocationally related qualifications. Such a finding is not

unexpected especially given the need for practitioners to hold at least a Certificate IV level qualification to deliver accredited programs in Australia, and increased participation rates in formal post -compulsory education within the population generally.

Data which shows more consistency is that which reveals the skills required for contemporary practice and hence for maintenance of a career in this field. Data from all sources would suggest that while training presentation skills were important, especially early in a career, they are not necessarily the most important skills for HRD practitioners. Most of the literature would indicate the role seems to be about achieving improved organisational and individual performance and this may be achieved by methods other than a traditional classroom based training approach. This could be seen to indicate that there is a need for skills sets that include a capacity to diagnose organisational performance issues and to communicate solutions within organisations in a way that the solutions are understood within the organisations. Similar findings are evident also in the survey data which, for example, showed that practitioners believed their organisation valued the following HRD skills most highly:

- the capacity to conduct organisational training needs analysis;
- the capacity to evaluate training outcomes;
- the capacity to facilitate team building and communications activities;
- the capacity to manage learning activities; and
- the capacity to provide customer service training.

All of the above skills were rated as being more highly valued in organisations than training presentation skills. Likewise, responses in the interview component of the research revealed that while, interviewees had at various times in their careers been mainly required to deliver training presentations, as their careers progressed they were also required to become more involved in other forms of development activity. The data could therefore be seen as suggesting that HRD careers are forged initially through use of presentation skills but that these careers are maintained by those practitioners who have developed a capacity to do more than present training sessions. Increasingly, careers in HRD seem to require that practitioners, at least in part, frame themselves as organisational problem solvers.

It is therefore suggested that there is a resonance in all data sources revealing that practitioners need to broaden their skill base in order to maintain a career in the field of HRD. Explanations of this need are possibly found in evidence that reveals the field of HRD itself is changing, and that organisations and the environment in which organisations are operating are changing. This expressed need for practitioners to broaden their skill base may also be the result of the career maturation process. In this circumstance, practitioners who remain in this field, as they gain more experience and develop greater sense of self agency in career formation and enaction, recognise the need for different types of development solutions for organisations. Hence it could be the interaction of the three forces that is producing a relatively consistent 'voice' in terms of the skills required for an ongoing HRD career.

Question 2. Are there consistent influences determining career formation and enaction in this area of occupational practice and if so what are they?

The career stories, which are discussed in Chapter 5, and the literature studied and presented in Chapter 2 were the most useful sources allowing insights into this question. The literature addressing HRD provided no major insights into how individual practitioners entered and moved through various positions in the field. The careers literature, however, highlighted the importance of career entry and transitions as a way of examining career formation and enaction. Even more useful data for this question of the research project came from the career stories of individual practitioners.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, entry to the field of HRD, unlike many professions and occupations, was not affected by achievement of specialist qualification or mastery of a set of clearly defined competencies. More frequently, entry to this field was the result of individual achievement in the workplace that was recognised by the employer as being a legitimate and sufficient source of expertise to be drawn on in order to teach others skills within the workplace. The entry pathway was evident from stories of both those who had entered the field with university qualifications as well as those with no formal work qualification. While some of the interviewed practitioners began their career in HRD quite tentatively on a part time basis, other moved into this as a career area on a full time basis.

Early learning in the career area was usually achieved by those interviewed as a result of the interviewee's relationship with some other person in the workplace. Some referred to this person in "mentor type" tones: for others it was simply a person to whom the novice practitioner had access.

In discussion about how they had enacted their careers, all interviewed practitioners indicated that they had made a number of job transitions. The stories that described interviewees' career moves show that there is opportunity for mobility within this career field. The career transitions that interviewees made were often the result of changes in the workplace governance e.g. downsizing or some form of organisational amalgamation. For some interviewees, transitions were forced because the HRD function, as a core organisational competence, had become questionable. As a result, either the function or some of its tasks were being outsourced by the interviewee's employing organisation. Such findings mirror a prominent theme in the organisational and career literature, which emphasises the prevalence of career and job change in contemporary organisations resulting from either restructuring or outsourcing of organisational functions to enhance organisational competitiveness, and hence the need for flexibility on the part of employees.

Several interviewees indicated that they had changed jobs as a result of dissatisfaction with the changes taking place in their workplaces, or some other facet of their work life or the work environment. Such findings from empirical studies could be seen as reflecting positions advanced by Herzberg (1966) and Dawis (1996) as discussed in Chapter 2 that highlight the role of workplace or occupational dissatisfaction as a trigger for career transition.

Thus the interview study clearly resonates with a position advanced in career literature that the environment in which the individual works, which can include the total organisational environment, intersects with individual practitioner aspirations and may result in career transition.

There is also evidence from the interviews to indicate that some career transitions resulted from individual interviewee's beliefs in their own occupational capacity or what may be seen as their sense of self-agency in the career shaping process. An individual's sense of self-agency and sense of self-

efficacy as a shaper of career is a prominent theme in the careers literature and certainly emerges from career stories of practitioners.

Changes in the nature of the field of practice could also be argued as shaping careers in HRD. Many of the more experienced practitioners interviewed discussed their increased interest in seeking out more strategically oriented HRD work as their careers unfolded. This influenced the type of HRD role they sought when seeking career shifts. Such a shift in expectations about work in this area could be seen as paralleling the call in the literature for the field itself to take on a more organisationally strategic orientation.

Additionally, both the literature about the field of HRD and responses of interviewees could be seen as reflecting a shift in practice. This shift increasingly is requiring HRD practitioners to reject the role of expert transmitter of knowledge and replace it with a development role that requires HRD practitioners to draw more directly on their learners' experience. Several respondents reported that their practice had moved in this way, as they became more experienced practitioners.

Furthermore, several career stories reflected a move whereby individuals worked in either an internal organisational consulting HRD role or in a position as an external HRD consultant working with, rather than as, an employee of an organisation. Both the organisational and HRD literature reveal a trend towards the increased use of both internal and external consultants within organisations.

Question 3. Are there common patterns or properties characterising careers in human resource development and if so, can these patterns or properties be seen as contributing to a sense of a common occupational identity amongst practitioners?

In searching for insights into these questions, this research study is attempting to identify from the data whether careers in HRD have common qualities or if there are common patterns in how HRD careers are enacted. Several studies of patterns in specific career areas are discussed in Chapter 2. Patterns in the way practitioners enter a field or the transitions practitioners make as they enact their career can become such a property that could be seen as a characteristic of a field of practice. Similarly a property of an occupational area may be the

existence of a common sense of occupational identity amongst practitioners of an occupational field. Exploring the data sources for insights into the existence of a common occupational identity arguably involves searching for evidence that practitioners hold a common understanding or picture of the HRD role and the goals of an HRD practitioner. Super, Savickas and Super (1996:137), for example, have argued, as reported in Chapter One, that the possession of a "vocational identity is the possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals". Searching for a common sense of occupational identity may also involve surfacing consistency in occupational interests, areas of occupational satisfaction, of ways of doing things or of beliefs about the nature and goals of practice. In such a search it should also be noted that this research study accepts the notion advanced by Chappell (1999) that identity is a discursively constructed concept that is subject to ongoing transformation as identity emerges from specific historical, social and political contexts. As such the project is investigating whether there is evidence of a commonly held sense about the occupation, about what its purpose is and where it is heading in the current historical, social and political context.

Certainly the evidence considered for this project reveals that HRD as a career field could be seen as lacking consistency because of the lack of regulation about entry to this occupational area. At the same time, as also discussed earlier, there is a consistency in entry pattern in that practitioners in this study moved into the field when their employers perceived them as having at least some degree of technical or procedural expertise which they could share with others. There is also some consistency in the tendency for practitioners to move between positions within the field itself, even though a rigid or very orderly career path was not evident. Individual practitioners, as shown in both interview data and from the survey study, could move in an upwardly mobile direction and manage a team or staff group providing HRD services. The other common transition pattern, however, which did not always mean promotion to a position of higher status, was the move to a position that required the HRD practitioner to use a broader skill set or take on a broader or slightly different role scope. Usually this shift required practitioners to move from providing training in technical skill or a procedural area into providing training programs with a soft skills/communication focus, then into supervisory or management development activities, or special project management activities, sometimes completed alongside development activities associated with their original procedural or technical skills. Such career transitions required practitioners to

use different approaches. These could involve setting up systems which more directly resolved organisational problems. Such a shift was often from what could be seen as technical training to work that might be seen as closer to organisational change work.

Hence there is evidence from the interview data particularly, that an HRD career can be seen as being characterised by mobility. Similarly from this data and the transitions practitioners have made, there is evidence that this is a career field, like many other career fields that have emerged in the post-industrial era, that is relatively flexible in that there are not rigid barriers to entry or movement around this field.

Another property characterising careers in this field results from the way some practitioners have made career transitions. Several of the practitioners interviewed made transitions within their career as a result of "other-than-work" issues. The most frequently mentioned "other than work" experience generating transition was the need to travel to another country or state following a move made by the interviewee's partner. Often such moves were seen as providing work experiences which interviewees who had made such a move valued most. While this "other-than -work" career transition characteristic would not apply to this career field alone, it certainly was in evidence for careers in this field from the career story component of this study.

There is some evidence from the empirical studies that elements of a common occupational identity exist amongst practitioners from this career area. While strong occupational identity and culture indicators such as consistency of language, identification of occupational heroes, common themes in occupational "war stories" so often apparent in career stories of occupations such as nurses, police and teachers were not in evidence, the data gathered in empirical studies shows that practitioners held common beliefs about the practices which were ranked as being of the greatest importance in organisations. From this survey there is also evidence of commonly held beliefs about how HRD practitioners viewed the purpose of their field of practice and of common understandings or beliefs about how their field of practice was changing.

There was also some evidence of commonality in participants' sense of occupational identity in the career stories gathered for this study. These stories

showed that practitioners held some consistent beliefs about their early practice experiences and about what was satisfying about this area as an occupational field. Many of the interviewees believed that early in their career they had taken on tasks beyond their level of competence. They also discussed the times in their career when they were on fast learning journeys. Additionally practitioners reported gaining satisfaction from similar dimensions or features of their career. For example, a majority of interviewees reported the satisfaction they gained from working with people and seeing their clients grow, improve and gain confidence. The other major source of satisfaction came from seeing their programs or other interventions they had designed and implemented make a difference in their organisations.

Hence, in summary, there is certainly some consistency in practitioner beliefs about what this area, as a professional field, should be doing and where it is going. There is also consistency in terms of what satisfied practitioners believe about their work in this field. Such features suggest that some elements of a common occupational identity exist amongst HRD practitioners.

6.5 Coherence of HRD as a career field

The overarching question driving this entire project has been about the way in which HRD can be seen as a coherent career field. While post–industrial, post modernist positions on career would suggest that looking for consistency and coherence in a career field may be seen as old fashioned and, in fact not appropriate, this investigation, which has attempted to understand human resource development as a career field and look for consistency and coherence, certainly has provided some insights into this area which have not been well documented in other studies of this field. Thus, while this study has revealed there is much evidence of diversity in this field of practice, it has also shown that there is considerable consistency in terms of the work people in this field do, and in the broader and changed role they are taking on in many organisations. There is also considerable consistency in the way practitioners understand and enact their careers. These are the consistently resonating themes that emerge from the three sources of evidence considered in this project. The findings from this research would also suggest that careers in this field are influenced by the interplay of three forces or influences. The career field which emerges is embedded in the intersect of developments in the field of HRD practice, developments in understandings of how careers are formed

and developments in the organisational environment. As such, change in any of the three fields impacts on the nature of careers in Human Resource Development. It should also be acknowledged that this is a career field that has a property of increasingly "osmotic" or semi-permeable boundaries that therefore allow practitioners to move in and out of practice in this career field. As such then HRD is a coherent career field that is shaped by organisational forces, forces in the field of HRD itself and developments in processes of career formation and development. This career field allows for movement within the field and has fairly flexible boundaries that do not confront aspiring entrants with rigid obstacles that need to be overcome. It also allows for diversity in practice scope and in models of practice. This flexibility and variability arguably give robustness to the area as an occupational field without taking significantly away from coherence of the field. These features could be seen as a strength given the post-modern condition in which the career field is evolving.

6.6 Implications for professional development required by practitioners

While the primary focus of this research project was not to identify the professional development needs of human resource development practitioners, some indications as to what is needed for the ongoing development of practitioners in this field emerge from the findings. Such findings do not show specific skill sets required for ongoing development much the way specially planned studies on competencies required for HRD practice have shown. They do, however, provide indications of a range of broad areas and issues that need to be considered in the process of ongoing development of HRD practitioners. Some of the dominant areas which need to be addressed in such development derived from the data from this study are reported below.

1. Prominent in both literature and empirical studies is the need for HRD practitioners to become providers of solutions that overcome organisational performance problems. Embedded within this position is the need for practitioners to be well aware of the business directions of their organisations in order to be able to produce the solution that meets the strategic needs of the organisation. As such then a capacity for a form of "organisational literacy" which allows the practitioners to "read" the issues in the organisation is an essential capacity for the practitioners and needs to be addressed within an ongoing professional development program.

Development implication: Programs developing HRD practitioners should build diagnostic and organisational performance problem solving skills.

2. The career stories as well as the literature on HRD particularly have revealed the enduring role of workplace learning as part of the career development experience. Most practitioners emphasised the learning they had achieved in their workplace and from work colleagues and supervisors. Some also highlighted learning from others they had met in the learning networks or from the communities of practice in which they were operating. As such development programs that help HRD learners interrogate and build on past workplace experiences or integrate current experiences and colleagues would seem to be useful directions for ongoing learning.

Development implication: Programs developing HRD practitioners need to develop the capacity in participants to understand and maximise their work experiences and relationships for their learning potential.

3. Closely aligned to the previous position is the need to develop programs that enhance the individual's sense of self-efficacy, a sense often developed and shaped by workplace experiences and workplace colleagues. The abilities of practitioners to understand themselves and what drives them professionally and to identify their own competencies and build on those competencies were apparent determinants of HRD practitioner career success in a number of career stories. This may suggest that practitioners should be given considerable control in shaping their own development programs to ensure that their own needs, including those that arise from the challenges of the organisation in which they are operating, are met. In so doing, the program needs to equip practitioners with skills that allow them to perform more effectively in the workplace and hence build a sense of occupational self-esteem.

Development implication: HRD development programs need to build practitioners' sense of self efficacy and career self-agency. This may be achieved by allowing participants considerable control of the direction and nature of their development programs.

4. A development program that recognises the various career transition options available to practitioners would potentially be of use to the development of individuals and the occupational field itself. Such a program could address the changing nature of audiences and programs that practitioners encounter as their careers change, as well as also highlighting the changing nature and pressures in organisations to which HRD practitioners must be able to respond rapidly, if not anticipate.

Development implication: HRD development programs should increase practitioners' awareness of occupational transition possibilities.

6.7 Limitations of study and suggestions for further research

This research project could be seen as providing a snapshot of a field of practice or more specifically a series of snapshots of a field of practice which have been superimposed on each other. As such the picture that emerges is a picture reflecting a "scene" at a specific point in time. This becomes the major feature and what could be seen as a limitation of this study in that the findings are situated at one point in time and, as such, can not be reliably generalised into the future. This study certainly is a time bound study. The relevance of evidence potentially deteriorates as the world and economies in which organisations, as the site of HRD practitioners work, change. Similarly the evidence presented also potentially deteriorates in usefulness as the technologies of both workplaces and of HRD specifically adapt to developments in the wider economies. Since the data was gathered for this study, the economy and activities of major organisations have shifted. Similarly, in the same period of time, the use of computing and telecommunications technology as a major development and knowledge management technology has increased exponentially. The impact of such phenomena on careers in the field of HRD has not been rigorously explored in this project and certainly is deserving of future investigation.

A further limitation of this study as an investigation of a professional field is that it draws on a limited amount of evidence and then only from those within the field. A broader perspective of this field and its characterising properties could usefully be sought from an investigation that includes the views of those who have moved through the field as practitioners to other areas of

organisational practice. Many practitioners move from HRD to other areas of organisational functioning. Some understanding of how such workers saw the field of HRD when they were both members of the field and when they had moved on would contribute to the picture of this as a professional field. Such insights may yield evidence of different entry mobility patterns and differing sets of beliefs about the field itself that could contribute to a fuller understanding of this area as a career field.

The study may also have benefited from a more detailed analysis of factors influencing entry and other-than-work features influencing career patterns. Little attempt was made to probe questions about practitioners' early learning experiences. Those interviewed were given freedom to discuss this area if they saw pre-work experiences as significant in shaping their career but attempts to really interrogate individual backgrounds for a clearer understanding of this dimension of career were not pursued. Such investigation may have added some richness to the picture being created. Similarly little attempt was made to really examine the impact of gender and age on HRD practice and beliefs about the field and careers in general in this study. A larger scale qualitative study may yield more powerful findings in relation to variables of this kind in understanding career formation and enaction.

The study presents some insights into how organisational functioning is influencing the shape of this career field. The field of HRD itself does not solely determine how careers should operate. Thus the study argues that the shape of a career in HRD is the product of the dynamic interaction between the field of HRD, organisations and individual agency. Further in-depth studies of how particular types of organisations influence career shapes and patterns would also add further insights to the picture being built up of HRD as an organisational practice area and a career field.

6.8 Conclusion

This study has investigated HRD as a career field. It has explored whether this area can be seen as a coherent career field. It has also investigated influences that are shaping the careers of practitioners working in this area. The time and place situated nature of the empirical research is acknowledged and its limitations in this regard are recognised.

The study has shown the ways in which HRD can be seen as a coherent career field. It has also shown that careers available to practitioners in this area are influenced by the organisational environment, which include changes in the ways organisations are structured and managed and in the goals they seek to achieve. Careers in HRD are also influenced by changes in the field of practice, changed understandings of the concept of career generally and by the individual HRD practitioner's sense of self agency in the career formation and shaping process. The study has further shown that some consistent career-related patterns and several fairly generic properties could be seen as characterising the field of human resource development and the careers enacted in this field. For example, the field affords practitioners a degree of career mobility in that movement between positions is not impeded by rigid barriers. Hence the field of practice allows for considerable career flexibility and career diversity. This field of practice is also populated by a group of practitioners who seem to share some elements of a common occupational identity. This is based on how practitioners understand the purpose of their work, and the direction the occupational field is moving. These practitioners also talk about deriving satisfaction from similar features of their work activity. Such findings arguably contribute to a picture that human resource development as an organisational practice can be seen as being a relatively coherent career field yet at the same time as providing its practitioners a range of flexible and evolving career options.

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Appendix 1

Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training
& CCH Australia Ltd

This survey is designed to gather information about personnel who have a training and development/human resources role in Australian and New Zealand organisations. CCH and the RCVET value your assistance in providing a more comprehensive picture of the contemporary work of T&D/HR personnel.

There are no 'correct' answers to these survey questions and your responses are completely confidential.

The first 8 questions are general questions about your organisation. The other questions relate to staff who have a Training and Development/human resources role in your organisation.

As an incentive to complete this survey CCH offer respondents the opportunity to go into a draw for a free training kit (from a choice of 4) worth $500.

If you would like to enter the draw you will need to provide your contact details (please note that this page is removed before the surveys are collated — your answers will not be identifiable in any way):

Name

Postal address

Tel

E-mail

Please return the completed survey in the reply paid envelope supplied not later than December 15 2000.

Thank you for your assistance. On completion of the analysis we will provide a concise report of the major findings of this study.

SURVEY

Where a box is provided to record your answer please place a (✓) against the appropriate response.

You can expand or clarify a response in the comments section that appears in the survey.

1. What is your current position in the organisation?

2. How many people are employed in your organisation? (Full-time & Part-time)

0-19	20-99	100-199	200-1000	1000 +

3. Which industry grouping best describes your organisation's activities:

Building & Construction	☐
Financial services and business	☐
Communications & Information Technology	☐
Community services	☐
Education	☐
Energy (electricity, gas & water)	☐
Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality or personal services	☐
Manufacturing	☐
Primary Production (agriculture & mining)	☐
Public service and Administration	☐
Transport and storage	☐
Other - e.g. conglomerate (please specify)	☐

_____

4. Is your organisation part of the

Public sector	☐
Private sector	☐
Not for private sector	☐

5. Is your organisation a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

Yes	☐
No	☐

6. Currently is your organisation in a phase of:

EXPANSION	☐
STABILITY	☐
CONTRACTION	☐

7. What priority does training get in your organisation?

HIGH	☐
MEDIUM	☐
LOW	☐

8. Has this increased, decreased or remained the same over the last 3 years?

INCREASED	☐
DECREASED	☐
SAME	☐

9. Does your organisation employ staff in Training & Development/Human Resource Development positions?

YES	☐
NO	☐

If you answered YES to question 9

9.1 How many people are employed in these areas?

F/T	P/T

9.2 What training qualifications does your organisation normally expect staff to have?

Higher degree	☐	☐
Degree	☐	☐
Degree related to T & D	☐	☐
Diploma	☐	☐
Certificate IV in workplace training	☐	☐
No formal requirements	☐	☐
Other - please specify	☐	☐

9.3 What are the positional title for T & D staff in your organisation?

_____

_____

9.4 To whom doe T & D/human resource development staff report?

_____

9.5 Is Training and Development in your organisation primarily arranged

by a centralised T & D unit	☐
at divisional or business unit level	☐
both	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

_____

9.6 Are staff other than T & D involved in training in your organisation?

YES	☐
NO	☐

If you answered **NO** to question 9

9.7 Who provides Training and Development in your organisation?

Internal staff - from other functions	☐
Community colleges	☐
TAFE	☐
University	☐
Private providers	☐
Product suppliers	☐
Group Training Company	☐
Private consultants	☐
Other - please specify	☐

_____

9.8 If internal staff are used to they require a qualification in workplace training or equivalent?

YES	☐
NO	☐

9.9 What is the name of the qualification?

_____

10. How does your organisation normally select external training providers?

Public tender	☐
Industry/personal network	☐
On-going consultant relationships	☐
H R agencies/training brokers	☐
All of the above	☐
OTHER (please specify)	☐

_____

11. Who in the organisation is responsible for managing the T & D functions that are outsourced?

_____

12. Please indicate your level of training activity this year in the following T & D areas?

ACTIVITY	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
A. induction of new employees			
B. new product/equipment training			
C. management development			
D. occupational health & safety			
E. computer/IT training			
F. recruitment/selection/promotion			
G. performance appraisal			
H. technical skill development			
I. quality processes and procedures			
J. change management/re-organisation			
K. customer/client service			
L. team building/communication			
M. introduction of new technology			
N. EEO/AA programs			
O. performance improvement			
Other (please specify)			

13. In your opinion what will be your need for training activity in these areas over the next 3 years?

ACTIVITY	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
A. induction of new employees			
B. new product/equipment training			
C. management development			
D. occupational health & safety			
E. computer/IT training			
F. recruitment/selection/promotion			
G. performance appraisal			
H. technical skill development			
I. quality processes and procedures			
J. change management/re-organisation			
K. customer/client service			
L. team building/communication			
M. introduction of new technology			
N. EEO/AA programs			
O. performance improvement			
Other (please specify)			

14. Do you think the need for training and development will increase, decrease or remain the same over the next 3 years in your organisation?

INCREASE	
DECREASE	
SAME	

15. Why do you think this is the case?

16. If you organisation was considering employing a Training and Development/Human Resource specialist today, which of the following areas of work would you rate high, medium and low in terms of importance to the organisation?

ACTIVITIES	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
identify organisational training needs			
present training workshops			
manage learning activities			
evaluate training outcomes			
liaise with external providers of training			
design on-line/e-learning			
design knowledge management systems			
computer/IT training			
recruitment/selection/promotion			
performance appraisal			
technical skill development			
quality enhancement			
change management/re-organisation			
customer/client service training			
team building/communications			
career management			
Other (please specify)			

_____

17. When out-sourcing training related activities does your organisation prefer to use public or private providers of training?

Public provider	
Private provider	
No preference	

Why is this the case?

_____

18. Does your organisation use computer-based learning/on-line learning in any of its training programs?

YES ☐
NO ☐

If you answered **YES**

s

Who provides learning support to participants? _____

Who provides technical support? _____

Do you intend to expand this mode of learning in your training programs? _____

If you answered **NO**

What is the main reason for **not** using this form of delivery?

_____

_____

19. The following list of statements relates to the purpose of training and development in organisations. Indicate your support for each statement using the sliding scale from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Place a (✔) in the appropriate box.

The purpose of training & development is to contribute to

- organisational and work performance
- increase qualification level of workforce
- job satisfaction
- individual development of employees
- solving organisational problems
- managing organisational change
- maintaining technical skills
- developing a positive working environment
- succession planning
- career development of employees
- organisational competitiveness
- sharing organisational knowledge
- building productive work teams
- introduction and use of new technologies
- other (please specify)

SA	A	N	S	SD

20. The work of Training & Development is changing in many organisations. The following statements list some work activities that many see as becoming more important for T and D professionals. Please indicate if these capabilities have become more important (MI), have remained the same (RS) or are not important (NI) for your organisation.

	MI	RS	NI
A to provide proactive services that identify and resolve problems			
B to bring about improvements in individual performance			
C to gather evaluative data about outcomes from T and D activities			
D to define performance problems for business units/functions			
E to assist in developing performance solutions for business units			
F to work closely with organisational customers and clients			
G to provide accredited training programs to employees			
H to facilitate and support change management activities			
I to negotiate with external providers of training			
J to manage the learning activities of organisations			
K to utilise IT in the implementation of T & D activities			
L to utilise IT in the implementation of T & D activities			
M to manage the dissemination of organisational knowledge			
N to integrate learning with normal work activities			

Appendix 2

Project "Examining Careers in Human Resource Development" Interview protocol

The following questions have been designed to provide a loose framework for the interview. They have been included to reveal the types of information being sought in this research project. It is not necessary to rigidly adhere to this interview schedule either in terms of the ordering of the questions or in terms of information provided.

All information will be rate confidentially and responses reported so that no participant can be identified.

1. Details of participant's "objective/external" careers

Chronology of positions held in HRD
Information for this section might include:

- How you first entered this field;
- Positions held, in HRD/Training, length of time in various positions, type os organisation in which positions have been held
- Major long term projects.

2. Subjective perspective of careers

- Reasons for entry to this field – career goals/motives
- Reasons for staying in this field
- Reasons for shifts in position/career transitions
- Descriptions of how you believe your practice/approach as an HRD practitioner has changed and, if so why
- Changes in career goals?
- Description of opportunities or drivers of careers/limiters or barriers to careers
- Sources of satisfaction/dissatisfaction in career
- Characteristics/skills experiences which you believe have contributed to you remaining in this field
- Values/interests driving your practice/career

3. Learning experiences and approaches associated with career

- e.g. formal, informal critical experiences from which you have learned, people from whom you have learned
- What skills/attributes do you believe you will need for future employability in this professional field?
- How have various workplaces contributed or influenced your career?
- In what ways, if any, have you seen the field HRD change over the duration of your career.

Appendix 3 Career Stories

1. Maria

Maria entered the family business after leaving school. Here she worked with her father and learned the skills of the logistics business and what she referred to as people management skills. Maria eventually took over the business from her father and managed it for a number of years. She then sold this business with a view to having a "rest" but within a very short period of time she was asked to assist what had been a competitor logistics business as management and business adviser. This led to Maria's becoming a business consultant advising businesses initially from the logistics area on business improvements and then into assisting with marketing.

Following the death of her husband Maria "took stock" and she reassessed where she wanted to be. She decided that her long experience both managing a small business and advising other small business could be put to use helping small to medium businesses whom she saw as often being too busy working to resolve problems and to build skills base of their organisations. She was also particularly keen to help women in business and so applied for and won a public sector position as a trainer and business adviser assisting people establish and maintain small businesses. Maria enjoyed the training and development aspects of this position and developed courses and manuals that had long usage in this department. She also was a member of state-wide committees working with women in government.

There were aspects of the culture of this work environment Maria did not like so she moved into private consultancy following a fairly debilitating illness. Maria's experience working within government departments had equipped her with knowledge about funding avenues and about submission writing as well as strengthening her skills in area of training and development practice. Her new self-created career role involved assisting business to obtain funding for development programs and when successful she would then assist in the provision of these development programs. Much of this early work was in areas of change management and turning businesses around. As both the business world shifted and Maria's business evolved she moved the focus of her work to assisting organisations establish quality management systems. Maria was particularly interested in "growing the point of view of internal management of organisations and helping them examine what they did and how they did it and

through delicate discussion and consensus finding ways to focus on improvement". Having moved directly into Human Resource Development role Maria has undertaken firstly undergraduate and then post -graduate study. She believes she has learned firstly from her father but also from the people she is working with and the task she undertakes. She believes a prime part of her role is "being there to make the organisation a better place not only for the company—a more profitable and more efficient business but you are there to make it a better place for the employees". Maria has worked directly in this field for more than 10 years.

2. Donald

Donald's entry in to the field followed undergraduate study and several years working as a teacher, completion of a master degree in psychology and some time in student counselling. As a result of these experiences and study Donald moved into counsellor training. In this role he was involved in direct provision as well as managing the outsourcing of such training. He then moved to working in a university environment where he established and managed a student counselling function for a period of 3 years. A short return to an earlier position of managing the development of counsellors as well as other administrative tasks pertaining to counseling provision followed.

Dissatisfaction with political climate impacting on this work place became a catalyst for Donald's moving to private sector. Following this move initially Donald worked as a project manager and was responsible for designing and delivering interpersonal/personal skills programs for the large number of trainees employed by this organisation. The position, however, changed as a result of a recession in this industry. Instead Donald became involved in redesigning the training and development programs offered by the organisation and in providing management and leadership development programs. To support his performance and strengthen his commercial skills in this more business oriented environment he undertook post-graduate studies in business management.

Donald stayed in this role for approximately 8 years with his major work being in leadership development. As part of the role he designed and delivered programs, engaged experts for program design and outsourced other specialised tasks. As part of this role he also attempted to establish the perspective that

learning and development was not about offering a menu of courses. Learning and development in an organisation he believes requires Land D/HRD specialists to work with participant groups to determine what they really need and about building a customised development approach. During his time with this organisation he formed a strong belief that development was not about sending people on courses. This he sees is only a small part of human resource development. He stated "A lot of my work at this time was really involved with things like facilitating business planning, renegotiating agreement, doing consulting work with various customers, designing new approaches.

Donald was in the process of negotiating a new role as project manager delivering on organisational non-negotiables related to people management and organisational development issues with his organisation when he was offered and took up a position of learning manager in large multinational business solutions organisation. This new role involved overseeing the ongoing maintenance of accreditation and certification of professionals working in the organisation, managing leadership and management development programs including the localising of programs which had been "imported" from the parent company overseas, and exploring opportunities for increasing use of technology to deliver learning experiences as opposed to traditional classrooms. He was also responsible for data gathering related to organisational climate and culture.

Donald sees the skills he requires in his role as being hugely related to relationship management. "Its about having those networks and being in touch with them". He also sees the need for skills in being close to the business and understanding the business, being strategic and needing to work effectively with executives that as well as people management skills.

In talking about his career and the shifts he has made Donald argues "A lot of it is right place right time. I also think its about being able to market, being able to look at what the skills you've got and sell them into a different environment." He believes a willingness to keep examining yourself is important as is a capacity for being receptive wanting to get inside what's driving people.

3. Frances

Frances entered the field of HRD from a background in teaching, curriculum design and policy implementation and project management. Initially she competed an Arts degree and after some time in UK working in publications department of a standards institution, moved in to a school teaching with the aspiration of becoming a secondary school principal. Her grandmother had been a primary school principal and had provided Frances with a strong role model. Frances taught in several states of Australia and in different educational systems as a result of changing employment opportunities which became available to her husband. Such moves strengthened her realisation that she was interested in dealing with issues of inequality through establishing learning experiences.

These moves also led to her undertaking project and contract work. One significant project for which Frances had management responsibility was concerned with providing career information for senior school students. This project influenced Frances thinking about industry as a stakeholder in education. A return to Sydney saw Frances move back into project work with TAFE related to TAFE School pathways program as community liaison person. It was through this position that Frances became interested in competency standards and training packages.

Some dissatisfaction with her work environment led to her moving to another public sector organisation into what was called a "business development manager" position that seemed to match her previous experience. Frances' experience working with competency standards allowed for her to move comfortably onto national committees developing standards for her new industry and to what she saw as a huge learning process as she watched and played a role in the development and then rolling out of a competency approach to human resource development in her industry. In so doing some of her early interest in working for the educationally disadvantaged returned in that the work place as she discovered that while this organisation delivered a vast number of training courses there were no career pathways linked with such learning for employees. She therefore began work in developing a coherent career related program. The work she has done and driven in her unit allows her to claim that her unit has been involved in designing and delivering some of the best competency-based development courses in her industry in the world. Since taking on this HRD role she has developed a unit which has a

more commercial focus and plays a more strategic role in the organisation than it had in the past.

Frances believes that there was some consistency in the different development roles she has played across her career citing that those with whom she is primarily currently working are often employees with same learning/skill levels as when she was teaching in secondary schools. More than 90 per cent of the workforce for which she provides development opportunities have Year 10 school qualifications as their highest educational qualifiactions. Frances therefore has drawn back on some of her earlier experience and training to support this process.

Reflecting on her career Frances acknowledges being influenced by other professionals with whom she has worked. These have become sources of significant technical and political learning for as well as in some cases role models of best practice. She also believes what has driven her career is her passion for good teaching and creating and environment in which effective learning takes place.

4. Cecily

Cecily first ventured into the field area of HRD when she ran evening classes in the use of Word Perfect for some of the clients of the business service company she was managing. She found this experience inspiring. This was a change from the way she was feeling about her secretarial/clerical career. She remembers feeling a buzz from seeing "the look in the eye that says 'I know how to do this'" from learners in her classes. From her clerical position, following her part time training experience she sought employment with a computer training company. When she was first in this new role as a computer trainer, Cecily admitted, she didn't have the first notion of what she was actually supposed to do. She however almost intuitively built up some scenarios and exercises based on the work experience she had had as the basis of her teaching. She stated: "It was instinct. It was more the only way I could teach myself was to find an example. Having worked in secretarial service I knew what examples were necessary for secretarial service". This model of learning by doing was more difficult when she was required to provide training for other professionals. At this point when she was having to work with computer packages she had never

actually used in the work place she decided to move directions and began searching for new opportunities.

The next move was into a Human Resource Administrator position in a large manufacturing organisation. While this role provided her with new insights into administration in a large organisation it did not allow for the interaction she had enjoyed when she was training. After a short time, when a position became available in Human Resource Development as the HRD Co-ordinator with this organisation she took it up. At this stage Cecily realised she needed to know more to play the role required of her in this position so began studying. To build her skills she successfully completed a number of Certificate IV courses including courses in Situational Leadership and Assessment and Workplace Training.

Despite this learning Cecily and her supervisor lost their positions in this organisation at a time of a restructure. Those who gained positions in this organisation after the restructure were those who had had undergraduate degrees- a factor that led Cecily to pursue undergraduate studies. After a very short time in a sales role - a role that Cecily detested - she was back into Human Resource Development, this time as a performance consultant. This position which she had sourced from internet was a position requiring both skills in computer technology and leadership development. This role allowed Cecily to work as a consultant with a range of companies both integrating computer systems and providing training on new systems. This training role required technical proficiency with computers but it also was about working with groups of employees in various organisations and assisting groups to analyse how they could best use the various computer systems to streamline business practice. At the same time there was been a need in the training to introduce sessions on team working and management to maximise effectiveness of system.

Cecily stays in HRD because of the relationships. "I like to build rapport and I like to be acknowledged. The development arena allow this to happen." Cecily reflected on the shifts in her career. She indicated that she had always felt being a secretary was degrading, had enjoyed her early years in the field as primarily a technology trainer but wanted to do more work in the area of leadership facilitation. Cecily also considered some of her learning experiences She remembered the feeling of satisfaction when completing her Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training when she realised that what she had been

doing as a practitioner was appropriate. This helped her overcome a feeling of inadequacy which arose from her leaving school before she had completed the HSC. She saw that her career experience was showing her that she could actually achieve something. She sees some of the other certificated course she has completed and other tertiary study as also validating and being a sign "that you can do it". One of the strengths Cecily believes she has is her capacity to maintain focus. Cecily believes she has grown in confidence as an HRD practitioner. She states of her early days of training and especially consultancy she thought she had to know every facet of business. Now she stated "I am quite happy to say that we need to pull in expert resources that have the sort of experiences needed."

5.Elizabeth

Elizabeth had always been interested in pursuing a foreign languages teaching career, however, her final school results did not allow her to follow this pathway. Initially she began an Arts degree but realised it would not lead her to a career in the direction she wanted and so when offered a chance to work in national security industry which she believed would give her more opportunity of working with people from different countries (following passing an entrance test) she left university. In so doing she still held an interest in the area of helping people learning and gaining skills. She worked in an operational area in this industry for 3 years but realised during this process that there were opportunities for her to move into a training role within the organisation. Initially she began working in the field as a technical trainer within the organisation. The scope of her practice at this stage essentially involved providing new recruits with the technical skills required for work in an operations area. She became aware at this time that technical trainers within this organisation had less status than management trainers. She wanted to have broader experiences available through being a management trainer, and she also wanted further recognition for her training capacity as a technical trainer. This opportunity came when she spent several months on secondment to another division within the organisation. Here she worked on a project that involved the development of a training plan to introduce new legislation that impacted on role of operational staff. It was in this role she was first exposed to the pressures on management and broader pressures and political imperatives impacting on her organisation. She also realised how work in this organisation was closely driven by government legislation and this in itself could be subject

to significant change. During this period of time Elizabeth also learned much more about session planning, using technology as part of training design and working with a strategic orientation. After almost 3 years Elizabeth then moved into management training within the organisation. This shift was not a common shift in her organisation and she had to assert herself to make this change. It was the direction she wanted to move because she wanted a broader role more strategic role in the organisation. In this role, as well as working with different audiences and developing a different skill set in participants, Elizabeth and her colleagues were attempting to move their unit closer to a performance consultancy model as well as providing a calendar of development courses. She argued that her unit was also attempting to make a shift to being more proactive as there was some thinking within her organisation that in recent years this function had been seen as being very reactive. Elizabeth has made a number of career transitions within her comparatively short career in the field of HRD. She moved into training with no formal skills in training and development however she confidently sought and made this move knowing that she had some skills in training from her sports coaching /training background. She believes she has learned for her role as an HRD practitioner from both others in the field as well as through formal study. She says she learned about coaching and providing feedback from her sports background with her own coaches being training role models. She also indicated she learned from particular colleague with whom she had worked during the time when she provided her technical training.

Elizabeth also realised that to equip herself adequately for this area of practice she needed more development. As well as seeking out opportunities to work in different area in her organisation Elizabeth began studies. She firstly completed a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training which she then converted to an Undergraduate degree in Adult Education. She also actively networked particularly through a forum for government agencies which had established a network to address issues arising as a result of the introduction of competency based training. She stated "I attended those meetings reguarly. I was meeting with people from other organisations and talking about training issues and national issues. It broadened my outlook about practice enormously." Elizabeth enjoys her role in training. Her satisfaction comes from seeing people "basically blossom" from having completed training and having extended themselves.

6. John

John had dreamed of becoming a teacher but as a result of his final school results found himself working in the public service. After several years working in a government portfolio area he did not enjoy, he joined the bank. John spent 3 years working in the general banking stream when he attended a supervisors training course which he thoroughly enjoyed. He states of the experience "At that point I made a decision that that was what I wanted to do. So, for the next 6 moths I harassed and harangued my branch manger to nominate me for an opportunity to go into the training department". He then spent 3 years in the training area before returning to general banking stream. After 6 months away from the training role he left the bank for a job in training with a major retailer. He stated "I had the bug. I missed it terribly. I loved the adrenalin rush. I loved the interaction." In his new job he worked initially mainly in customer service and management training and then following an internal move within retail outlet into some sales training based in the suburbs. A further organisational restructure saw John return to city and work with another team developing training for those retail workers working in food sales. During this time John developed both train the trainer and food hygiene programs. John then sought a further move in this organisation taking on sole person role as a training manager in the logistics area. After 6 months in this position John left the organisation. He "jumped ship" of the basis of a predicted restructure fearing he would be retrenched. John's experience in training allowed him to move into a training role with an industry training council. He stayed in this position for a short time predominantly designing and presenting courses but conflict in this work role saw him return to his former employer in a sales and training role. As this role developed John realised it did not lend itself to a lot of training and so he moved on again. This move took him into the insurance industry. His first role in this industry required him to travel around Australia preparing distributors to sell insurance. After several years he moved into a general role of both sales and sales training for insurance agents. He remained with this organisation for 10 years moving on only after the organisation moved out of insurance having sold part of the business and more specifically its client base to another insurance company. John assisted in the transition from one company to the other and then was approached to join a division of the new insurance company as a training manager for eastern states of Australia.

Across his career John has developed skills in substantive content and workplaces processes which are relevant across industries. He has also developed skill sets that allow him to present traditional training programs but also to oversee others in the delivery role. He believes there is an expectation now for trainers to be more competent and multiskilled than in past years. Trainers now require skills in needs analysis and evaluation. He also stated "We are expected to be business managers. It has shifted from requiring people who are instructors to people who are contributing to the bottom line of the business. We have to show now wherever possible we are contributing to the bottom line". John believes most of what he has learned, he has learned on the job. John particularly referred to some people he worked originally with in his banking days as being sources of learning and inspiration although in recent years has gained a Certificate IV qualification and an undergraduate degree.

7.Amy

Amy's entry into training came after approximately 12 months of her working with an aviation organisation. On leaving school she began some studies in psychology but dropped out and joined the aviation organisation with the intention of moving into the personnel department. In those days all entrants to this organisation were required to work their way through a range of organisational functions such as reservations and telephone sales before reaching the function they wanted to work in. Amy was involved in this process when she showed a capacity for carrying out some of technical processes associated with the organisation and the industry. As a result within 12 months of joining the organisation she was training new staff members in various industry procedures. Amy who at this stage had no qualifications in training was told because she was good at the procedures she should do the training. Talking of her early training days Amy stated "Somehow I seemed to be able to do it quite well, not knowing what I was doing, and eventually I started running after hours workshops for people because I wasn't happy with the training they were getting." Amy then moved on to other departments but again, within a few months of learning how to do the work of the function, she was given the job of teaching all the new people. She spent 6 years with this organisation before being head hunted by a hotel opening in the City in which she lived. She was appointed an assistant manager to set up a staff of 50 for the opening of the hotel. The American company that owned the hotel had a very developed training program for its staff. All new managerial staff were trained

in a whole range of courses for the opening including train the trainer, social skills communications skills, supervisory skills training before they set up their departments. Amy admitted that she didn't have the background experience in hospitality to do this job but the employing organisation was more interested in attitude of its new managerial employees that their work background. In this organisation managers of the various departments employees were expected to train all the staff they employed. She went on to say "We trained all our own. Whatever course we needed we ran. Amy left this job because of the demanding hours (80 perweek) and returned to aviation industry. Here she took over a division and once again had full responsibility to get all new staff trained. This position lasted only a short while, as Amy then moved because her husband took up a position interstate. Following another move Amy once again took up a full time position with the aviation company that required her to set up a training program for staff in a function nationally. This position lasted several years before a restructure that saw Ann move into a policy area. At this stage, Amy returned to a hospitality role when she moved into another hotel that was opening. Once again she was responsible for training staff in the area. This time the training preparation involved extensive simulation and videoing of performance It was in this job Amy discovered that you could help people gain really effective work skills without terrifying them

This career was quite short lived as Amy husband was posted overseas for several years. On her return to Australia she joined up with an ex-work colleague and provided tourism training courses for travel agents,. She describes her work "We would run customer service and selling skills courses for travel consultants. So I did that for 12 months, wrote a course and designed it. The first one was in hindsight a bit of a disaster, but from there I started to polish it up a bit".

Amy realised she had quite a high profile in this industry, so she has started her own business. As a human resource development consultant, her main work has involved providing training, needs analysis, conducting assessments, career pathing, coaching and mentoring. While Amy embarked on this career with little formal preparation throughout the last decade she had completed a number of training programs initially through private companies. She actively participates in a number of professional network groups and has also completed undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs.

8 Emma

After Emma completed her Arts degree she became a research assistant at the university for a leading a HR management academic working on a social science project. During this time she pursued postgraduate studies in criminology and became a research officer in the Department of Corrective Services. In that research role she managed a project revising prison officer training program for new prison officers. She argues that she was thrown in at the deep end in this project but this was what led to her into her more 20 year long career in HRD. To develop the program Emma brought in expert consultants. As part of designing this program Emma decided to use her own human behaviour studies and devised a section of the program herself. She then bought in a consultant who helped her deliver it. She states "That guy taught me a lot about how to facilitate and work with groups. He came and ran it (the program) twice then I took over running it". Following this project Emma then moved from her research position in this organisation to general staff development. This aspect of her career came to an end with a move interstate and Emma's career transition into working in the community sector. Her role involved providing education and training for adult education groups including tutors and committees around the state. She then returned to Sydney and took up a position with a computer company as the national training manager. This role had been unfilled for several years so Emma's work entailed putting together programs for the sales force, engineers and product development employees. In this role she set up and co-ordinated programs, designed others and facilitated in other programs. She also started a sales traineeship program while working in this organisation. As Emma had not worked in either the sales or the computing industry she bought in a salesperson as her sales trainer and then worked hard at getting to know the business and the needs of managers. From there she moved to a food manufacturing organisation putting together a structured training system at state level for employees. This initially focused on manufacturing and distribution teams and then she moved her attention to the sales force. In this role, her organisation became one of the first manufacturing organisations to embrace the competency approach to training and the raft of other innovations which were occurring in term the skills formation policy being implemented by government. She made a move within the food manufacturing organisation to a national position in head office which required a strategic capacity. Following some restructuring at that organisation Emma moved. This time she gained an executive development role in a large financial services institution. This role

also entailed working with top employees in both Australia and in overseas branches of this company and with leading management schools in Australia and in the UK. In this role while active in the design Emma 's role rarely required her to deliver training sessions.

At various stages of her career, Emma has been s actively involved in professional associations and has also been a member of a number of committees that were influential in shaping direction of vocational education and training in Australia

Emma sees one of the key skills required by all trainers working in organisations is having an understanding of the business that they are in. She said: "You need to really very quickly get an understanding of the way the management team operates in that company and know the company strategy". She also indicated that work in corporate sector required the HRD practitioner to be very results driven and very clear about what ever they were doing, and what was of benefit for the organisation.

9. Alana

Alana entered the field of HRD after work in the sales or, what she says we would now call the service industry, and in range of small businesses. She says during this time that she always had an interest in people and that was what led to her decision to undertake undergraduate studies in behavioural sciences as a mature age student. Alana had begun such studies hoping to become a practising psychologist. As part of her study experiences she began to engage in part-time counselling. This initially was voluntary work but Alana hoped that this part time work particularly working with drug and alcohol groups would lead to opportunities for some form of supervised psychology practice. To further her options in this direction she also began working with community groups in a health program offered by the Department of Health acting as a group leader in a stress management program. It was at this time, she, for the first time came in contact with group members undertaking the stress management class who suggested she deliver the programs or design and deliver her own programs in their organisations. Such experiences gave Alana her first access to working in an HRD capacity in a large organisation.. At the same time she joined a small training consultancy group on the understanding that she would be writing programs which she would be able to sell and deliver

in corporate sector. Alana had considerable success in doing this especially in terms of hearing what various potential clients wanted and then being able to discuss the design of programs they wanted and sell the consultancy into these corporate organisations. Despite her success frequently she found herself being used as sales person rather than being able to deliver the training she was selling. Alana therefore left this consultancy group but not until she had made a number of contacts which led to her delivering more stress management, communication and supervision type programs. After a very what she called frantic time of approximately 3 years doing this, she then, through her contacts, was invited to join a large recruitment firm as State Training Manager. Her role here was about selling psychology practitioners into organisations to assist with management. This was an exciting time but as she said:

> "Working in consultancy of that type put an enormous pressure on you to make budget all the time so you're not purely focussed on the HRD role. You can't, just like a lot of line managers, have your own focus. I began to think to myself if I have to be bringing in $150-200,00 a year for their company working my butt off I may as well be out there making a half of that or less than half of that for myself."

At this point Alana moved into private consultancy practice. Alana has remained in consultancy practice for more than 15 years working mainly with major corporate organisations is areas related to team building, performance improvement, management development and organisational change. She recognised that her practice has changed considerably in terms of the way of delivery but feels that there has almost be a "loop' in that her early career was about managing stress and emotionality and now she is actively involved in assist in organisations achieve some form of emotional health. Alana has over her career completed both undergraduate and post graduate studies and been actively involved in professional development and other professionally related associations.

10.Paul.

Paul has had an extensive career in HRD having determined when he was at school that teaching was the last career he wanted. As a consequence on leaving school he moved into agriculture. Fairly quickly after completing formal studies in agricultural engineering he found himself working with groups of farmers

giving them advice about good agricultural practice. When Paul migrated to Australia he sought a similar position but found himself teaching in an agricultural college. Many of those he was teaching were straight from school. Paul still hankered for working with farmers in groups and advising them about and providing training in practical approaches to good farming so sought a position within the Extensions Service area of the Department of Agriculture. He worked in rural NSW in this area and was actively involved in developing educationally related activities within the community in general as well as with the agricultural community in particular. As part of the process undertook short courses through a nearby university as well as Graduate Diploma in a bid to improve his own practice. It was through his academic studies and then contact with others as part of professional development activities that Paul developed an interest in organisational development.

He then consciously sought to make a career transition that would allow him to work in the area of organisational change. After some time Paul obtained a position with large manufacturing organisation as a staff development manager. While this position did not afford him the degree of organisational development work as he had hoped, it did allow him to develop within the role. Paul remained with this organisation for almost 18years. In that time his focus initially was with staff but as he developed his approach to training and development he found he was working with various levels of management to bring about change. This shift particularly occurred as line managers took on more of the basic employee training role. Towards the end of his career Paul sought redundancy as part of an organisational restructuring process and then established himself as an external consultant and delivered training programs back into the organisation. He sees this shift as only a minimal change seeing much of his work in the organisation was as an internal consultant to various functions. Paul enjoyed his career in training and development and for that matter spending much of it with one organisation. He felt part of his enjoyment came from being able to develop new approaches and try things out.

11. Susan

As a young woman working overseas in hospitality Susan contemplated career opportunities in training and development however having moved from hospitality and back to Australia she established a very successful career in secretarial field. After many years of practice and having risen to the most

senior secretarial position in a manufacturing organisation, Susan sought to move into HRD position when the company for which she had been working moved interstate and Susan found herself searching for a new position. During her time in a secretarial position Susan had completed diploma level qualifications in HR and she had been actively involved in recruitment and selection and other HR functions. She had also particularly enjoyed delivering short computer training programs she had written to upskill staff in her organisation. When the time came to move organisations Susan therefore sought to locate herself in an organisation which would provide her with the opportunity to move into a training and development role. She initially secured herself an administrative role in a pharmaceutical manufacturing organisation but fairly quickly sought information about how she could move into a training/HRD role within that organisation. This shift was initially difficult.

To better position herself Susan undertook further study specifically in the HRD field. Within approximately 12 months, having completed additional study, Susan, was offered a position as a training officer. This was the first time this position had been available and at first Susan spent most of her time "coming to grips with the paper work" and operating as a training administrator. She also used this time however to observe the training skills and practices of her boss who delivered most of the corporate training. After some time she began sharing the delivery of small sections of various training programs being offered or providing training for more junior staff members. Susan also drew on her computer skill strengths and established a computer learning centre within the Corporate section of the organisation. This was a successful move. This centre which began as one computer behind a screen in the first aid room, developed and eventually had 6 computers and a range of programs and provided training for relatively senior members of staff. Experiences associated with the establishment and maintenance of this centre provided Susan with confidence to take on bigger tasks. Within 2 years she was promoted to position as Associate Manager. This promotion enabled her to participate more in the delivery of programs. She also was responsible for the development of a number of programs and training manuals. Further organisational restructures occurred and within several years Susan was promoted to Corporate Training Manager. This role saw her running training programs such as management development, supervisor development, and behaviour skills development for participants from all divisions within the organisation. She was also

responsible for overseeing the "Australianisation" of programs developed by parent company in the US and participating in meetings with other training managers from the Asian region of the company which provided opportunities to share understandings about the company as well as development practices.

Susan's believes that her practices have developed as she has been responsible for development programs in a wide range of areas and with a broader group of audiences. She argues that in her organisation she has tried to build a belief that training is no longer "a day out of the office and a nice lunch thrown in". She has also worked at developing training programs that have a more strategic orientation with those attending meeting learning skills that needs of their section and the organisation.

Susan has been active in her attempt to learn about this area of practice. She has undertaken formal studies as part of her pursuit of a career in this field. She has also been very active in establishing a network of practitioners from whom and with whom she can learn about practical approaches that achieve results. When considering what drives her desire to maintain her career in this field Susan stated: "I love the creative side of putting together a program and I like to see the finished package, but I get a real buzz out of standing up in front of people and delivering a program because I really like to talk to people and draw out their expertise. I don't like to impart my knowledge as much as for them to realise that they have the knowledge. They just didn't have the particular label for it. I love to see the light switch on for them."

12. Sylvia

Sylvia's career in human resource development has extended over approximately 30 years. During that time she has worked in both public and private sectors organisations, with tertiary education institutions, with not-for - profit organisations, as an independent consultant and as a volunteer on international projects. Her career in this field could be seen as beginning when she, as a health technician, began tertiary studies in psychology in a bid to provide better customer service to anxious clients. These studies were completed in two continents as Sylvia began travelling mid way through her studies. Sylvia's' work in Australia began in the health sector. After completing her studies in psychology she became a full times Social work student, supporting her studies with research work into HRD initiatives being

implemented by a major Australian utility. Sylvia gained this entry into organisational HRD by applying for the research positions which were posted with the vocational guidance centre of the university at which Sylvia was studying. Talking about this experience Sylvia stated: "There was some uneasiness about being a "bleeding heart" social worker in the corporate arena and why wasn't I working in the employee assistance team. I said I considered the employee assistance program as being part of the overall HRD function".

The next major change in Sylvias's career came with her moving into private practice and completing HRD work as a freelance practitioner when she moved to Asia with her husband. Initially she worked on assertiveness training, leadership skills for women, negotiation skills training programs and other program which enabled female health practitioners to go back into their local communities and deliver preventative health programs. She also providing programs with the Chamber of Commerce. On returning to Australia Sylvia initially worked as a career counsellor with one of the universities before being head hunted as manager of training and development team by another utility company. Here she ran management development and executive development programs and set up and managed an organisational development program. She was also responsible for establishing a performance management system that became a prototype for a large number of state government departments. This prominence of this program resulted in Sylvia being invited to join a major financial institution to work on, amongst other projects, an executive development program. In this role Sylvia worked with an American academic consultancy team in implementing a capability assessment program which provided tools which assisted with executive coaching, succession planning and organisational modelling. During this time Sylvia was accredited to use these tools as an individual practitioner. After 2 years of considerable learning Sylvia moved again to Asia with her partner and once again went into private practice commuting between Australia and Asia for several years according to client needs. She also became involved in the cultural industries while in Asia and to better inform herself of needs of the sector undertook a post graduate studies in the area. The experiences resulting from such study and consultancy in the cultural industry led to Sylvia completing a doctorate that focused on leadership in the cultural industry. Sylvia's private practice and reputation has continued to grow from these experiences. She has actively published findings from her research and work and been invited speaker at UNESCO conferences as well as becoming an Honorary Fellow of at least one Australian university.

Sylvia's work has changed over the years of her practice. She stated "I only engage in projects which are long and deep. I don't do training programs-I haven't for a decade. I only engage in learning and development processes for individual organisational change. The shortest projects are for 3 months and the longest are for 6 months." The focus of Sylvia's work is transferring skills or a process across and in the organisation and to embed it if not in the practitioners then at least in the organisational systems and in the organisational cultures. She sees her practice as focussing on 3 areas - leadership development with a program based on her doctoral research; change management and enculturing change management or training change agents in organisations managing culture shifts, and, working with global organisations helping expatriate employees and their families move from one culture to another. Sylvia sees HRD practices as being about maximising human potential. She argued it is really about, making a difference in the way work is done so that people can realise their potential as effectively as possible. About her own career she stated "having lived through 6 different transitions because of geographical shifts I have been given wonderful insights into ... how to locate career as a set of competencies. And if you can then figure out what it is to develop those competencies and keep some sort of driving passions around that then you can root it up and put it somewhere else".