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**DEVELOPMENTAL MANAGERS**  
**LINE MANAGERS AS FACILITATORS OF WORKPLACE**  
**LEARNING IN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

BY

RONA S. BEATTIE

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY  
TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
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**THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
SHIRLEY BEATTIE (1932-1999)**

**AN EXEMPLARY AND LOVING FACILITATOR OF  
LEARNING**

## ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the behaviours used by voluntary sector senior and first line managers when facilitating employee learning in the workplace. The thesis also considers the inhibitory behaviours used by line managers. The research topic is growing in importance given the increasing drive to devolve Human Resource Development responsibilities to line managers. Yet we have limited theoretical and empirical understanding of how managers deal with such responsibilities.

Following an extensive literature review of the voluntary sector, learning, and the line manager as developer, five research questions were identified. These are:

- i. What do line managers do *to facilitate* learning?
- ii. What do line managers do *to inhibit* learning?
- iii. What *motivates* line managers to develop staff?
- iv. What influence do *individual* factors have on developmental behaviours?
- v. What influence do *organisational* factors have on developmental behaviours?

Case study methodology, within the traditions of phenomenology, has been used to address these research questions

The empirical research was conducted in two social care organisations in the voluntary sector. The culture and values of voluntary organisations provide relatively unexplored territory for management research and may provide an environment conducive for line managers to act as developers. Furthermore, exploration of the voluntary sector helps address a significant deficit in management knowledge.

The findings reveal that environmental drivers such as the ‘contract’ culture created demand for learning in both organisations. Organisational factors such as organisational history, mission, strategy, structure, culture, the nature of the workforce, HRD strategy and learning climate all contributed to the nature of developmental interactions and relationships, and influenced the behaviour of line managers. In particular, the role of supervision in social care was seen to be significant. Individual factors such as educational background, career experience,

learning style, motivation to learn and/or to support learning also influenced the growth of developmental relationships and the behaviours used by managers.

The study has identified nine categories of facilitative behaviours: caring, informing, being professional, advising, assessing, thinking, empowering, developing developers and challenging. Eight categories of inhibitory behaviours, which mirror some of the facilitative behaviours, were identified and these are: being unassertive, not giving time, being task-orientated, withholding information, being dogmatic, not assessing, not thinking and controlling.

The thesis concludes by discussing implications for theory and practice that have emerged from this study. This includes the presentation of a Developmental Manager model, a future research agenda and lessons for stakeholders, such as employers, HRD specialists, managers and the academic community. In this final chapter the author also engages in a process of epistemic reflexivity.

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## **CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION**

Every encounter between a superior and subordinate involves learning of some kind. When the boss gives an order, asks for a job to be done, reprimands, praises...deals with a mistake...or takes any other action, he is teaching them something. The day to day experience on the job is so much more powerful that it tends to overshadow what the individual may learn in other settings (McGregor, 1960).

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the thesis by describing the research problem – line managers as facilitators of learning - before outlining the research aim and questions. The chapter then discusses why the study was conducted in the voluntary sector, and considers the potential theoretical and applied implications arising from this study. The chapter concludes by outlining a plan of the thesis, providing a brief overview of each chapter.

### **2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Over the past ten years there has been growing recognition of the devolution of Human Resource Development (HRD) responsibilities to line managers (e.g. AMED, 1991; Mumford, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; Heraty and Morley, 1995; Bevan et al. 1995). Indeed Salaman (1995) has argued that:

...key managerial competencies...are those which support the management of performance or the management of learning (p.5).

Until very recently, however, there has been limited research into what managers do as facilitators of learning (AMED, 1991; Mumford, 1993; Heraty and Morley, 1995; IPD, 1995; Horowitz, 1999). Yet the increased attention to development on and through the job inevitably throws greater weight on managers themselves as developers of others (Mumford, 1993).

As a consequence of this paucity of research we have limited understanding of what behaviours managers demonstrate in developmental interactions (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999).

Therefore, due to a resurgence in recognition of the workplace as a site of ‘natural learning’ (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983) there has been increasing awareness of the need to consider the developmental responsibilities and behaviours of line managers both from academic (e.g. Marsick and Watkins, 1997; Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999) and policy perspectives (e.g. NSTF, 2000; IPD, 2000; SCVO, 1999).

The capability and commitment of managers and key workers throughout an organisation’s hierarchy are the most important factors in determining the provision and effectiveness of workplace learning (both formal and informal) (NSTF, 2000, p.37).

Although there is an extensive literature on developmental roles that managers may play, such as mentor and coach, much of this literature is prescriptive, and there appears to be relatively few examples of substantive research and empirical studies.

The HRD literature is somewhat normative and rhetorical in exhorting line managers to take responsibility for training and development (Horowitz, 1999, p. 187).

The critical role of line managers in learning has also been recognised by the new Investors in People (IiP) standard whose eighth indicator is ‘managers are effective in supporting the development of people’. The evidence sought for this indicator is outlined below:

- The organisation makes sure that managers have the knowledge and skills they need to develop their people.
- Managers at all levels understand what they need to do to support the development of people.
- People understand what their manager should be doing to support their development.
- Managers at all levels can give examples of actions that they have taken and are currently taking to support the development of people.
- People can describe how their managers are effective in supporting their development

(IiP National Standard, 2000)

It is hoped that this thesis will show voluntary organisations, and others, how to fulfil this requirement.

However, it has been suggested, in contrast to the rhetoric of normative literature, that the devolution of HRD to line managers is not unproblematic (Salaman, 1995; Clutterbuck, 1998; Horowitz, 1999; IPD, 2000).

The reality is that it is the exception rather than the norm. Delegating this responsibility effectively to line managers carries problems and risks. Line managers are not specialists in people management...Ownership of HRD responsibility may not form part of the key performance objectives of a manager...Workloads of line managers usually reflect other priorities than developing employees. Line managers may lack the confidence and organisational support to take on responsibility for HRD...The above discussion does not deny the validity of the idea that line managers become responsible for developing their people, but HRD literature and practice fails to address satisfactorily how this should occur (Horowitz, 1999, pp. 187-188).

Managers do not always have the skills of leader, coach and change agent ready to hand. How many of them understand how teams learn, about learning styles, about the psychology of learning, about evaluation and about knowledge management (IPD, 2000, p.1)?

### **3. RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS**

The aim of this thesis is to identify the developmental behaviours of line managers. To achieve this aim, and following an extensive literature review, the following five questions have been developed:

- i. What do line managers do *to facilitate* learning?
- ii. What do line managers do *to inhibit* learning?
- iii. What *motivates* line managers to develop staff?
- iv. What influence do *individual* factors have on developmental behaviours?
- v. What influence do *organisational* factors have on developmental behaviours?

One aspect significantly lacking from the existing literature is the discussion and analysis of significant episodes or critical incidents from individuals' careers where managers have had a positive (or negative) impact on the development of their staff.

...[Yet] the shift from training to learning [means] that both managers and workers are now seen to have a considerable impact on the processes and structures of learning systems, alongside experts such as trainers and educational advisers. Accordingly, their views and insights with respect to their own actions and strategies have gained a more central position (Van der Krogt and Vermulst, 2000).

Such analysis would provide a clearer insight into the behaviour of Developmental Managers, who are defined here as managers who develop self, staff and others. It is a proposition of this research that managers who take an active interest in developing their staff are likely to engage in self-development, and to take an interest in supporting the development of others, not just their direct reports.

Having addressed these research questions the author has developed a Developmental Manager model to enhance our understanding of how environmental, organisational and individual variables interact with the Developmental Manager role. Finally, it is hoped that the outcomes of this thesis will improve theoretical and applied understanding of the role of line managers as facilitators of learning.

#### **4. THE RESEARCH CONTEXT**

This study has been conducted in the voluntary sector because voluntary organisations, with their emphasis on participative decision-making and values, particularly those associated with the organisation's cause (Paton and Cornforth, 1992), may provide a fertile environment for learning and Developmental Managers.

Voluntary organizations, even more than other organizations, have implicit not just explicit aims. One of these is providing opportunities for learning (Dartington, 1992, p.30).

Such potential is heightened in the field of social care where the tradition of supervision – ‘the platform for training and development’ (Gilbert and Scragg, 1992, p.184) – emphasises the developmental role of line managers.

There is also a desire in the sector:

...to reconcile management practice with the values of voluntary organizations and the pursuit of various progressive aims, such as greater equality and participation (Batsleer et al., 1992, p.xii).

The voluntary sector provides a relatively untapped terrain for management researchers, as it has not been exposed to the same theoretical and empirical scrutiny as the public and private sectors, and therefore offers new perspectives on management issues and problems.

The contribution of voluntary sector management to the development of management thinking and practice in general needs to be noted. There is a dawning realisation that managing in voluntary and non-profit enterprises may provide useful insights into the definition of generic management roles and competences. Most immediately, the experience of voluntary sector managers is particularly relevant to managers operating in sections of the erstwhile public sector – in schools, colleges and hospitals and so forth – for whom simple private sector models of management are woefully inappropriate (Batlseer, 1995, p.225)

Within HRM specifically it has been argued that research in the non-profit sector is needed to redress the dominance in the literature of for-profit organisations (Kamoche, 2001) and to evaluate the relevance of HRM for voluntary organisations (Cunningham, 1999). An initial attempt to do this was seen last year with the publication of a special edition of a mainstream HRM journal, *Employee Relations*, devoted to the voluntary sector. In it the guest editor noted that the UK voluntary sector literature itself is bereft of any substantial bibliography of employment-related books. Moreover, employment-related articles in the internationally respected refereed academic journals, such as *Voluntas* and *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* are rare (Cunningham, 2001a). As a consequence we know little about people management in the voluntary sector (Cunningham, 2001b). This is a matter of some concern given that staff in the sector care for the most vulnerable groups in our society, and the effectiveness of that provision is linked to the commitment (and skills) of those staff (Paton and Cornforth, 1992).

However, whilst yet nowhere near the level of public and corporate management studies, voluntary sector management is beginning to emerge as a growing research field in the UK (e.g. Butler and Wilson; 1990; Paton and Hooker, 1990; Taylor, 1991;

Batsleer et al., 1992; Bruce and Raymer, 1992; Bruce and Leat, 1993; Billis and Harris, 1996; Osborne, 1996a).

In the late 1980s Druker suggested that organisations in the future would be knowledge-based, composed largely of specialists, who manage their own work and bear little resemblance to the manufacturing sector which dominates many management texts. He concluded that many voluntary organisations resemble this *future* and also argued that voluntary organisations have the best management practices (Druker, 1989).

This theme is developed further by Dartington (1992) who argues that the private sector is now recognising management principles which have long been understood in the voluntary sector, such as:

- i. People value a sense of ownership of what they are doing.
- ii. Organisation around task is more effective than organisation around the management of resources.
- iii. Authoritarian management has limited effect and potential compared with networking democratic management.
- iv. Individual initiative can be encouraged.
- v. The quality of the work done is the most important indicator of effectiveness
- vi. Intuition and creation are often more effective than going by the book.

In conclusion, the potential theoretical and applied implications emerging from this study include:

- i. Voluntary sector organisations providing an alternative perspective for management, management development and HRD theory and practice, which may lead to the development of new theoretical models and practices.
- ii. The enhancement of knowledge and understanding about both line managers as developers and voluntary sector management, thus contributing to the development of effective management education and development.

## **5. PLAN OF THESIS**

Chapter Two defines the voluntary sector, explores the context of the voluntary sector, and considers features, such as values, that differentiate it from the public and private sectors. The chapter then considers the role and practice of HRM, and HRD in particular within the voluntary sector.

Chapter Three explores learning theory. The relevance and influence of concepts, such as HRD, workplace learning, organisational learning and the learning organisation, ethics, and adult learning, to the role of line managers as developers are examined.

Chapter Four reviews the literature on managers as developers. This chapter examines the devolution of HRD to line managers, self-development and developmental roles. The limited normative and empirical literature on the behaviours of line manager as developers is then reviewed. The chapter also considers how line managers may be developed and supported. The chapter concludes by presenting the conceptual framework and research questions that have emerged from the literature review outlined in Chapters 2-4.

Chapter Five outlines the research strategy adopted for this thesis. The chapter explores the epistemological debate in management research before outlining the methodology and methods adopted in this study. The chapter concludes with consideration of the limitations of the approach adopted.

Chapters Six and Seven respectively describe the two case study organisations, Richmond Fellowship Scotland (RFS) and Quarriers. The chapters explore organisational factors, such as their histories, organisational strategies, structures and cultures, which provide the context for developmental managers' activities. The chapters focus particularly on the HRD strategies and practices, such as supervision, used by the organisations.

Chapter Eight provides an analysis of the facilitative behaviours demonstrated by the managers in this study. The chapter commences by providing some background data

about the managers such as gender, qualifications and length of service. Nine categories of facilitative behaviours have been identified.

Chapter Nine provides an analysis of the inhibitory behaviours demonstrated by the managers. Eight categories of inhibitory behaviours have been identified.

Chapter Ten explores the interaction of a range of learning variables on each other including organisational commitment to learning, formal learning opportunities, experiential and informal learning, managers stimulation of learning, learning climate and organisational learning.

Chapter Eleven presents a cross-case analysis of RFS and Quarriers to identify the environmental and organisational variables that have influenced the nature of developmental interactions and developmental behaviours. The chapter then discusses the individual variables that have influenced the way managers and learners have interacted. Developmental relationships are explored to examine the nature, process and content of developmental interactions, and the behaviours, facilitative and inhibitory, demonstrated by managers.

Chapter Twelve compares and contrasts the empirical results with existing knowledge, theory and concepts before identifying an agenda for future research. This final chapter also identifies lessons for stakeholders. The chapter then presents a Developmental Manager model and confirms that the five research questions have been answered. Finally, the chapter concludes with author engaging in a process of epistemic reflexivity regarding the conduct and outcomes of this doctoral study.

## **CHAPTER 2 - THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

The Voluntary Sector is increasingly recognised as an important force within Scottish Society. In a recent debate, the Scottish Parliament acknowledged the significant role played by the voluntary sector in service delivery, its commitment to the social economy and its growing role in policy development and in strengthening communities (SCVO, 1999).

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The chapter begins by exploring the context of the voluntary sector by defining it, comparing it with other sectors, and by examining the environmental factors that have and are shaping the sector. The chapter then explores Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) in the voluntary sector, particularly development of managers and the role of supervision in developing staff.

### **2. DEFINITION OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

#### **2.1 Defining the sector**

The first problem any voluntary sector researcher has is defining the sector (Butler and Wilson, 1990; Paton, 1992; Leat, 1993; Smith and Lipsky, 1993).

The effort to develop theories of nonprofit organisations has to confront the reality that 'nonprofit' does not crisply modify 'organisation' in patterned ways (Smith and Lipsky, 1993, p.39)

Various terms for the aggregation of such organisations include voluntary sector, non-government organisations, the independent sector, the third sector or non-profit sector. Definitions tend to include any organisation that is not government or non-profit making. Some definitions substitute 'non-profit distributing' for non-profit-seeking as a more accurate definition of modern voluntary organisations. Butler and Wilson (1990) suggest that within the voluntary sector, registered charities are easier to define because of legal parameters, but even here they acknowledge there are ambiguities. Under English law recognised charitable activities include education, relief of the poor, advancement of religion and other services of benefit to the community.

Trustees must not benefit and beneficiaries cannot be givers, therefore self-help groups are excluded (ibid.).

Paton (1992) states that initially the term voluntary meant 'independent of government'. However, he suggests this interpretation is increasingly contentious with the increase in contracting and voluntary organisations' participation in government policies. He further suggests that the meaning now given to voluntary derives from the idea of volunteering and quotes Adirondack (1989):

Even when the work is done by paid staff, these groups are still called "voluntary", partly because of their connection to volunteer groups and partly because they are managed by voluntary (unpaid) management committees.

Although even this definition Paton suggests is not without its problems as it could apply to other organisations such as schools with parent governors, and in Scotland - school boards, which nobody would naturally consider as voluntary organisations. According to Handy (1988) voluntary organisations are organisations that are not profit seeking, government-run, or owned by anyone.

The Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) (1999) defines voluntary organisations as bodies that are:

... 'volunteer led', that is the governance of the organisation is by unpaid volunteers. They are non-statutory and independent of state control and direction. They are non-profit distributing and any surplus is put back into the work of the organisation itself. Finally, the sector provides a public or community benefit from its operations, often to particularly marginalised or excluded communities (p.5).

This thesis uses the SCVO definition since the empirical work was conducted in organisations that are members of SCVO.

## **2.2 Scale of the voluntary sector**

The European Commission has highlighted the socio-economic importance of voluntary organisations:

...the sector [contributes] to employment creation as well as active citizenship, democracy, social services and in promoting and safeguarding human rights (European Commission (1997) *Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe*, EC Communications cited in SCVO, 1999, pp.3-4).

The third sector<sup>1</sup> employs an estimated 19m FTEs in Europe, complemented by a substantial volunteer workforce equivalent to a further 10.4m FTEs. The sector is the fastest net creator of jobs in the EU in recent years. The sector is estimated to employ 512,000 paid staff in the UK, accounting for around 2.2% of UK employment (VSNT0, 2001a). The sector accounts for 1.89% of UK GDP, and has an annual income of £14 billion (NCVO, 2000).

The 1990s were a period of rapid growth for the sector with the workforce growing by 60% between 1990-1997 due to economic growth, fundraising efforts of voluntary organisations and a range of government initiatives (VSNT0, 2001c). The sector also provides untold social benefits.

There are around 136,000 registered voluntary and community organisations in the UK, Scotland alone has 44,000 voluntary organisations, plus thousands more community groups working informally. As will be seen below the sector is diverse:

...ranging from small community based organisations with no paid staff to large household-name charities with thousands of paid staff. In the smaller organisations one person (sometimes paid, sometimes not) is often responsible for a wide range of functions from management to fundraising and day-to-day administration. Large voluntary organisations often have complex regional and management structures with specialists for areas such as marketing and human resources. All voluntary organisations have a voluntary management committee, responsible for the governance and strategic management of the organisation (VSNT0, 2001b, p.3).

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<sup>1</sup> An EU term for the voluntary sector

Voluntary organisations operate in a wide range of fields including social care, housing, childcare, disability, health, the environment, cultural heritage, the arts, advice, counselling, guidance and education (ibid.).

Harris et al. (2001) remind us that the Wolfenden Committee (1978) argued that the sector exists because it fills gaps, provides alternatives and identifies new needs and new means of service delivery.

Given the sector's growing significance now seems an appropriate and opportune time to conduct research into the sector.

### **2.3 Typologies**

Leat (1993) identifies various characteristics used to develop typologies of voluntary organisations: industry; source of income; bases of participation; beneficiaries; mission; accessibility; and status. She asserts that there is no 'typical' voluntary organisation, just as there is no typical for-profit organisation. Therefore generalisations should be made with caution. Handy (1988) also supports this view.

However, he suggests that there are commonalities and identifies three main types of voluntary activity, which are:

- i. Mutual support - organisations created to link people with a particular problem or enthusiasm who can provide understanding, advice, and support e.g. sufferers of multiple sclerosis, alcoholics or hobbies. These bodies require a minimal amount of organisation to support members for meetings and information provision
- ii. Service delivery – such as Quarriers and Richmond Fellowship Scotland, the case study organisations in this research. Some have so many paid staff that it is hard to tell them apart from their counterparts in the statutory sector. They are dependent as much on government grants (now contracts) as on voluntary contributions. Handy claims organisation is important in these bodies. They

exist to meet a need and have pride in being professional, effective and low-cost. These are 'managed' organisations. They have the 'paraphernalia of bureaucracy', jobs with formal definitions and responsibilities, formal accountability to other bodies and need staff with professional qualifications.

This thesis concentrates on this category within the social and health care fields as such organisations may employ large numbers of staff, are facing considerable change through government policy, such as Care in the Community, and as their work is complementary to other sectors, notably the public sector (particularly social services and NHS). It may therefore be possible, in the future, to compare practices and policies between sectors.

- iii. Campaigning Organisations - e.g. CND have been created to campaign for a cause or to act as a pressure group for a particular interest. These organisations are led rather than managed, need good administration and well-written literature. The essence of the organisation is adherence to the cause, focused on a leader, often a charismatic one, and the only qualification for belonging is believing.

Handy acknowledges that the above categorisation is crude and that many voluntary organisations fit all three categories. However each category has unspoken and implicit assumptions about the nature of organisations and how they ought to be run.

There are also national and local umbrella or co-ordinating bodies e.g. SCVO, Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS), and Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS).

Kramer (1987) also notes that voluntary organisations are included in a special class of formal organisations called human service organisations, which share a common set of attributes.

They work directly with people whom they seek to change, process, or care for by making available critical resources for their maintenance, enhancement, protection, or restoration of well-being (p.242).

Both case study organisations in this study would fit into this classification.

An international attempt to classify voluntary organisations has been undertaken with the development of the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (INCPO) (Kendall and Knapp, 1993). The application of this classification system, designed to link with existing Standard Industrial Classifications, in Scotland is presented in Appendix 1, and demonstrates the diversity of the sector. The strata of most relevance for this study Health and Social Services accounts for nearly half of voluntary sector activity in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. COMPARISON WITH OTHER SECTORS**

#### **3.1 Differences**

There is no simple answer to the question ‘what is different about managing voluntary and non-profit organisations?’ No characteristic is universal and exclusive to voluntary organisations which make their management processes significantly different from those in other sorts of organisations. However:

...managing in voluntary and non-profit organisations will often be different in significant ways and for good reasons when compared with many other organizations. The difficulty lies in expressing the nature and significance of those differences without getting caught up in, or reinforcing, the stereotypes, both positive and negative, of the different sectors. For every sector has its positive self-image and legendary figures - and its negative caricatures of the other sectors (Paton and Cornforth, 1992, p.45).

There are factors, which when combined, can make managing in voluntary organisations ‘*different*’ (Paton and Cornforth, 1992; Bruce and Raymer, 1992; Leat, 1993) including:

- social goals - which make it more difficult to determine priorities and evaluate performance

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<sup>2</sup> NB: this is based on membership of SCVO, not all voluntary organisations are necessarily members of SCVO.

- particular resource acquisition and management issues associated with independent, non-trading organisations
- the nature and variety of stakeholders and their relationships with voluntary organisations
- a 'way of doing things' or culture that emphasises value commitments and participatory-democratic decision-making
- operation through small, informal units
- the virtual absence of complex technological systems
- high lay involvement in policy-making and management

Steane (1997) argues that voluntary organisations are more likely to have greater emphasis on expressive, rather than instrumental values, and as such are likely to be:

Affiliative and human in their orientation and favour an ontological contribution to a person, that is, those values which are integral to being human or contribute to enhancing humanity (p.6).

He continues that the ideal of value neutrality in human services is not feasible as there are:

...a myriad of implicit and explicit beliefs about the world which contributes to conduct and preferences (p.16).

Butler and Wilson (1990) also argue that voluntary organisations have distinctive cultures.

Many charities are characterised by their organisational cultures, which are dominantly moral, self-reflective, democratic, participative and altruistic (p.51).

Whilst Taylor (1996a) identified the following ethical standards for voluntary organisations:

- The equal consideration of people's interests and values.
- The need to be honest and truthful.

- The need to promote fairness.
- The need to act impartially.
- The importance of applying ethical principles and practice universally and in a consistent manner.

Paton and Cornforth (1992) suggest that such factors create three implications for managers in voluntary organisations.

- i. A large proportion of managers in voluntary organisations need to be 'all-rounders,' with a fair grasp of most aspects of the organisation's activities, tackling strategic issues which in larger organisations would be the responsibility of senior managers.
- ii. There is a premium on personal sensitivity and influence in situations, e.g. with external stakeholders and other staff, where managers cannot rely on the authority of their position or on incentives. These personal skills include the ability to handle intense value differences and to deal appropriately with people from different social or organisational worlds.
- iii. Managers must cope with considerable uncertainty and ambiguity. These may result from an unstructured work environment, insecure resourcing and the need to accommodate a range of conflicting principles and expectations, both internally and externally.

Clearly management roles making these demands and needing these abilities exist in all sorts of organisations. Any difference is one of relative frequency and degree (Ibid.).

The influence of these factors has been explored by investigating the culture and management practices of each organisation.

### **3.2 Similarities**

Leat (1993) suggests that there are increasing pressures for the voluntary and for-profit sectors to converge:

Non-profits, through the processes of resource dependence and institutional isomorphism, are becoming more like their public and private sector 'colleagues' in a whole range of ways from increased trading to adoption of professional management structures and processes...at the same time for-profit organisations are also changing, not least in their discovery of the importance of solidary, expressive characteristics in successful organisations. The net result of these two trends may be increasing convergence between non-profit and for-profit organisations (p.17).

She argues that boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred and that there is increasing overlap between organisations as well as growth of 'hybrid for-profit/non-profit organisations'. She proposes that it might be more appropriate to focus on organisational types (e.g. residential homes) rather than sector labels, based on sectoral stereotypes. This emphasis she suggests may provide greater rigour and clarity, as well as helping respective sectors learn from each other. However, such a study would face significant methodological difficulties. This empirical study has therefore focused only on voluntary organisations. Although it is still hoped that lessons learned here will be of benefit to wider management theory.

#### **4. CONTEXT OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

This section examines the context of the voluntary sector in the UK, and Scotland in particular.

##### **4.1 Political, Economic and Legal Context**

The voluntary sector is playing an increasing role in national economy and social policy because:

...when it comes to the 'softer' products such as health care, education and welfare, there are considerable problems in relying solely on the marketplace for service provision since it relies so heavily on profitable returns (Butler and Wilson, 1990, p.11).

In the UK the political changes of the 1980s, notably the Conservative Government's social and economic policies, affected the funding and ideological climate of

voluntary organisations (Batsleer et al., 1992). Voluntary organisations became a vehicle for implementing Government programmes e.g. job creation and training schemes, and political priorities.

Throughout the 1990's, voluntary agencies are likely to be viewed by government [increasingly] as a substitute provider or public agent; a preferred alternative, rather than, as in the Wolfenden Report (1978), as a supplement or complement to statutory provision (Kramer, 1992, p.186).

The most significant policy development, for this thesis, was the NHS and Community Care Act in 1990, which had four key elements impacting on the voluntary sector (Scott and Russell, 2001).

- i. A shift from institutional to community care;
- ii. An emphasis on needs-led (user/carer preferences) services rather than supply-led ones;
- iii. A decentralisation of strategic responsibilities from central to local government; and,
- iv. The development of a mixed economy of care with independent for-profit and non-profit providers alongside, or instead of, state provision.

The development of this 'mixed economy of care' model has led to many major charities being substantially funded by the state. However, this funding has increasingly come through contracts to provide specific services rather than grants (ibid.). Such funding brings increasing monitoring and evaluation of performance (Batsleer et al., 1992; Batsleer, 1995; Taylor, 1996b; Cunningham, 2001a; Deakin, 2001). It has also contributed to the increasing adoption of quality initiatives such as IiP, SQMS and EFQM (Taylor, 1996b; SCVO, 1999).

Funding is therefore a very complex issue for individual voluntary organisations and can be influenced by the level of dependency on public funding. There is therefore a need for voluntary sector managers to devote substantial time and energy to managing the funding relationship (Butler and Wilson, 1990), although this is not a topic for this study. Many voluntary organisations also have to cope with financial uncertainties

because of the changing priorities of statutory sector funders (Batsleer et al., 1992; Cunningham, 2001a).

Smith and Lipsky (1993) suggest somewhat controversially that this pressure to become more businesslike and professional has impacted negatively on responsiveness to clients and non-profit values. Butler and Wilson (1990) suggest that growing professionalisation itself will lead to increased competition between voluntary organisations, which Taylor (1996b) suggests will reduce the traditions of collaboration and co-operation in the sector. The effects of the 'contract' culture on management and staff development will be investigated later in this study by exploring the environmental factors that are influencing learning in voluntary organisations.

The influence of government on the sector is likely to continue as the current Labour government, whilst moving from a 'contract culture' to a 'partnership culture', has emphasised the need for 'best value' which requires competition for contracts and tight performance standards (Cunningham, 2001a).

Harris et al. (2001) provide a useful summary of the impact of changes in social policy over the past 20 years on the voluntary sector. Firstly, during the Thatcher era voluntary organisations were:

...propelled into the centre of the social policy stage with an expanded role in welfare provision. Instead of meeting social needs in ways which complemented, supplemented or provided an alternative to the state, voluntary organisations increasingly took responsibility for delivering 'mainstream' services which were previously provided by statutory bodies. Their importance and status were dramatically enhanced. Governmental agencies, particularly local authority departments now *needed* voluntary organisations in order to plan and implement their social policies.

On the other hand, although the voluntary sector's status was enhanced by the pluralist trends in social policy, other concurrent themes in social policy in the Thatcher period were increasingly leading voluntary sector managers to feel that they were at best 'junior partners' in the new era of welfare pluralism and at worst helpless supplicants. The market became the dominant model for understanding the relationship between governmental organisations and agencies in other sectors. Thus voluntary organisations became 'providers' and 'contractors',

competing to sell their services to government 'purchasers' and increasingly guided by agreements which specified expected performance levels in some detail. At the same time, commercial business practices became the preferred model for managing all organisations, irrespective of sector, and voluntary organisations were expected to demonstrate that they were 'business-like' if they wanted to participate in the social policy market-place (pp.3-4).

More recently the Blair government continues to view the voluntary (and private) sectors as instruments for the efficient and effective delivery of policies.

[Although] the language and style of policy discourse are softer and generally more empathetic to the sector: the talk is of 'partnership', 'compacts' and a 'Third Way' conducive to a flourishing 'third sector'. There is also an acknowledgement of the distinctive features of the voluntary sector and the contribution it can make to 'civil society' and new forms of governance. But it remains the case that the social policy expectations of voluntary organisations and the voluntary sector have undergone a dramatic transformation in the twenty or so years since the Wolfenden Committee reported and Mrs Thatcher entered 10 Downing Street (p.4).

Funding from the National Lottery has proved to be a mixed blessing for voluntary organisations. Large voluntary organisations have tended to be more successful in winning substantial awards due to them having the infrastructure to prepare bids. There is evidence in Scotland however that donations to charities have decreased as the public have exaggerated perceptions of how much the lottery contributes to 'good causes'. In summer 2001 the National Charities Lottery Board was renamed the Community Development Fund with the intention to give more support to smaller community groups.

Finally, voluntary sector employers have to comply with employment legislation, such as the Employment Rights Act, equal opportunities legislation and EU directives, like any other employer.

## **4.2 Societal trends**

Demographic trends affect the voluntary sector just like any other sector. The main issue for the sector is the ageing population. This impacts on the sector's ability to recruit staff and volunteers, and more particularly means that voluntary organisations are having to cope with ageing service users (Taylor, 1996b) whose problems may become increasingly complex. Changing gender roles also affect the sector in particular the increasing numbers of women entering the labour market resulting in changes to informal caring and volunteering patterns (Lewis, 1995; Taylor, 1996b).

## **4.3 Technology**

Investment in Information and Communications Technology has tended to lag behind the for-profit and public sectors due to cost. However, chief officers of Scottish voluntary organisations have recently expressed growing interest in developing improved technology infrastructures to maximise the opportunities offered by the Internet for marketing and access to information. As a consequence they recognise the need to improve their ICT knowledge and skills (Green, 2000). At a national level support has been provided by SCVO's IT strategy which has seen the development of the voluntary sector portal and the com.com/holyrood initiative which links 200 local sites to the Scottish Parliament (SCVO, 2000).

The infrastructure of social care is no longer rooted in large-scale institutions. For example, children are no longer cared for in large-scale institutions. Community Care has led to the development of small-scale projects dispersed in service users' communities. Indeed increasingly care packages are being provided for individuals within their own home. Such dispersal of operations creates challenges for voluntary organisations in managing and developing their staff.

Advances in medical technology such as drug regimes, diagnostic processes and medical equipment have changed the way many service users are looked after. For example many individuals with mental health problems can be treated at home rather than having to be admitted to long-stay institutions. Such changes require staff to keep up-to-date with the latest changes in health and social care.

#### **4.4 The Scottish Voluntary Sector**

There are a number of contextual factors which distinguish the Scottish voluntary sector, from the rest of the UK, and have an impact on training and development in the sector (Beattie et al., 1994)<sup>3</sup>, including:

**i. Framework for vocational education and training**

Scotland has its own set of approaches and institutions, such as Scottish Enterprise National (SEN) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and their Local Enterprise Companies (LECs), Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) and the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). This has an important impact on training and development in the Scottish voluntary sector at the strategic level.

**ii. Legislative framework**

There are significant differences in the legislative framework in Scotland, and these have important implications for the voluntary sector in Scotland. There are different statutes in Scotland compared to England and Wales relating to core areas of voluntary sector activity such as social welfare, children, health and care, housing, and the environment. Clearly this raises important issues for the education and training of those in the sector who are working in these areas so as to ensure that provision relates to the appropriate Scottish statutes.

**iii. Registration and operation of charities and voluntary organisations**

Also different is the legal framework for the registration and operation of charities and voluntary organisations, which has implications for education and training. For example there is no Charity Commission in Scotland to provide advice and support for charity managers as there is in England and Wales. The Scottish Executive has recently commissioned a review of charity law (The McFadden Commission).

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<sup>3</sup> The author has updated these to take account of recent policy changes.

iv. Local and Central Government

Green (2000) stresses the growing recognition of the sector's contribution to Scottish civic society.

The voluntary sector in Scotland is recognised as providing a real and valued contribution to the economic and social life of the country, providing services to groups who otherwise might otherwise not have access to them. The sector is growing rapidly in size and political importance and in consequence, the participative, representative and user-consultation role of voluntary organisations is becoming increasingly significant. There is also a growing expectation that organisations in the sector concerned with identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable and excluded people will be responsible for delivering an increasing proportion of vital public services (p.7).

It has been suggested that Scottish voluntary organisations have traditionally had closer links with local government than their English and Welsh counterparts (Beattie et al., 1994). The reform of Scottish local government in 1996 aimed to produce greater service decentralisation in many areas of the country, and best value has not halted the trend towards the transfer of some services from local government to the private and voluntary sectors. These trends have stimulated growth in activity for larger voluntary organisations, such as Quarriers and RFS, whilst funding for smaller community-based organisations has reduced. For example, voluntary organisations provide 61% of the total places in supported accommodation for people with mental health problems, and of these RFS provides 25% (Scottish Homes, 1997). This has led to voluntary organisations having increased accountability to local authority funders, monitoring and evaluation of services (Green, 2000).

Since devolution the Scottish Executive, and the Scottish Parliament, have shown considerable interest in the voluntary sector.

We regard the voluntary sector as becoming a partner in the New Scotland, equal to the Confederation of British Industry and the Scottish Trades Union Congress. We must say that loud and often (Wendy Alexander, Minister for Communities, 1999).

Since devolution there has been the creation of a Communities Minister post, the Voluntary Sector Issues Unit has been enhanced, a draft strategy for Volunteering and Community Action has been published, the Compact between government and the sector has been endorsed, the Voluntary Sector Forum where the executive and the voluntary sector meet 6-monthly has continued, and reviews of charity law and voluntary sector funding have been commissioned.

There have also been developments in the field of social care. The 'Aiming for Excellence' paper (Scottish Office, 1998) created two new bodies. Firstly, the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care will take over the responsibility of registration and inspection of services from local authorities in April 2002. Secondly, the Scottish Social Services Council was established in October 2001 to influence professional and training standards, and over time register the workforce. These developments mean that social care employers, including those in the voluntary sector, require increasing numbers of qualified staff. Finally, the Learning Disabilities Review (Scottish Executive, 2000) has resulted in the decision to close all learning disabilities hospitals by 2005, with a requirement on all service providers, including voluntary organisations to provide person-centred services.

The influence of the environment has been explored by examining strategic documents and by asking key informants what environmental factors drove learning in their respective organisations.

## **5. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The importance of management, including HRM, is being increasingly recognised in the sector due to the challenges described above (Butler and Wilson, 1990; Batsleer et al., 1992; Leat, 1993; Osborne, 1996a). Of particular significance has been the growth of the 'contract culture'.

The result is that funding bodies have demanded more in the way of good management practice and greater attention to staff management for the provision of services like community care (Cunningham, 1999, p.20)

However, there are concerns in the sector about the relevance of public sector, and particularly, private sector models for the voluntary sector (Druker, 1992; Batsleer et al., 1992; Dartington, 1992; Harris and Billis, 1996).

There is a rather simplistic view that the public and private sectors have much to teach us about management and those of us who work in the voluntary sector would be the first to admit that we have much to learn. But the challenge of successfully managing Voluntary Organisations contains much that is unique to our situations (Martin Sime, Chief Executive, SCVO in Green, 2000).

Historically the concept of management was alien to the language of voluntary organisations (Druker, 1992; Batsleer, 1995) because:

Forty years ago, 'management' was a very bad word in non-profit organizations. It meant 'business' to them, and the one thing they were not was a business. Indeed, most of them believed that they did not need anything that might be called 'management'. After all, they did not have a 'bottom line'...

But the 'non-profit' institutions themselves know that the need management all the more because they do not have a conventional 'bottom line'. They know that they need to learn how to use management as their tool lest they be overwhelmed by it. They know they need management so they can concentrate on their mission (Druker, 1992, p.x)

Whilst acknowledging that voluntary sector managers participate in a wide range of activities, such as strategic planning and fund-raising, this chapter, and study, focuses on and explores the managing people role of voluntary sector managers. This section explores: the scale of employment in the voluntary sector; the characteristics of the paid voluntary sector workforce; HRM/D practice in the voluntary sector; management development; and supervision, where line managers play a critical role in developing their staff. It should be noted that to date there has limited academic research into HRM in the voluntary sector (Cunningham, 2001a; Hay et al., 2001).

## 5.2 Employment

Whilst the majority of voluntary organisations in the UK employ no paid staff, and involve few volunteers, a small proportion of the largest voluntary organisations employ large numbers of paid staff and involve large numbers of volunteers (Leat, 1993). It will be this latter group, within the social and health care fields which will be the focus of this thesis.

A recent study has estimated that the 'wider Scottish voluntary sector' employs approximately 100,000 people (c.80,000 FTEs) (SCVO, 1999<sup>4</sup>). Voluntary organisations with charitable status employ nearly 60,000 paid staff, as can be seen in Table 2.1 below. This equates to 2.4% of the economically active population of Scotland and the sector now employs more than the country's agriculture industry, and equals around half of all employment in the computer industry (ibid.).

Income Bands	No. of organisations (estimated)	Total Staff (FTEs)	% of total staff
<£25,000	15,985	4,955 (3,528)	7%
£25,000-£500,000	5,341	30,444 (23,990)	49%
>£500,000	277	24,406 (21,478)	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,603</b>	<b>59,806 (48,996)</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2.1 - Paid employment in 'general charities' (SCVO, 1999, p.8)**

### 5.3. Characteristics of the voluntary sector workforce

The voluntary sector has a high proportion of female staff. 68% of the workforce is female, with 32% male. Minority ethnic individuals comprise 1.4% of the workforce, which compares closely to the total population in Scotland (ibid.).

In Scotland at every level up to Chief Executive women outnumber men by a ratio of around 2:1 (See Table 2.2). At Chief Executive level the numbers are almost equal. The high proportion of women arises from the care-based nature of much of the voluntary sector.

	Male	Female
Chief Executive	47%	53%
Manager	21%	79%
Professional Staff	26%	74%
Senior Care, Admin. & Project Staff	18%	82%
Clerical, Care and catering staff	10%	90%
Manual staff	20%	80%

**Table 2.2 – Gender and job role (SCVO, 1999, p.11)**

The Scottish voluntary sector has a well-educated workforce, particularly at the managerial and professional levels, as can be seen in Table 2.3 below. However, it should be noted that few managers have management qualifications (VSNT0, 2001b).

	Degree	Diploma	HNC/ HND	SVQ	Certificate	Other
Chief Executive	67%	28%	6%	0%	22%	17%
Manager	27%	20%	15%	16%	32%	22%
Professional staff	27%	20%	24%	22%	34%	21%
Senior Care, Admin. & Project Staff	18%	15%	13%	15%	30%	12%
Clerical, Care & Catering Staff	15%	6%	17%	17%	34%	20%
Manual	2%	2%	4%	0%	24%	10%

**Table 2.3 – Educational qualifications of paid staff by job classification (SCVO 1999: 10).**

#### 5.4. HRM Practice

Cunningham (1999) argues that voluntary organisations may find aspects of HRM theory relevant due to the:

...strong pressures on managers in the voluntary sector to re-evaluate their approaches to people management. Funding and competitive factors have led to an increased awareness within the sector about the importance of people management as a resource for the purpose of achieving quality in service delivery (p.23).

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<sup>4</sup> The author was a member of the advisory group for this research project

He continues that aspects of HRM may be attractive to voluntary organisations, as many already possess characteristics associated with HRM such as the emphasis on organisational mission, autonomy of work groups and client/customer focus. There are however barriers to the adoption of HRM such as suspicion of what are perceived to be private sector prescriptions, and issues relating to organisational size and costs of implementation.

Ball (1992) suggests that the success of voluntary organisations in reconciling conflicting demands such as: type and security of funding; involvement in government programmes; and the relationship between volunteers and paid staff impact on 'the roles of staff and may be a factor when conditions of employment are considered' (p.70). Similarly these conditions of employment impact on the effectiveness of the organization, for example 'dual standards on equality of opportunity may lead to cynicism about the organization by both the employees and the clients' (p.70).

Ball concludes that that the distinctive values and dilemmas of the voluntary sector influence HRM policies, although he acknowledges that occasionally senior people in 'value-based' organisations may not treat their staff in accordance with the values of the 'cause'.

Cunningham's (2001b) research into the adoption of HRM practices in the sector found that in terms of 'soft' HRM many organisations were trying to adopt a learning culture, with 2/3rds of respondents employing a training manager, and more than 2/3rds utilising performance appraisal. Other elements of 'soft' HRM included communication and consultation. There was also some evidence of 'hard' HRM practices, such as pay and conditions being cut, and discipline procedures being tightened in response to the demands from the 'contract culture'.

Leat (1993) argues that:

...although non-profits share with many for-profit organisations the special problems involved in managing professionals and knowledge workers, they [non-profit] may face some additional and possibly distinctive characteristics in this area (p.34).

She identified two issues involved in the management of such staff. Firstly, the difficulties in measuring outcomes with professional staff, particularly in social care organisations. Professionals may be more knowledgeable than the Board and 'customers'. Secondly, professional values such as the strong emphasis on autonomy may lead to resistance to being 'managed'. The interaction between values and the drive for competence will be explored by investigating the learning climate of each organisation.

However, these issues are not unique to non-profit organisations, they are present in much of the statutory sector and increasingly parts of the for-profit sector are dominated by professionals and 'knowledge' workers e.g. Information Technology.

These issues do, however, create a number of implications:

Management control over a workforce of professionals is thus successfully exerted not so much by coercion or even material rewards as by establishing a supportive environment, respecting domains of professional autonomy, and achieving professional consensus in important decisions (Young, 1985).

Druker suggests that studying the management of staff in the voluntary sector can provide valuable guidance for managing people, in the future, in all sectors.

Managing the knowledge worker for productivity is the challenge ahead for American management. The non-profits are showing us how to do that. It requires a clear mission, careful placement and continuous learning and teaching, management by objectives and self-control, but it demands corresponding responsibility and accountability for performance and results (Druker, 1989, p.93)

Issues, such as providing a '*supportive environment*' and '*continuous learning and teaching*' for professional staff identified by Young and Druker were explored in the fieldwork for this study by asking respondents to describe the learning climate of their organisation.

An exploratory study (Cornforth and Hooker, 1990) of a cross-section of 28 voluntary organisation managers found few had received substantial management training.

Most were working in the sector from choice and were motivated by values they saw embodied in their organisation, primarily greater social equality and justice, which influenced their management styles. These managers indicated that the actual work of the sector rather than the likes of salary and status motivated them. Other attractions of the sector include the perception that it offers greater freedom, flexibility and scope for initiative. On Blake and Mouton's Grid these managers exhibited, not surprisingly, a high degree of 'concern for people', being concerned that their staff were valued, respected and happy, and moderate to high degree of 'concern for task'.

Arising from this high concern for people Cornforth and Hooker (1990) identified four styles of participative management:

- i. Open consultative style of management - with the emphasis on friendliness and communication. This style can easily cross social barriers.
- ii. Participative managers - accept their position in the managerial hierarchy but consult staff wherever possible and involve them in decision-making. However, they accept they have ultimate responsibility and are willing to take difficult decisions.
- iii. Delegated management - accepts that ultimate authority rests with the collective of workers as a whole. This style applies most to co-operatives. The manager's focus is on co-ordinating activities, providing support and direction rather than supervising and controlling people.
- iv. Collective leadership - management functions are not delegated to a specific manager but are delegated on an-hoc basis to individuals or groups.

Other implications of participative management identified included: not standing on their dignity, being willing to muck in and to lead by example. Supporting, encouraging and empowering staff to achieve organisational and personal goals were seen as being very important, as was teamwork. One manager commented:

I think to be a good leader you have to have a clear understanding of the aspirations of the people working here and be able to help them put that into effect.... The most satisfying part of the job of being a manager here in my view is when I see people doing things that a year or

two before they couldn't possible have done...the good manager in a place like this pulls out people's latent abilities (Ibid. p.113)

This thesis explored whether the case studies' managers adopted a participative approach, and in particular what they do to develop staff's latent abilities.

Clearly voluntary sector managers also work with volunteers, whom they may manage, they report to a voluntary management committee and many still have an active role with service users. Such activities do impact on their day to day management, however this thesis is only focusing on their interaction with paid staff.

## **5.5 HRD**

Harris et al. (1991) argue that:

...offering training (and education) is in the long term interest of the voluntary sector as a whole...individual agencies...are likely to benefit not only from increased commitment and expertise of individuals attending courses, but also, as time passes, from the movement between agencies of mature trained personnel (p.22).

Osborne (1996b) identified a range of challenges to be considered when assessing the training needs of the sector including:

- The changing environment and context (as discussed in Section 4)
- The changing pattern of social and community needs
- The diversity and distinctiveness of the voluntary sector (as discussed in Sections 2 and 3)
- The rise of the contract culture and managerialism (as discussed in Section 4)
- The importance of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice
- The legal responsibilities of trustees
- The changing national framework for vocational training

The importance of training and development in the voluntary sector, as well as the sector's contribution to lifelong learning generally, was recognised in 2000 by the

DfEE funding a National Training Organisation for the voluntary sector (VSNTO) (VSNTO, 2000a).

SCVO's survey of the Scottish voluntary workforce in 1998 found that the increasing demand on the voluntary sector for accountability was leading to greater adoption of quality standards accompanied by greater emphasis on staff development (SCVO, 1999). 35% (122) of all respondents held or were committed to achieving a quality standard. Investors in People (IiP) was the most popular, with just under half holding or being committed to the award. VSNTO has also encouraged voluntary organisations to become involved in national standards, such as S/NVQs, as part of their campaign for lifelong learning which acknowledges that:

- Learning can take place anywhere
- Learning is a process which lasts throughout life
- Learning is a process which offers development opportunities to everyone
- The best kind of learning is that which can be transferred to different settings
- The workplace can be the ideal setting for learning
- Many people learn best by actually doing something
- Formal recognition of learning keeps people motivated

(VSNTO, 2001c, p.1)

52% of organisations had a formal training policy. The likelihood of having a policy increased with size. 60% reported having a training budget. Organisations with over £1 million per annum spent 2.4% of their income on training. 67% of organisations reported having formal induction processes for new staff, with 90% of large organisations providing induction.

Induction is recognised as important by all organisations in that it provides an introduction for new staff which outlines the organisation's ethos and methods of working (SCVO, 1999, p.24).

46% of staff work in organisations with formal performance appraisal systems. This rises to 79% in the large organisations. 25% of organisations were able to provide accredited training such as SVQs. Over 95% of paid staff reported that they had

training opportunities within their organisation, of which 85% had utilised these opportunities. The least likely to be offered training were Chief Executives/directors and manual staff. Table 2.4 presents the frequency of different modes of training.

Respondents indicated that the most frequent opportunities for training were formal learning activities such as short courses. This may be an indicator that individuals do not always recognise informal learning opportunities, such as coaching. Time was the most popular reason given for not being able to pursue training opportunities.

65% of organisations reported that an individual had responsibility for implementing the training policy. However these individuals were not necessarily full-time training specialists.

<b>Mode of training received</b>	<b>%</b>
Coaching	3%
Short courses	49%
Computer-based	7%
Distance learning	4%
Mentoring	3%
Night Class	3%
Job-shadowing	3%
1:1 support	7%
Day Release	10%
Other	11%

**Table 2.4 Mode of Training Received (SCVO, 1999, p.26)**

Beattie et al. (1994) found that voluntary sector managers generally had a positive attitude towards training and development, particularly compared to managers in other sectors. However, respondents identified that their limited exposure to development themselves hindered their ability to meet and identify the development needs of their staff. More recent research has identified that the activities most commonly undertaken by managers are support and supervision, and that people management skills are the most frequently mentioned development need for managers (SCVO, 1999). Chief Officers have also identified the need to develop their skills in developing management teams and strategic planning as a consequence of the sector's rapid growth in socio-economic and political importance (Green, 2000). Section 5.6

explores the role of supervision in the management and development of people, whilst Section 5.7 explores management development within the voluntary sector.

This study explores whether the growing interest in HRD in the voluntary sector is replicated in the two case study organisations through an examination of their HRD policies and practices.

## **5.6 The Role of Supervision**

Within the field of social care the role of supervision provides a framework for managers to act as helpers. Supervision has been defined as:

...a means of developing and controlling the quality of service, taking account of the needs and rights of users and the quality of staff performance. The needs and rights of staff must also be attended to, in order to get the best from them as the major resource of the organisation. The functioning of supervision is thus inextricably linked to the way the organisation manages the tension between needs, resources and rights (Hughes and Pengelly, 1997, p.6).

This process is carried out through regular meetings between the individual and their supervisor (Brown and Bourne, 1996).

Wiener (1995) describes supervision as a process where one individual helps another to improve their work performance. From a management perspective it addresses a number of questions.

- i. How do you know that employees are doing what they should be doing?
- ii. How do you know employees are doing the job as well as they can?
- iii. How do you know employees are coping?
- iv. How do you know that no service user is being hurt?
- v. How do you know that no employee is going to get the organisation into trouble?

From the employee's perspective supervision provides an opportunity to:

- i. Review their work to ensure that it meets expectations.

- ii. Offload feelings and experiences created by the demands of the job and get support.
- iii. Look at one's personal and professional needs and career progression.

Brown and Bourne (1996) identify six values that should underpin supervision:

- i. Supervision needs to be considered in the structural context of the agency and wider society.
- ii. Social work and community care are essentially collective team-based activities with a high level of interdependence between staff.
- iii. Supervision is a person-centred activity that places as much importance on the supervisory relationship, feelings and staff development as on task implementation, regulation and control.
- iv. The content and the process of supervision should be anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory to empower both service users and staff.
- v. Supervisees and supervisors are adults who learn best when their learning is self-directed, and a proactive approach is taken to supervision.
- vi. Regular supervision is a resource to which every employee is entitled.

Sawdon and Sawdon (1995) argue that the three functions of supervision – managing, teaching and supporting – need to be regarded holistically, with no one function given predominance.

Within supervision Brown and Bourne (1996) ask whether empowerment is possible in what fundamentally is an unequal relationship. They believe it is providing the following conditions are met:

- Recognition of the clearly defined limits of the legitimate power of the supervisor and the legitimacy that derives only from their formal role and position.
- Understanding that this power is to be exercised constructively in a two-way relationship between people of equal status and worth as human beings.
- Recognition of just how much the supervisee has to contribute to the supervisory relationship.

Sawdon and Sawdon (1995) develop this argument further.

The effective supervisor does not deny her/his power and authority but uses it to ensure with the supervisee that s/he is clear about what is required and how they are meeting or not meeting those requirements together. The effective supervisor does not lean over backwards nor abrogate power and authority. S/he shares the responsibility for dealing with the pain and complexity of vulnerable life situations in a manner which promotes the supervisee's own sense of worth (p.9).

From their discussions with employees they have found that it tends to be the facilitative interventions that are lacking and suggest that there is a need to train social care managers in these skills. Indeed:

...understanding how people learn, facilitating and indeed accelerating these processes, is critical and underpins the educative function of supervision... The teacher/supervisor is seen as a facilitator, joining the learner/supervisee in a process of enquiry, and mutual challenge rather than an expert transmitter of knowledge (p.7).

Hughes and Pengelly (1997) stress the need for supervisors to be aware of differences in learning styles and their impact on which stage of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) individuals are more likely to be comfortable. In practice they have found limited exploration of such adult learning factors within the supervisory context.

The ideal supervisor has been colourfully described by Ash (1995) as:

- A warm wall – to give me support and firmness and to bounce off ideas
- A deep well from which I draw strength and wisdom
- A helicopter to winch me out of danger
- A pilot to make sure I steer the right course through difficult waters
- A harbour master to make sure that I have a safe haven in times of storm.

Finally, to be effective the supervisory relationship must be built on:

...mutual trust and respect for individual knowledge and experience, and must seek to preserve non-judgemental attitudes to personal and cultural differences (Stanners, 1995, p.178).

Such trust and respect and provide the foundation for the:

Openness and security that comes from feeling valued at whatever level one is at in an organisation is the only path to the sort of reflection and constructive criticism which entails speaking one's mind and voicing one's feelings, even when feeling foolish and vulnerable. Silence is the enemy of supervision wherever it takes place (Sawdon and Sawdon, 1995, p.30).

This research study therefore explores whether managers within voluntary organisations can be classified as 'ideal helpers' (Tough, 1979) supporting ethical development which requires 'considerable respect for individual privacy, self-esteem, dignity and autonomy' (Woodall and Winstanley, 2000, p.284). In particular the role of the social care model of supervision is explored as a framework for the 'developmental manager'.

## **5.7 Management Development**

There has, as discussed in Chapter One, been considerable growth of interest in management and management development in the voluntary sector.

The development of managers in the sector continues to be a priority because by improving the skills of managers we will, in turn, improve the skills of the people that they manage and the performance of voluntary organisations (VSNTO, 2000b, p.xiv)

This section explores the strategies for management development that voluntary organisations may adopt, management structure, attributes of voluntary sector managers, the development needs of managers, management development activities, and constraints on management development.

### *5.7.1. Management Development Strategies*

Bruce and Leat (1993) caution that:

It is important that the sector does not adopt management development as a passing fashion, that it does not equate management development with appraisals, and courses, and that it does

not uncritically copy the (often under evaluated and often out-dated) practices of the commercial sector (pp.56-57).

They have identified five broad approaches to management development in the voluntary sector:

- i. 'The businessmen' - view voluntary sector management as no different from managing a for-profit organisation. These tend to be centralised organisations with few volunteers. These organisations are likely to recruit externally or they may send managers on standard training courses designed for the for-profit sector.
- ii. The 'differentiator not-for-profit managers' - are largely pro-management but see voluntary management as distinctive from managing a business. They accept the need for practices such as strategic planning and marketing but emphasise the role of values in differentiating voluntary sector management. These organisations are likely to run some customised courses but may also use some external training.
- iii. The 'technical professional managers' - view management as glorified administration. Professional values and skills are predominant with management a subordinate activity. Senior managers are usually experienced professionals (e.g. social workers, doctors). Management training is likely to lack priority in allocating training resources and may be tolerated rather than enthusiastically embraced. These organisations are likely to run customised courses, which aim to give professionals some additional management skills.
- iv. 'The anti-elitists/empowerers' - view management and management development as elitist, authoritarian, divisive and against the ethos of the organisation and the cause. Staff may have joined the voluntary sector to escape the values and structures of the for-profit sector. These organisations are likely to run broad-based customised courses with a community-work orientation.

- v. 'The volunteers' - have few paid staff and are likely to emphasise the volunteer tradition and the value of volunteers. Paid staff are a necessary evil and exist to serve the volunteers. In these organisations management development is not a priority. 'Volunteer managers' are assumed to be capable through common sense and experience acquired in their paid work, where they may be highly competent managers. Where management training is provided it is likely to take the form of customised courses and focus on information and skills to get the job done rather than management *per se*.

As part of the exploration of organisational variables influencing voluntary sector managers the research explores which, if any, of these approaches are present in the case study organisations.

#### *5.7.2. Management structure*

The vast majority of the top 200 charities have conventional line management structures. On average, each chief executive has six managers directly accountable to him/her (Bruce and Raymer, 1992).

The managers in Cornforth and Hooker's (1990) research appeared keen to find structures that were compatible with efficiency and their 'concern for people'. They were keen to clarify decision-making structures and delegated responsibilities and accountabilities, and to involve staff more in policy formulation and to remove communication barriers.

National organisations with area or regional structures can create problems for staff development. Staff may be accountable to head office, management committees and local funders whilst having minimal supervisory or peer support. Senior managers have to manage such staff at distance, which creates difficulties for key developmental activities such as coaching and appraising (Paton and Hooker, 1990).

The impact of management structure on management development and staff development will be explored during fieldwork.

### *5.7.3. Management Qualities*

Bruce and Raymer (1992) found that the management attributes identified as most significant by Chief Executives were: strategic planning, awareness of customer needs, raising income levels, concern for quality, flexibility and creativity and marketing. A weakness in the design of Bruce and Raymer's survey questionnaire was that they did not include 'managing people' however this attribute was included to such an extent in the 'open' part of the questionnaire that the authors conclude that it too is highly significant. This was confirmed by the SCVO study (1999) discussed in Section 5.5 above. Cornforth and Hooker (1990) identified the following 'managing people' skills: diplomacy; openness; effective listening and being able to see the other's point of view. However, it was also pointed out that managers' strong commitment to organisational goals could lead them to over-working themselves and their staff. Clearly, these attributes and skills should inform decision-making about training and management development. 'Managing people' attributes are central to this study, particularly those relevant for the development of people.

### *5.7.4. Management Development Needs*

Bruce and Leat (1993) reported that few organisations in their research had undertaken a systematic management training needs analysis. Although there has been more recent research in Scotland focusing on the needs of Chief Officers (VSNTO, 2001a).

At the individual level there appears to be demand for management education. More than half (59%) of an LSE survey indicated an interest in studying management and social policy, and most were interested in postgraduate level courses (Harris et al., 1991).

### *5.7.5. Management Development Activities*

Generally voluntary organisations have a fairly conventional response to management training needs, with courses being the most likely option used, although a few

organisations are more innovative using the likes of Action Learning (Paton and Hooker, 1990; Harris et al., 1991).

Bruce and Leat's study (1993) found that:

- All levels of management were exposed to management training but there appears to be a concentration in many organisations at middle management level.
- Management training was seen primarily as internal or external courses. There appeared to be a shift toward use of customised in-house training. 'Although all organisations... engage in some form of on-the-job training this method was explicitly developed in very few organisations'. This provides further justification for this research into management and staff development in the sector, and particularly to explore the role of on-the job training and the part that line managers play.
- On-the-job training was most likely for junior managers and it was recognised that for this to be effective requires trained middle managers. The ability and development of managers for this role will be central to the research for this thesis.
- Provision for middle managers was varied, although external courses appeared to be limited due to cost, time and perceptions of limited relevance.
- Senior managers were most likely to attend external courses and be exposed to mentoring, coaching and learning sets.
- There was some interest in sharing training between organisations, particularly for junior management trainees.

Dartington (1992) suggests that voluntary organisations have traditionally developed their management skills through the experience of doing and through *peer support*. An issue explored by the author was the extent and nature of peer development within the sector. Previous anecdotal evidence suggested that this may be an attractive developmental technique for voluntary organisation managers.

Bruce and Leat (1993) suggest six factors which may impact on the development of management training in voluntary organisations:

- i. Size of the organisation - larger organisations may have more money and be more likely to perceive a need for management training given the range and complexity of tasks. However, some of the smaller national organisations sampled argued that doing more with less requires attention to management development to make the most of lower income and fewer staff.
- ii. Organisational structure - it is suggested that decentralised organisations, not only centralised organisations, are likely to participate in management training because of the need to ensure consistency of practice throughout the organisation. Although decentralised structures may make it more difficult to provide commitment of time and resources for management development.
- iii. Organisational culture - organisations which see themselves as businesses are more likely to emphasise 'good management' and the need for trained managers. Also, the role and dominance of 'professionals' and the involvement of volunteers are likely to have an impact on the way management training develops.
- iv. Internal processes and practices, such as the use of strategic planning and performance appraisals, appear to be closely related to the development of management training.
- v. External influences - such as pressure from funders, withdrawal of funding, the demands of purchasers and the general opportunities and threats contained in the external environment impact on management development.
- vi. Chief Executive - the attitude of the Chief Executive appears to be a very significant factor to the attention paid to management development.

Finally, Green (2000) urges that there is:

...a need for a fundamental change within the sector – a cultural change which recognises the importance of managerial development and is prepared to prioritise, support and invest in it  
(p.51)

The influence of the above factors on management and staff development were explored during fieldwork by examining strategic documents, HRD policies and asking respondents about their development within the organisation.

5.7.6. *Constraints on Management Development*

Management development is likely to encounter obstacles in all sectors. However:

It might be supposed that the notion of human resource management, of investing in people, would be meat and drink to voluntary organisations. But the reality is that voluntary organisations have not traditionally invested in management development, and some continue to be opposed to such development. Why? (Bruce and Leat, 1993, p.56).

Approaches to investing people may be dependant on whether 'soft' or 'hard' models of Human Resource Management (Storey, 1989) are adopted.

Bruce and Leat (1993) suggest that apart from costs, there also may be specific barriers such as: the sector's ethos; governance structures, which may result in different perceptions of need between 'autonomous branches' and headquarters; specialists' roles; volunteer involvement; participation and empowerment ideologies; funding, which is often based on short-term projects whereas management development requires a long-term perspective by both staff and organisation; and employment patterns and sources.

In an Action Research study of five varied voluntary organisations Paton and Hooker (1990) found that management development took place in a context of chronic 'under management' caused by: an undervaluing of management; strong pressure to minimise overhead costs; and reliance on 'volunteer' managers. Individuals often identified training needs themselves then sought organisational support. 'Top down' succession planning or 'high flier' development programmes were unusual.

Further constraints include the:

- i. Limited availability of accredited programmes for voluntary sector managers
- ii. Limited accessibility of training and support to smaller community-based organisations
- iii. Reliance on *ad hoc* use of courses
- iv. Lack of development for volunteer managers

Management tends to be seen from an individual and organisational perspective. There is a need for a wider discussion of current and future management needs within particular 'industries' and across the sector as a whole (Bruce and Leat, 1993). The author hopes her research will contribute to this discussion.

The extent of constraints on development generally was investigated during the fieldwork, as well as consideration of ways of overcoming or minimising their impact.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter highlighted the difficulties involved in defining and classifying voluntary organisations and the voluntary sector itself. This thesis has focused on service delivery organisations, operating in the social care field, as they employ the highest proportion of staff in the sector.

Voluntary sector managers need to be managerial 'all-rounders'. In particular, they have to meet the challenges of face-to-face management of professional and semi-professional staff undertaking, at times, highly stressful and challenging work. It could be argued that such demands are likely to increase for public and for-profit sector managers in the 21st century, therefore research carried out in the voluntary sector could also be of benefit to other sectors.

The discussion above demonstrates the complex and rapidly changing environment for, and nature of management, in the Voluntary Sector. Some social care organisations have responded to these challenges, particularly financial, to create a more professional managerial approach. This research explored the influence such an environment has on organisational policies and on the role of line managers as developers.

Other factors identified as impacting on management and staff development include values, organisational size, culture and structure; internal processes and practices; external influence; and the Chief Executive's or senior managers' attitudes, and their influence on the role of line managers as developers were examined in both case study organisations.

There has been relatively limited consideration of mainstream management and development ideas in the small, but growing voluntary sector management literature. This research will seek to integrate, where appropriate, the two literature fields, and in particular to utilise and adapt relevant management and development models for analysis. However, it must be stressed that voluntary organisations should not uncritically copy the for-profit and public sectors.

It has been argued that voluntary organisations may find HRM attractive given the increasing pressure to be competitive and thus the need to maximise the contribution of people. Soft approaches to HRM, emphasising HRD, may be viewed as sympathetic to the values of voluntary organisations. Although it was noted that some elements of hard HRM were emerging in the sector as a consequence of the 'contact culture'.

There has, until recently, been limited analysis of management and staff development needs. The fieldwork phase therefore investigated the content and nature of training and development offered to paid staff in the voluntary sector. Research to date has tended to focus on formal learning opportunities, such as courses. However, this study explored the balance between formal and informal learning, and the role that line managers play in facilitating these.

Voluntary managers may generally demonstrate, a not wholly unexpected 'concern for people', although the values of the 'cause' may not always be transferred to the management and development of people. This research therefore explored the impact of such values on HRD strategy and practice, and whether they encouraged the development of a supportive environment and continuous learning by managers.

Supervision potentially provides an important framework for line managers as developers. Supervision within the social care setting is protected time when individuals and their supervisors discuss work and development issues. Supervision is a critical people management activity, given that individuals working in social care are often working in stressful environments supporting people in difficult personal care situations. Yet previous research indicates that supervision may not reach its full

potential due to supervisors lacking facilitative skills and having limited understanding of adult learning. In addition supervision provides an opportunity to stress the standards of expected performance within care organisations, although there may be tensions with professional autonomy. Central to this study is whether developmental managers possess facilitative skills and understand adult learning principles.

Chapter 1 has discussed the growing interest in management and management development in the sector. As will be seen in Chapter 4 managers are more likely to be willing and able to develop others if they themselves have been developed. The strategies adopted for management development in the case study organisations were explored.

Chapters 3 and 4 explore the mainstream literature on learning and managers as developers.

## **CHAPTER 3 - LEARNING**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores a range of theoretical areas within the broad sphere of learning including HRD, workplace learning, organisational learning and the learning organisation, ethics, and adult learning. The conceptual areas explored have been selected because they reflect the context in which developmental interactions take place, they may enhance our understanding of learning in the workplace, and in particular they may provide insights into developmental interactions between managers and staff. Indeed some of these conceptual areas, if translated into practice, may influence the way managers behave when they are supporting the learning of individuals in the workplace. The author acknowledges that these themes are often confused within the literature, however perhaps of more importance is how they interact and influence one another. The main question to explore therefore is how do these aspects of learning affect or influence the behaviour of line managers as developers?

### **2. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Human Resource Development (HRD) has emerged as a subject of growing significance in the past decade (Beardwell and Holden, 2001), and emphasises the strategic aspects of learning rather than the operational activities of training and development. The creation of the University Forum for HRD, the development of new academic journals such as Human Resource Development International, and the growing number of books (e.g. Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996; Wilson, 1999; Walton, 1999; McGoldrick et al., 2002) demonstrate HRD's growing significance. However, as with HRM, the subject still lacks the clarity offered by a universally accepted definition. Nevertheless (Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996) offer a tentative definition:

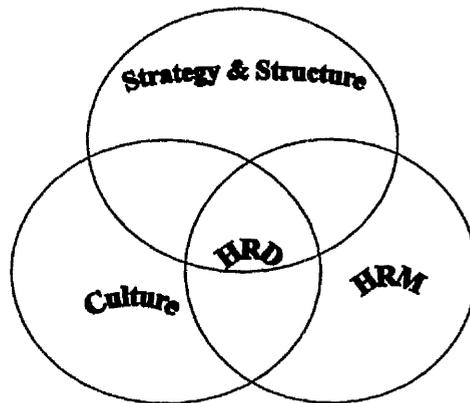
Human resource development encompasses activities and processes which are intended to have impact on organisational and individual learning. The term assumes that organisations can be constructively conceived of as learning entities, and that the learning processes of both

organisations and individuals are capable of influence and direction through deliberate and planned interventions. Thus, HRD is constituted by planned interventions in organisational and individual processes (p.1).

An adaptation of Mankin's (2001) model shows the potential interaction between HRD, and strategy and structure, culture and HRM (see Figure 3.1).

Wilson (1999) acknowledges Frank's (1988) examination of the theoretical base of HRD which concluded that:

- i. HRD is based on the research and theories drawn from adult education and is different from the learning that occurs in children. Learning is based on creating the appropriate circumstance in which adults can learn and thereby change behaviour.
- ii. HRD is concerned with improved performance within the work environment. It is not concerned with improving people's health or their personal relations with their family.
- iii. HRD utilises the theories of change and how these relate to the organisation. Change affects individuals, groups and the organisation and HRD is predominantly concerned with the change of individuals.



**Figure 3.1 The Locus of HRD (based on Mankin, 2001, p.79).**

A range of environmental pressures have contributed to the emergence of HRD as a strategic activity including: the accelerated rate of change; focus on quality;

globalisation; increased flexibility and responsiveness of organisations; increased pressure to demonstrate the contribution of human resources; new competitive structures; and new technology (Garavan et al., 1995). Another driver has been the increased recognition of learning as a source of competitive advantage and that the value of human resources can appreciate, unlike capital (Wilson, 1999).

A number of themes have emerged from the literature on the role and practice of HRD (Wilson, 1999; Horowitz, 1999). The role of HRD is: to enable organisations to respond to challenges and opportunities through HRD interventions; to develop policies which integrate corporate and HRD strategies; to create a culture of continuous and shared learning; and, to target value by focusing HRD initiatives on areas which enhance competitive advantage e.g. service excellence, leadership. Key aspects of HRD practice include: ensuring that all stakeholders, including individual employees and line managers, are informed of their role in and participate in HRD; the continuous assessment of learning and development opportunities for employees to enhance career development and organisational growth; having a systematic learning system; adopting a competency-based approach; and, having a partnership between line managers and HRD specialists to support employee development

What role line managers play in HRD is discussed fully in Chapter 4. The role of HRD and line managers' responsibilities for HRD within the case study organisations are explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **3. WORKPLACE LEARNING**

#### **3.1 What is workplace learning?**

Resurgence of interest in workplace learning can be seen in recent consultation exercises sponsored by the UK government (National Skills Task Force (NSTF), 2000) and IPD<sup>5</sup> (2000).

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<sup>5</sup> Now the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

The skills required of people at work are increasing. This places a significantly increased importance on the ability to learn and on the effectiveness of learning at work. Organisations are becoming more customer-responsive and leaner, are delayering management structures and are subject to continuous change. In these circumstances, the ability to learn can be either a key enabler of organisational change or, when insufficiently developed as an organisational core competence, a key weakness in the implementation of change. Improving the capacity for organisational learning is therefore a real challenge for managers, particularly in those sectors in which learning has not previously been seen to be of importance (IPD, 2000, p.3).

Development of skills and knowledge has never been, and should not become, the preserve of traditional education institutions or training providers. The workplace itself offers excellent opportunities to learn formally, and informally, through day-to-day problem solving on-the-job and worker involvement in enhancing productivity and handling change (NSTF, 2000, p. 6).

Boud and Garrick (1999) provide an overview summarised in Table 3.1 of the purposes of workplace learning.

<i>Improving performance for the benefit of the organisation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• of self as worker</li><li>• of the team or work community</li><li>• of the enterprise</li></ul>
<i>Improving learning for the benefit of the learner</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• for self</li><li>• for one's personal growth and lifelong learning</li></ul>
<i>Improving learning as a social investment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• for citizenship (including the environment)</li><li>• for team or work community (including 'learning organisations')</li><li>• for future enterprises ('creating the future')</li></ul>

**Table 3.1 Purposes of Workplace Learning (Boud and Garrick, 1999, p.6)**

According to the IPD workplace learning includes all formal and non-formal training, that occurs, partly or wholly, in the workplace. Formal workplace learning is what most people think of as 'training' and may involve e.g. initial training for new recruits, corporate universities and open learning. Less formal learning activities include team development, action learning, knowledge sharing and knowledge management.

These activities occur in the workplace day by day, as people learn on the job, perfecting their skills, finding new ways of working, sharing knowledge and passing on skills to fellow workers (IPD, 2000, p.2)

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) provide a useful summary of work-based development methods in Table 3.2 below.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Learning Process</b>
<i>Learning from another person</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Mentoring and sponsorship</li> <li>• Role models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback, reflection, challenge</li> <li>• Support, advice, feedback, opportunity, challenge</li> <li>• Observation, reflection, imitation</li> </ul>
<i>Learning from tasks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special projects</li> <li>• Job rotation</li> <li>• Shadowing</li> <li>• Secondment</li> <li>• Acting up/delegation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving, taking responsibility, taking risks &amp; making decisions, managing without mastering</li> <li>• Exposure to other cultures and points of view</li> <li>• Observation of tasks, new techniques, skills</li> <li>• Exposure to other cultures and points of view</li> <li>• Trial of new tasks and skills, challenge</li> </ul>
<i>Learning with others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task forces/working parties</li> <li>• Action learning</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic understanding, building awareness &amp; confidence</li> <li>• Problem solving, interaction, influencing</li> <li>• Interaction &amp; building awareness</li> </ul>

**Table 3.2 An overview of work-based development methods (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998, p.187)**

Of particular relevance to this thesis are the notion of informal learning and the role of managers in facilitating such learning, which according to a recent survey was considered the most frequent form of workplace learning (Eraut et al., 1998).

### **3.2 Informal learning**

The IPD (2000) acknowledge that whilst non-formal workplace learning is by far the most common form of learning, it is the least regarded and the least well managed. Yet the IPD argue:

It often combines both learning and practice in one activity – learning by doing, for many the most effective form of learning. It is the least formal mode of learning, but at its best, it is the form of learning that most closely aligns with corporate success and is likely to become more important in this regard (p.2).

Likewise the NSTF (2000) has also recognised the value of informal learning and suggests that the limited but growing body of knowledge in this area is clarifying:

The key role of front line supervisors and managers in initiating and supporting informal learning and the close connection between 'high employee involvement' work practices and the breadth and quality of informal learning opportunities. It has also helped to identify some of the more structured processes which can help support informal learning, including work shadowing, coaching and mentoring, team working, job rotation and practice combined with constructive feedback. Evidence suggests that informal learning brings greater benefits when firms design it to meet business objectives and maximise productivity gains (p.35).

Marsick and Watkins (1997) also emphasise the importance of informal learning, including incidental learning, which they differentiate from formal learning.

Formal learning is typically institutionally-sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Incidental learning, a subcategory of learning is defined...as a byproduct of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not being highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning, on the other hand, mostly always takes place although people are not always conscious of it (p.295).

They suggest that their ideas about incidental learning share theoretical roots with theories about reflective and transformative learning. Having analysed a range of models they found they contained four similar themes whether the learning is stimulated by events or other people and involved:

- i. Proactive learners remaining open to alternative frames on a problem, seeking competing explanations and adopting an attitude of experimentation, trying new behaviours and working at the process of their own development.
- ii. Reflection is the primary tool to trigger learning from experience. Disciplined reflection, challenging one's assumptions and comfortable ways of thinking, leading to deeper learning.

- iii. Insight alone is not enough. Creating a support system which encourages all individuals to grow, and accepts individuals who have changed, promotes retention of new behaviours.
- iv. Transformative learning may be catalysed through expert facilitation.

### **3.3 Line managers and workplace learning**

Line managers play a key role in facilitating workplace learning (Marsick and Watkins, 1997; IPD, 2000; NSTF, 2000).

Managers and key workers have a critical role to play in ensuring that the benefits arising from informal learning are maximised. The uptake and success of informal learning is linked to the commitment, enthusiasm and skills of managers and key workers. Managers can encourage and facilitate informal learning by establishing systems and practices which value and promote informal learning (NSTF, 2000, p.42).

Marsick and Watkins (1997) suggest that managers can facilitate informal learning, through planning for learning, creating mechanisms for learning in teams and developing an environment conducive to learning, although they acknowledge that managers need to be skilled to achieve this.

They can, for example plan more consciously to turn challenges into learning opportunities, seek alternative viewpoints and perspectives to compensate for blind spots and limitations, and draw out lessons more explicitly that are relevant for similar circumstances. Enhancing incidental learning is more difficult, given that it is, by definition, unplanned. Lessons here focus on the potential sources of error...Managers can surface assumptions and tacit beliefs, clarify the way in which context influences understanding, and pay attention to triggers that set off patterns of behaviour that continually produce undesired results.

Effective managers of the future will have to attend to the more subtle, implicit learnings which drive behaviour. By learning to surface tacit meanings, they will be able to achieve shared meaning and to engage in dialogue. This will enable the organization to learn and possibly to innovate. On the other hand, we acknowledge that this requires great skill and may exact its own hidden costs (pp.308-309).

The IPD (2000) stress that a key building block necessary for effective workplace learning is managers understanding the theory and practice of workplace learning and how it relates to short- and long-term organisational performance.

### **3.4 Concerns about workplace learning**

Woodall (2000) expresses several concerns regarding workplace learning following a research project into work-based management development across a range of sectors, although the voluntary sector was not one. Whilst the research was focused primarily on middle and senior management development, some of her conclusions may have validity for wider work based learning.

Firstly, she found that whilst both senior HR and management development specialists thought the workplace was the most important place for learning there was limited awareness of the full range of formal work-based interventions and potential development challenges that could be used. There was also little systematic promotion of workplace learning; it was expected to 'happen' as a consequence of individual managers working on personal development plans.

This increased reliance of work-based learning as a key component of management development policy does not sit easily with the lack of active promotion and support. It certainly begs the question of whether more managers are actively self-developing and making effective use of work-based learning experiences in the absence of opportunities for guided reflection (p.29).

The view that managers need to develop themselves, if they and others are to benefit from workplace learning, is developed further by Beckett (1999).

Leadership in organisational learning will be more apparent in those who understand their own 'context' or situation in daily social life at work – shared feelings, thoughts and actions at work construct us as workers. Those who can recognise this – who are open to their own organic learning possibilities – can then advance such learning in others...If managers can create amongst their peers and their clients a climate which nurtures everyone's creativity, they will have demonstrated the fusion of thinking, feeling and doing. They will have shown that organic learning is at the structural and cultural heart of the organisation in which they work. In terms of creativity, they will have made learning work – at work (p.96).

He continues that to enhance workplace learning there is a need for:

...more explicit and structural attention to adult learning, particularly learning arising from affective experiences (feelings, emotions), and on the particular context, or 'situation', of those experiences (p.97).

The role of adult learning in the workplace is considered in Section 6 below.

Secondly, Woodall (1998) suggests that within HRM systems there is a need to review other aspects of HR policy and practice, including performance management systems, to ensure that they complement, rather than impede work-based development, and to ensure that line managers play a key role in development.

Performance management systems are needed that create the space for separate development reviews with sufficient time for reflection, and which have as a key performance indicator evidence of line manager facilitation of the development of their direct reports (p.29).

In conclusion, Rainbird (2000) warns that workplace learning should not be regarded as a panacea.

The workplace is enormously significant as a site for learning, both for accessing formal learning opportunities and for many informal learning opportunities which result from the nature of work and from social interaction with work groups. But it is also highly problematic: its primary purpose is not learning, but the production of goods and services, involving the creation of profit in the private sector, delivery within budget in the case of the public sector (p.1).

The fieldwork phase of this study explored the role of the workplace in learning, and investigated whether any of the problems identified above are present. Finally the contribution that line managers make to facilitating, or inhibiting, learning at work is examined in Chapters 8-10.

#### **4 THE DEVELOPMENTAL MANAGER, ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND THE LEARNING ORGANISATION<sup>6</sup>**

This section discusses the concepts of organisational learning and the learning organisation, and the roles that managers may play in operationalising these concepts.

Before commencing this discussion it is worth acknowledging that particular perspectives in the literature dominate the two fields. Organisational learning tends to be the domain of academics engaging in critical inquiry, whilst the learning organisation literature tends to be prescriptive, normative and dominated by consultants, practitioners and academics-as-consultants. Argyris and Schon (1996) describe the former as being 'distant from practice, skeptical of first-branch claims, nonprescriptive, and neutral with respect to its definition of learning – that is, open to the view that learning may be good or bad, linked or not linked, to effective action or desirable outcomes' (p.xix). They describe the latter as 'prescriptive, practice-oriented, value-committed, sometimes messianic, and largely uncritical' (p.xix). However, it should be noted that there is an emerging field of academic literature criticising the latter concept, as will be demonstrated below.

Argyris and Schon (1996) suggest that these literature fields converge on some key themes including acknowledgement of the importance of recognising, surfacing, criticising and restructuring organisational theories of action or mental models. They however criticise both fields for limited consideration of the behavioural world of the organisation and the theories-in-use of individuals that reinforce and are reinforced by it. This thesis attempts to explore these potential linkages.

Argyris and Schon (1996) argue that as they are trying to 'combine a practice-oriented, value-committed stance with a skeptical attitude towards many of the claims and tacit assumptions of those who currently promote a version of the learning organisation' their research design starts from directly observable behaviour in particular cases with the aim of producing generalisable, empirically disconfirmable propositions. This view of the world has influenced the research design of this thesis,

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<sup>6</sup> Part of this review has been published previously in McDougall and Beattie (1998).

with the author observing organisational variables and individual behaviours in the workplace and drawing conclusions from them.

#### **4.1 Organisational learning**

The 1990s were a period of increasing interest in the concept of organisational learning, and there is no reason to suppose that this interest will decline in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A number of factors stimulated this interest including the ever-increasing pressure on organisations, including those in the voluntary sector, to cope with rapid technological, structural and market changes.

Now in the mid-1990s, it is conventional wisdom that business firms, governments, nongovernmental organizations, schools, health care systems, regions, even whole nations and supranational institutions need to adapt to changing environments, draw lessons from past successes and failures, detect and correct the errors of the past, anticipate and respond to impending threats, conduct experiments, engage in continuing innovation, build and realize images of a desirable future. There is virtual consensus that we are all subject to a “learning imperative”, and in the academic as well as the practical world, organizational learning has become an idea in good currency (Argyris and Schon, 1996, p.xvii)

Dodgson (1993) argues that the ‘greater the uncertainties, the greater the need for learning’ (p.378), whilst Stata (1996) argues that:

...the rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage (p.318).

Argyris and Schon (1978) defined organisational learning as:

...a process in which members of an organization detect error or anomaly and correct it by restructuring organizational theory of action, embedding the results of their inquiry in organizational maps and images (p.3).

More recently it has been defined as:

The intentional use of learning processes at the individual, group and system level to continuously transform the organization in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders (Dixon, 1994, p.5).

An examination by Dixon (1994) of a range of definitions identified a number of common themes: the expectation that increased knowledge will improve action; acknowledgement of the pivotal relationship between the organisation and its environment; the ideal of solidarity, as in collective or shared thinking; and a proactive stance in terms of the organisation changing itself.

Dodgson (1993) argues that a limitation of the literature in this field is the uncritical adoption of individual models of learning as a metaphor for organisational learning. However Dixon (1994) argues that a model of organisational learning must be based on and be compatible with individual learning theory, and has based much of her organisational learning theory on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle.

#### **4.2 Developmental Managers -- the link between individual and organisational learning?**

There has been significant research into the psychology of individual learning and much theoretical debate about organisational learning. However, there has been little empirical investigation into how individual learning contributes to organisational learning (McDougall and Beattie, 1998). Yet there has been recognition that:

...individuals are the primary learning entity in firms, and it is individuals which create organizational forms that enable learning in ways which facilitate organizational transformation (Dodgson, 1993, pp.377-378).

Argyris and Schon (1996) also stress that individual practitioners are centrally important to organisational learning 'because it is their thinking and acting that influence the capability for productive learning at the organizational level' (p.xxii). They also recognise the complex interactions that occur between individual and organisational learning.

We see the causal arrow pointing in both directions: the learning of individuals who interact with one another is essential to organizational learning, which feeds back to influence learning at the individual level (p.xxii).

They argue that this relationship will be dependent on ‘the political conditions under which individuals can function as agents of organisational action’ (ibid.). Therefore they have recognised the importance of organisational cultures as ‘holding environments for knowledge, attitudes and values’. Furthermore they believe that double-loop learning depends on ‘the organisations learning system, the behavioral world “draped over” its structure, information network and systems of incentives’ (p.xxiii-xxiv). These variables are explored in Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

A proposition of this research is that line managers may act as a channel between individual and organisational learning by participating in learning partnerships with their staff and others given that:

...learning processes within organizations usually involve interaction between individuals. It is important, therefore, to consider members of the organization and their relationships, and to analyze the contribution which these relationships make to organizational learning (Probst and Buchell, 1997, p.148).

Furthermore, managers can ill afford to ignore informal individual learning and its potential contribution to coping with continuous change and transformation (Marsick and Watkins, 1997), nor can organisations rely on learning through chance (Dixon, 1994).

Ellinger at al. (1999a) also argue that:

...organizations that aspire to become learning organizations must encourage managers to adopt new roles as coaches, trainers and educators if learning is to become distributed and continuous at multiple levels within the organization (p.387).

Given this recognition of the part line managers require to play in organisational learning a brief overview of their putative role in organisational learning and learning organisations is presented below in 4.5.

### 4.3 Transforming individual learning into organisational learning

The limited work to date on how individual learning translates into organisational learning emphasises various aspects. From a normative perspective the notion of four sequential steps – from individual learner to learning organisation – which require to be completed to achieve an effective learning environment have been highlighted by Mumford (1993). These are given as a model of a learning system, which he describes as a Learning Pyramid. This model has four levels from the individual learner through one-to-one learning and then group learning, ascending to the learning organisation. The pyramid steps include individual learners considering their own learning, discussing their learning with another e.g. their boss and/or a peer and then working as a group to reflect on learning. These three steps are suggested as preconditions for a learning organisation. While this model envisages peers and managers working together to create a positive learning environment, it has also been acknowledged that negative peer pressure and unsupportive or blocking managers can present obstacles to the development of a learning environment or a pedagogy of inquiry (Schuck, 1996).

The importance of communication in facilitating organisational learning is stressed in Nonaka's (1996) Spiral of Knowledge. Nonaka argues that new knowledge begins with the individual, for example a manager's intuition about a market leads to the development of a new product, or a shop floor worker's experience leads to new process innovation. Thus, according to Nonaka, an individual's personal knowledge is transformed into organisational knowledge valuable to the company as a whole. To achieve this requires:

...tapping the tacit and often highly subjective insights, intuitions and hunches of individual employees and making those insights available for testing and use by the company as a whole. The key to the process is personal commitment, the employees' sense of identity with the enterprise and mission [*which are likely to be high in voluntary organisations*] (p.19).

Making personal, particularly tacit, knowledge available to others therefore is the central activity of the knowledge-creating company. Improved communication as an important outcome of formal training interventions has also been recognised as

facilitating informal learning (Tushman and Nadler, 1996; Beattie and McDougall, 1998). The latter is described as learning initiated by individuals outwith formal learning strategies provided by the organisation. It has been argued that such learning can provide a range of individual and organisational benefits, particularly at times of transformational change (McDougall and Beattie, 1995)

However McDougall and Beattie (1998) found from research into a large financial organisation that factors such as gossip, lack of confidence and worries about the effect of organisational politics on exposing weaknesses were barriers to engaging in the open and honest discussion necessary for the effective operationalisation of the 'spiral of knowledge'. They argue that such concerns are an important feature of current organisational reality, where individuals are competing with each other in turbulent conditions. They conclude that given this constraint on organisational learning that there is an important role for HRD specialists in helping managers to create conditions which are more conducive to facilitating the transfer of tacit to explicit knowledge.

The encouragement and co-ordination of the variety of interactions in learning has been described as a key organisational task, as without effective process and systems linking individual and organisational learning there is little complementarity between the two. However achieving a balance between formal training and development systems and informal learning processes to produce knowledge that is strategically valuable for the organisation is problematic (Dodgson, 1993; Harrison, 1997).

#### **4.4 The Learning Organisation**

The learning organisation has been defined as:

...an organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members [the individuals] and continuously transforms itself [the organisation] (Pedler et al., 1991, p.1).

From a systems thinking perspective Senge (1990) defines learning organisations as organisations:

...where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together (p.8).

Pedler et al. (1991) present a vision of designing and creating:

...organizations which are capable of adapting, changing, developing and transforming themselves in response to the needs, wishes and aspirations of people, inside and outside (p.1).

The learning organisation as a concept has excited both academics and practitioners, particularly consultants, as can be evidenced from the growing number of publications on the subject both in the academic press and professional journals. However, there is more recent evidence of a move from this somewhat idealistic zeal to a position of more critical challenge to the reality of the learning organisation.

Coopey (1996) is critical of the lack of consideration of the impact of organisational politics. He contends that political activity is likely to impede learning, particularly through the control of information to protect sectional and hierarchical interests. He concludes that those who propagate learning organisation principles could be contributing to the latest phase of a long history of management metaphors. He suggests that these have been used manipulatively by managers with a tradition of instrumental interest in using social science as a means of solving industrial problems. This view is shared by Marchington (1995) with regard to many new employment practices which he believes aim to preserve managerial hegemony.

A second criticism of the learning organisation concept is that there is limited empirical evidence to support its transference into reality. Raper et al. (1997) argue that current organisational pressures, such as cost cutting, are inhibitors to the learning organisation ideal and that the 'aspirational and prescriptive' nature of the concept itself may be clouding our understanding of organisational reality. However, this view may underestimate the importance of individual human agency in driving learning (Mabey and Salaman, 1997).

Pedler et al. (1991) have acknowledged that the idea of a 'learning company' can be perceived as a scientific hypothesis without empirical evidence. However, the search for empirical evidence continues as Pedler and his colleagues, and other researchers (Burgoyne et al, 1994; Jones and Hendry, 1994; Leitch et al., 1996; Marsick and Watkins, 1999; Finger and Brand, 1999) undertake a range of case studies and surveys, some of which are longitudinal, into organisations pursuing the learning organisation ideal.

A third criticism of the learning organisation is that many organisations possess cultures that are not conducive to such idealism.

...the culture in most organizations is probably anti-learning – because the existence of rules and values and norms (probably all implicit and undiscussable) that encourage 'winning' over analysis and understanding, and encourage protection and defensiveness (Salaman, 1995, p.109).

The significance of culture is recognised in all learning organisation models. Insight into the relationship between individual and organisational learning is provided by the learning climate as described by Pedler et al. (1991). This highlights the importance of support and help in learning from mistakes; individuals taking time to question and discuss their own practice; a general attitude of continuous improvement; the acceptability of asking questions when help or information is required; the recognition and positive value of diversity in learning and creativity; and, that a key role of managers is to facilitate learning, this role is discussed further below.

#### **4.5 The role of line managers in learning organisations**

Numerous authors perceive line managers as being facilitators of learning in learning organisations, and recognise that this role requires further research.

The concept of the organisation as a learning system, and moreover a system which encourages learning not just through formal management development processes but by its whole rationale and approach to work, is one which potentially has great power to influence learning. Specifically it has great potential for encouraging managers to act as helpers over a

much wider range of processes than simply than those of the formal management development system (Mumford, 1993, p.76).

Research is needed that specifically investigates the processes and behaviours associated with how managers and leaders facilitate learning and build learning organisations (Ellinger et al., 1999b, p.197)

In learning organizations...Leaders are designers, teachers, and stewards. These roles require new skills: the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface, and challenge prevailing mental models and to foster more systemic patterns of thinking. In short, leaders in learning organizations are responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future – that is, leaders are responsible for learning (Senge, 1996, pp.290-291).

Senge (1996) outlines three tasks of the leader in organisational design or ‘social architecture’. The first task of organisation design involves designing the governing ideas of purpose, vision and core values of the organisation. The second involves designing the policies, strategies and structures that translate guiding ideas into business decisions. The third task involves creating effective learning processes.

The leader as teacher, the role of most significance for this research, is not perceived as an authoritarian expert teaching the ‘correct’ view of reality. Instead it is about facilitating people, including oneself, to acquire more insightful views of current reality. He points out that that this perspective is supported by the growing view that leaders are coaches, guides or facilitators.

The role of the leader as teacher starts with bringing to the surface people’s mental model of important issues. No one carries an organization, a market or a state of technology in his or her head. What we carry in our heads are assumptions. These mental pictures of how the world works have a significant influence on how we perceive problems and opportunities, identify courses of actions, and make choices...Leader as teachers help people restructure their views of reality to see beyond the superficial conditions and events into the underlying causes of the problems – and therefore to see new possibilities for shaping the future (pp.295-296).

The final role Senge identifies is the leader as steward, which he regards as the subtlest role of leadership because it is primarily focused on attitude. He argues that

leaders' sense of stewardship operates on two levels. Firstly, stewardship for the people they lead emerging from recognition of the impact their leadership can have on others.

People can suffer economically, emotionally, and spiritually under inept leadership. If anything, people in a learning organization are more vulnerable because of their commitment and sense of shared ownership (p.297).

The second type of stewardship is for the larger purpose of the organisation emerging from the leader's sense of personal purpose and commitment to the organisation's mission.

People's natural impulse to learn is unleashed when they are engaged in an endeavour they consider worthy of their fullest commitment (p.297).

Senge suggests to fulfil these roles leaders need to develop new skills in the critical areas of building shared visions, surfacing and challenging mental models, and engaging in systems thinking. These skills are summarised in Table 3.3 below.

<b>Building shared vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging personal vision</li> <li>• Communicating and asking for support</li> <li>• Visioning as an ongoing process</li> <li>• Blending extrinsic and intrinsic visions</li> <li>• Distinguishing positive and negative visions</li> </ul>
<b>Surfacing and testing mental models</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing leaps of abstraction</li> <li>• Balancing inquiry and advocacy</li> <li>• Distinguishing espoused theory from theory in use</li> <li>• Recognising and defusing defensive routines</li> </ul>
<b>Systems thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing interrelationships, not things, and processes, not snapshots</li> <li>• Moving beyond blame</li> <li>• Distinguishing detail complexity from dynamic complexity</li> <li>• Focusing on areas of high leverage</li> <li>• Avoiding symptomatic solutions</li> </ul>

**Table 3.3 New Leadership Skills (based on Senge, 1996, pp.298-301)**

Keep and Rainbird (2000) argue that Senge's, and other learning organisation writers' perceptions of the roles of managers are somewhat idealistic given that:

Traditional models of management have cast managers as policemen and women, spies, controllers, dispensers of reward and punishment, sources of wisdom and expertise, order givers and arbitrators between competing claims. The new model of management tries to paint them as teacher, coach, mentor, facilitator, resource controller and 'servant' of the team.

It is not obvious that the majority of existing managers, recruited to perform the very different tasks of the old model, possess the skills, behaviours and attitudes required to perform these new functions. Nor are the benefits for managers from such a dramatic change in roles clear. For example, if managers do become facilitators, with their ex-subordinates (now empowered) as the major source of competitive advantage, how do managers maintain their status and pay vis-à-vis the rest of the workforce (p.184).

Finally, Salaman (1995) identifies several relevant questions for this study.

- i. If learning can only occur when it is genuinely rewarded and modelled by senior managers, how far do conventional organisations achieve optimum levels of learning? It could be argued that voluntary organisations are not conventional, both in reality and in terms of their lack of coverage in management research, therefore they could offer a new perspective on such issues as reward for learning and senior managers' behaviour.
- ii. If learning needs certain sorts of cultural and relational support (intimacy, real trust and affection etc) how often do these exist and what can be done to support their development? Are such cultural values possible in Western, individualistic, commercial organisations? Such values may be more prevalent in voluntary organisations. Therefore the voluntary sector provides a potential research environment to explore such values and conditions.
- iii. Are conventional Western notions of leaders and the qualities on which leaders based their claims for legitimacy and respect, compatible with the encouragement of learning? Do leaders support egalitarianism, intimacy, and openness? Experience suggests that leaders in for-profit organisations are threatened by such values. It may be possible to postulate that such values are more tolerated in the voluntary sector.
- iv. UK organisational cultural norms are characterised by loneliness, anxiety, distance, formality and lack of trust. Voluntary organisations may challenge these norms and may also possess those qualities identified by him as critical for learning: open, warm, supportive, honest, and, egalitarian.

- v. Salaman cites Argyris's (1990) discovery of the incongruence between managers' espoused values and managerial reality. In his research, values of openness and risk taking were not applied in discussions where problems involved emotional and interpersonal issues, critical for personal development. In addition management of groups was often directive. Questions emerging for this research are: Whether the voluntary sector's espoused value of empowerment is actually applied in developmental relationships? Whether the sector's espoused values of social care are applied to the care of staff?

Salaman concludes that however worthy the Learning Organisation concept is it is difficult to achieve in reality, and stresses that the impetus for learning in organisations must come from individual managers themselves.

Probably the best and in most cases the most feasible approach to achieving learning within organisations is to focus on the key role (that of the manager) and the key process (the manager's concern and capacity to achieve the learning of subordinates)...if they are capable of managing this key role, and if they achieve it, many of the elements of learning organisation will be achieved...Regardless of how encouraging or discouraging the organisational environment is to learning, it remains essential that individual managers recognize and implement their responsibilities for the learning of their staff, and indeed of themselves (p.110).

The fieldwork explored whether the cultures of both organisations were conducive to learning; and investigated whether managers are concerned about facilitating the learning of their staff; and finally, explored whether line managers play a role in enhancing organisational learning.

## **5 HRD ETHICS, VALUES AND LINE MANAGERS**

The importance of values and ethics in HRD activities is raised by Garrick (1998) highlighting that the *humanistic* position held by many HRD practitioners and adult educators believes that people will be more productive when they feel work is personally meaningful and not simply an instrumental means to another end.

However, some concern has been expressed about:

...attitude modification activities that go beyond encouraging task-orientated specific behaviours...and which entail trying to convince individuals of the appropriateness of taking on a set of broad-based, culturally specific organisational values (Walton, 1999, pp.561-562).

Most explorations of HRD and ethics have tended to focus on these HRD interventions led by HRD professionals (e.g. Walton, 1999; Hatcher and Aragon, 2000; Woodall and Douglas, 2000; Beattie and McDougall, 2002). However, given the increasing devolution of HRD responsibilities to line managers the issues of ethics and line managers should be explored. For example, Walton's (1999) questions on HRD and values about the validity of HRD practitioners being the exponents and propagators of organisational values and whether HRD is about changing behaviours or attitudes could be applied equally to line managers taking on development responsibilities and roles. He recognises that solidarity with organisational values is an increasing requirement for organisational members and highlights that an IPD (1994) position paper 'People Make the Difference' considers the role of values and argues that:

- People management will have an impact on values.
- Such values, whether implicit or explicit, must be apparent to everyone.
- They need to be relevant, understandable and linked to mission and/or vision statements.
- Inappropriate alternative values could emerge if there is incompatibility between stated, espoused values and actual management behaviour.
- Commitment to values is associated with trust.
- Top team training is necessary to ensure that senior managers understand both the values of the organisation and the importance of acting in ways which are consistent with them.

At an individual level Rokeach (1972) has defined values as:

...a type of belief, centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave.

Rokeach then demonstrates the link between values and actions.

Once a value is internalised it becomes, consciously or unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining activities towards relevant objects and situations, for justifying one's own and others' action and attitudes, for morally judging self and others, and for comparing self and others.

Fisher and Rice (1999) argue that organisations will only act ethically when members are skilled at thinking about, and coping with, ethical issues and debate. If people are to develop appropriate virtues – honesty, perseverance, fairness etc. – the organisation has to nurture such virtues and ensure there are appropriate role models. They continue that ethical leadership should focus on developing an organisational moral ethos where people are more likely to act ethically. It could therefore be argued that line managers are pivotal to such ethical development and line managers, at all levels, should act as role models to ensure that appropriate values and ethics are consistently expressed and acted upon.

Knowles (1984) suggests four key characteristics of conducive learning environments, which have resonance with the concept of ethics in HRD:

- i. Respect for personality
- ii. Participation in decision making
- iii. Freedom of expression and availability of information
- iv. Mutuality of responsibility in defining goals, planning and conducting activities, and evaluating.

He concludes that:

A democratic philosophy [*that we might expect in a voluntary organisation*] is characterized by a concern for the development of persons, a deep conviction as to the worth of every individual and faith that people will make the right decisions for themselves if given the necessary information and support. It gives precedence to the growth of people over the accomplishment of things when these two values are in conflict. It emphasizes the release of human potential over the control of human behaviour. In a truly democratic organization there is a spirit of mutual trust, an openness of communications, a general attitude of helpfulness and co-operation, and a willingness to accept responsibility, in contrast to paternalism, regimentation, restriction of information, suspicion and enforced dependency on authority (p.98).

Brookfield (1986) identified six key principles, which reflect a concern for ethics and values, to facilitate adult learning.

- i. Participation in learning is voluntary; adults should not be coerced or intimidated into learning.
- ii. Respect between participants for each other's self worth. This does not exclude criticism but individuals should not be denigrated.
- iii. Facilitation is collaborative.
- iv. Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection.
- v. Self-direction and improvement is fostered.
- vi. Learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity, reflection, new activity and collaborative analysis.

Woodall and Douglas (2000) argue that learning style theory also has an ethical dimension though more of a utilitarian nature, compared to the likes of Knowles' work which could be described as being deontological with the absolute rights of the learner being central. With the former, HRD professionals (or line managers), are more likely to select learning interventions which are seen as being useful rather than what the learner necessarily wishes. For example it has been argued that for individuals to change they need to feel psychologically safe to engage in learning and they:

...must have a motive, a sense of direction and the opportunity to try out new things without fear or punishment (Schein, 1993, p.91).

However not all training and development activities and processes, necessarily provide such psychological safety, particularly where these involve value change (Woodall and Douglas, 2000).<sup>7</sup>

Tough's (1979) model of the *ideal helper* clearly emphasises the need for the helper to respect the needs and rights of the individual learner, as opposed to those who want to *control* the learner.

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<sup>7</sup> Woodall and Douglas explore this dilemma in relation to three approaches to value change: outdoor development, NLP and Gestalt.

...the ideal helper views his interaction with the learner as a dialogue, a true encounter in which he listens as well as talks. His talk will be tailored to the needs, goals and requests of this unique learner. The helper listens, accepts, responds, helps. These perceptions of the interaction are in sharp contrast to those of 'helpers' who want to control, command, manipulate, persuade, influence and change the learner...Such a helper perceives the learner as an object, and expects to do something to that object. He is not primarily interested in the other person as a person, and in his needs, wishes and welfare.

Finally, Steane (1997), as noted in Chapter 2, argues that voluntary organisations are more like to have greater emphasis on expressive, rather than instrumental values.

The fieldwork phase of this research considered the influence of ethics, values and beliefs on learning in both case study organisations by exploring their learning climates and respondents' attitudes to learning. The fieldwork also explored whether line managers act as role models to ensure organisational values and ethics are practised across the organisation.

## **6. ADULT LEARNING**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Line managers need to have some understanding of andragogy – the art and science of helping adults to learn - to enhance their ability to facilitate both their own learning and the learning of others (Knowles, 1984).

The line supervisors and managers could be exposed to the idea that their role is not just to supervise work, but to develop their people as well. Substantial blocks of time could be built into the supervisory training and management development programs dealing with the principles of adult learning and the skills of facilitating learning. The human resources developers and their staffs could be available to the line officers as consultants in performing their role as facilitators of learning (ibid. p.139).

Whilst much of this theory has been developed in relation to adult education it has much to offer our understanding of workplace learning, particularly given its emphasis on the importance of learning from experience for adults. Key principles and concepts of adult learning are explored below.

It is acknowledged that there is a growing view that the humanist tradition of much of adult learning theory, and indeed much of the ethical discussion in Section 5 above, is increasingly being viewed as naïve within management learning literature (Burgoyne and Reynolds, 1997). However, it is contended here that humanism influences voluntary sector practices and thus developmental humanism may provide theoretical insights into the facilitation of learning in such environments given that it:

...is a model of learning centred upon the holistic richness and integrity of human experience. That is, humanistic psychology starts with the reasons, motives and values of the individual and seeks ways of structuring the experience we all inevitably undergo, so that better learning results (Beckett, 1999, p.91).

## **6.2 Definition of learning**

Whilst acknowledging the wide debate on the meaning of learning (Knowles, 1984), the widely cited definition used in this thesis, which emphasises practice and experience, is that learning occurs where there is:

...a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice or experience (Bass and Vaughan, 1966).

## **6.3 Andragogy**

Knowles (1984) highlights five founding principles of adult learning expounded by Lindemann (1926):

- i. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy; therefore, these are the appropriate points for organising adult learning activities.
- ii. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centred; therefore, the appropriate units for organising adult learning are life situations, not subjects.
- iii. Experience is the richest resource for adults' learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience.

- iv. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing; therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in a process of mutual inquiry with them rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it.
- v. Individual differences among people increase with age; therefore, adult education must make optimal provision for differences in style, time, place, and pace of learning.

Knowles (1984) identifies six assumptions that underpin andragogy, which differentiate it from pedagogy.

- i. *The need to know.* Adults need to know *why* they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- ii. *The learners' self-concept.* Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction.
- iii. *The role of the learners' experience.* Adults come into a learning activity with a greater volume and range of experience than young people.

...Any group of adults will be more heterogeneous – in terms of background, learning style, motivation, needs, interests, and goals – than is true of a group of youths. Hence, the great emphasis in adult education of individualisation of teaching and learning strategies...it means that for many kinds of learning the richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves (p.57).

He, however, also points out that experience can lead to inhibition of learning.

The fact of greater experience has also some potentially negative effects. As we accumulate experience, we tend to develop mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking (p.58).

Therefore adult educators need to help adults to examine their habits and biases and open their minds to new approaches.

Knowles also argues that adults develop their self-identity from their experiences, therefore if in a learning situation that adult's experiences is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not just rejecting their experience, but rejecting them as individuals.

- iv. *Readiness to learn.* Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do to cope effectively with their real-life situations. Readiness to learn was explored in fieldwork by asking respondents about their attitude towards and engagement with learning.
- v. *Orientation to learning.* In contrast to school learning which tends to follow a subject-centred orientation, adults are life-centred (or task-centred or problem-centred) in their orientation to learning.

Adults are motivated to devote energy to learning something to the extent that they perceive that will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations. Furthermore, they learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations (p.59).

This suggests that individuals will find workbased learning an effective mode of learning.

- vi. *Motivation.* While adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life). Knowles reported that Tough (1979) found in his research that adults are motivated to keep growing and developing, but that this motivation is frequently blocked by such barriers as negative self-concept as a learner, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programmes that violate principles of adult learning.

Finally, according to Knowles the andragog will do everything possible to help learners take responsibility for their own learning.

## 6.4 Learning Theories

Hilgard and Bower (1966) have identified 20 principles from 3 different school of learning theory – stimulus-response theory, cognitive theory, and motivation and personality theory – which can inform the facilitation of learning.

### 6.4.1 Stimulus-Response theory

- i. The learner should be *active*, rather than a passive listener or observer.
- ii. *Frequency of repetition* is still important in acquiring skill, and for retention through overlearning.
- iii. *Reinforcement* is important; that is repetition of desirable or correct responses should be rewarded.
- iv. *Generalization* and *discrimination* suggest the importance of practice in varied contexts, so that learning will become (or remain) appropriate to a wider (or more restricted) range of stimuli.
- v. *Novelty* in behaviour can be enhanced through imitation of models, through cueing, through shaping, and is not inconsistent with a liberalised S-R approach.
- vi. *Drive* is important in learning.
- vii. *Conflicts* and *frustrations* arise inevitably in the process of learning difficult discriminations and in social situations in which irrelevant motives may be aroused. Therefore we must recognise and provide for their resolution or accommodation.

### 6.4.2 Cognitive theory

- i. *The perceptual features* of the problem given to the learner are important conditions of learning e.g. directional signs, sequencing. Therefore a learning problem should be so structured and presented that the essential features are open to the inspection of the learner.
- ii. The *organisation of knowledge* should be an essential concern of the teacher so that the direction from simple to complex is *not* from arbitrary, meaningless parts to meaningful wholes, but instead from *simplified wholes to more complex wholes*.

- iii. Learning is *culturally relative*, and both the wider culture and the subculture to which the learner belongs may affect his learning.
- iv. *Cognitive feedback* confirms correct knowledge and corrects faulty learning. The learner tries something provisionally and then accepts or rejects what he does on the basis of its consequences. This is, of course, the cognitive equivalent of reinforcement in S-R theory, but cognitive theory tends to place more emphasis upon a kind of hypothesis-testing through feedback.
- v. *Goal-setting* by the learner is important as motivation for learning and his successes and failures determine how he sets future goals.
- vi. *Divergent thinking*, which leads to inventive problems solving or the creation of novel and valued products, is to be nurtured along with *convergent* thinking, which leads to logically correct answers.

#### 6.4.3 Motivation and personality theory

- i. The learner's *abilities* are important, and provisions have to be made for slower and more rapid learners, as well as for those with specialised abilities.
- ii. *Postnatal development* may be as important as hereditary and congenital determinants of ability and interest. Therefore the learner must be understood in terms of the influences that have shaped his development.
- iii. Learning is *culturally relative*, and both the wider culture and the subculture to which the learner belongs may affect his learning.
- iv. *Anxiety level* of the individual learner may determine the beneficial or detrimental effects of certain kinds of encouragement to learn.
- v. The same objective situation may tap *appropriate motives* for one learner and not for another, as for example, in the contrast between those motivated by affiliation and those motivated by achievement. Otto and Glaser (1970) have identified five factors that may motivate adults to learn, namely:
  - a) Achievement for which the reward is success.
  - b) Anxiety for which the reward is the avoidance of failure.
  - c) Approval for which the reward is recognition.
  - d) Curiosity for which the reward is to explore the environment and be exposed to novel stimuli.

- e) Acquisitiveness for which the reward is something tangible, such as money or material benefits.
- vi. The *organisation of motives* and values within the individual is relevant. Some long-range goals affect short-range activities.
- vii. The *group atmosphere* of learning (competition v cooperation, authoritarianism v democracy, individual isolation v group identification) will affect satisfaction in learning as well as the products of learning.

The analysis of developmental interactions and developmental behaviours will demonstrate whether these schools of learning have any relevance for developing managers as developers.

## **6.5 Experiential Learning**

Given Knowles (1984) and others' emphasis on the importance of experience in adult learning it is useful to consider two theoretical concepts which have had a significant impact on adult learning generally, and in management learning particularly, in terms of learning how to learn – the learning cycle and learning styles<sup>8</sup>.

Experiential learning seeks:

...to describe and explain human learning processes irrespective of the context in which learning occurs...the theory also postulates processes other than action having to occur in order for successful learning to happen (Stewart, 1999a, p.109).

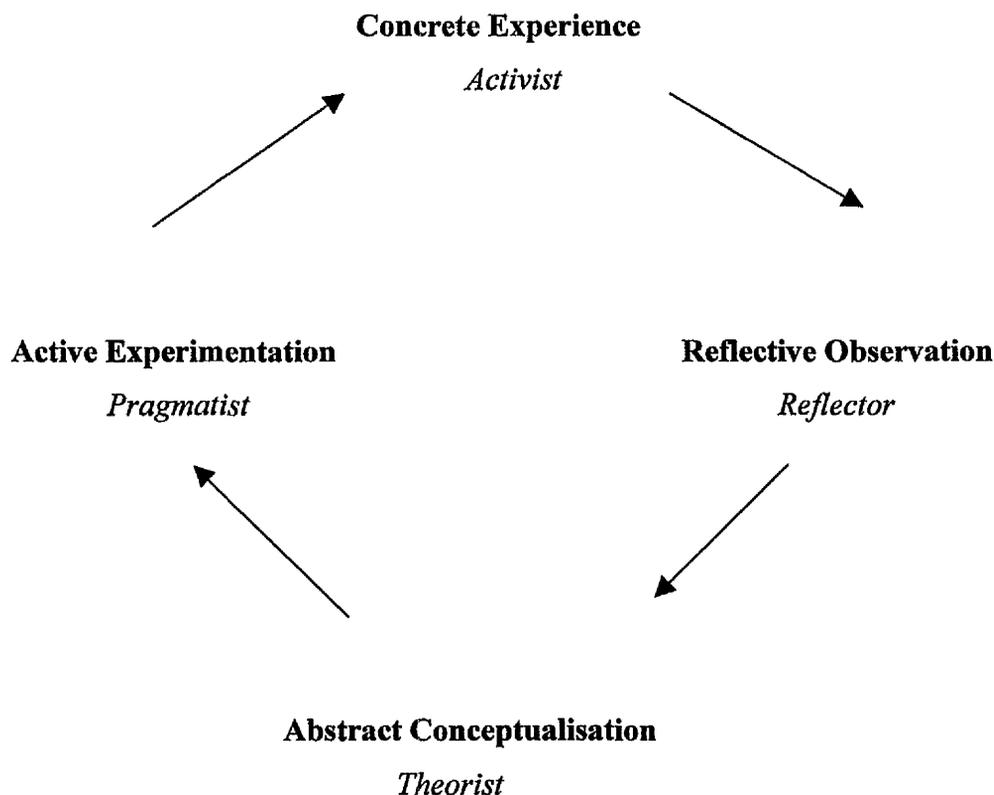
The learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) suggests that learning is continuous and cyclical moving from concrete experience through reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation to active experimentation. Effective learning therefore requires learners to become involved in concrete, new experiences, to observe and reflect on these experiences from different perspectives, to use concepts and theories to integrate their observations and to use these theories for decision making and problem solving.

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<sup>8</sup> Whilst these concepts have been critiqued in the literature, see for example Holman et al. (1997), it is not within the remit of this thesis to critique general learning theory.

Kolb identified four learning styles – diverger, assimilator, convergor, and accommodator - associated with experiential learning theory, which reflected the preference of individual learners for different phases of the cycle.

This work was refined and made more user-friendly by Honey and Mumford (1986) who developed a Learning Style Questionnaire, which is now widely used in education and the workplace. Their four learning styles are described below (based on Honey and Mumford, 1992, p.35).



**Figure 3.2 Learning cycle and learning styles (Based on Kolb, 1984; Honey and Mumford, 1986).**

*Activists* involve themselves fully and openly in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now, and tend to be enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is ‘I’ll try anything once’. They tend to act first and consider the consequences later. They tackle problems by brainstorming. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and consolidation. They are outgoing

people constantly involving themselves with others but seek to focus all activities on themselves.

*Reflectors* like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data from various sources and prefer to think about them thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

*Theorists* adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through logically. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basis assumptions, principles, theories, models, and systems thinking. They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous.

*Pragmatists* are keen on trying out new ideas theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient with long-winded and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems.

During fieldwork the influence of learning styles on developmental interactions was explored by asking respondents their preferred approaches to learning and by asking them to complete a Learning Styles Questionnaire.

## **6.6 Learning climate**

Knowles (1984) argues that the environment provided by an organisation can facilitate or inhibit learning. For example if a young manager is taught through a

management development programme that he should involve his staff in decision making, but his own superiors do not involve him in making decisions, which management practice is he likely to adopt?

Organisations, therefore, do not just teach through their formal HRD activities.

They all teach by everything they do, and often they teach opposite lessons in their organizational operation from what they teach in their educational program (ibid. p.97).

Clearly line managers play a critical role in the operational activities of their organisations. The key question is do they practice what their organisations preach?

In arguments resonant with later ideas about the learning organisation Knowles states that if an organisation wishes to stimulate adult learning then it too has to engage 'in continual self-renewal for itself'.

The proposition is based on the premise that an organization tends to serve as a role model for those it influences. So if its purpose is to encourage its personnel, members, or constituents to engage in a process of continuous change and growth, it is likely to succeed to the extent that it models the role of organizational change and growth. This proposition suggests, therefore, that an organization must be innovative as well as democratic if it is to provide an environment conducive to learning (p.99).

He concludes that climate setting is probably the most crucial element in the whole process of HRD.

If the climate is not really conducive to learning, if it doesn't convey that an organization values human beings as its most valuable asset and their development as its most productive investment, then all the other elements in the process are jeopardized. There isn't much likelihood of having a first-rate program of educational activities in an environment that is not supportive of education (p.121).

The nature of the learning climate in each organisation was explored by asking respondents to describe the organisation's culture and by examining their own attitudes to learning.

## 6.7 Links with phenomenology

According to Knowles phenomenologists see man as an organism forever seeking greater personal achievement. The urge for self-actualisation is the driving force motivating all of man's behaviour.

The adequate personality is one that embodies positive percepts of self, a clearly developing concept of self, a growing acceptance of self and identification with others, and finally a rich, varied, available perceptive field of experience (Pittenger and Gooding, 1971, p.107)

Key principles of this idea include:

- Man behaves in terms of what is real to him and what is related to his self at the moment of action
- Learning is a process of discovering one's personal relationship to and with people, things, and ideas. This process results in and from a differentiation of the phenomenal field of the individual
- Further differentiation of the phenomenological field occurs as an individual recognises some inadequacy of a present organization. When a change is needed to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self, it is made by the individual as the right and proper thing to do. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the process
- Given a healthy organism, positive environmental influences, and a nonrestrictive set of percepts of self, there appears to be no foreseeable end to the perceptions possible for the individual
- Transfer is a matter of taking current differentiations and using them as first approximations in the relationship of self to new situations
- Learning is permanent to the extent that it generates problems that may be shared by others and to the degree that continued sharing itself is enhancing.

(Pittenger and Gooding, 1971 cited by Knowles, 1984, p.24).

The above suggests that adopting a phenomenological approach in the primary research, to understand respondents' meanings of their learning experiences and relationships, as outlined in Chapter 5 was appropriate for the research topic.

Finally, the fieldwork phase will explore whether the principles of adult learning were understood and practised by managers by examining developmental interactions and the behaviours that were observed in these.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Whilst the emergence of HRD as a theoretical area has been acknowledged, there is limited empirical evidence of the influence and impact of HRD on organisational life. The fieldwork examines whether HRD had any influence on the case study organisations, by asking the following questions: What have been the drivers of HRD? What strategies and practices have been developed and how do they relate to organisational strategy? Finally, and most pertinently for this thesis, given that the rhetoric of HRD suggests that line managers should have greater involvement in HRD activities, the fieldwork explored the nature of that involvement in the case study organisations.

Resurgence of interest in workplace learning has reinforced the value of the workplace as a site of learning (IPD, 2000; NSTF, 2000). However concerns about the reality of workplace learning have been expressed (Beckett, 1999; Woodall, 2000; Rainbird 2000). The workplace learning literature has emphasised informal learning as a particularly valuable, if under recognised, source of learning (Marsick and Watkins, 1997; IPD, 2000; NSTF, 2000). This literature also stresses that line managers have a critical role to play in such learning. This study provides an opportunity for empirical research into the role of line managers in facilitating (and inhibiting) workplace learning in voluntary organisations.

The relationship between organisational and individual learning is highlighted in the concept of the learning organisation, around which much debate and criticism continues. Work in this area, has emphasised the importance of learning climate in creating the environment for learning and therefore in creating the atmosphere in which individuals do or do not learn with the resultant effect on organisational performance (Pedler et al., 1991). Knowles (1984) has also highlighted the critical role an organisation's environment can play in facilitating or inhibiting learning and argues that part of that climate setting involves the organisation in learning about

itself and changing accordingly. Again it is argued that line managers play a critical role in influencing the learning climate of organisations, particularly at a local level. This study into two organisations with aspirations to pursue the learning organisation ideal may also help reduce the empirical deficit in the learning organisation literature, and to explore whether the criticisms of this concept (e.g. Coopey 1996; Salaman, 1995) apply in these empirical contexts.

The influence of voluntary sector ethics, values and beliefs on developmental interactions and the developmental behaviours of managers were explored in both case study organisations by examining organisational values and learning climate. In particular a key question was whether or not the human-centred approach to social care is transferred to the learning and development of employees. Two possible paradigms may have emerged. Firstly, that voluntary organisations do not transfer their high ethical values and the person-centred emphasis from their social care practice to their HRD strategies and practices. The second is that there a transfer from the person-centred planning approach in social care practice to HRD. Indeed it could be argued that it would be untenable to have HRD strategies that did not take cognisance of ethics and the value of the individual, as the effective delivery of care requires the effective development of employees.

The review of the adult learning literature identified key principles such as: the need to know the purpose of learning; the learner's self-concept; the role of the learner's experience; readiness to learn; and, life/task/problem-centred orientation to learn; and motivation. Learners', including managers', experience and motivation to learn were explored in the fieldwork, as these were likely to influence the efficacy of developmental interactions.

Three schools of learning theory were also explored and it is argued that if line managers are to be effective facilitators of learning they need to have some understanding of such concepts. Therefore during fieldwork the existing understanding of managers was explored and strategies to develop their knowledge and skills are provided in Chapter 12. Chapter 12 also examines if there are any relationships between the developmental behaviours exhibited by line managers and these schools of learning.

The concept of experiential learning was also explored, in particular the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) and learning styles (Honey and Mumford, 1986). The application and influence of these on developmental interactions was explored in the fieldwork.

The literature review also demonstrated links between adult learning and phenomenology (Pittenger and Gooding, 1971; Knowles, 1984). It is argued that this linkage provides further justification for adopting a phenomenological approach in this study to further understanding of how and why managers facilitate the learning of others.

Finally, as indicated in the introduction to this chapter the theoretical areas above possess overlapping boundaries and themes (see Figure 3.3). One constant theme which has come to prominence in this review is the critical role of the line manager as a facilitator of learning, yet as will be seen in Chapter 4 there is still limited understanding and empirical knowledge of what managers *actually do* to facilitate learning. Chapters 8-10 will address that empirical gap.



**Figure 3.3 Theoretical Framework for the Developmental Manager**

## **CHAPTER 4 – THE MANAGER AS DEVELOPER**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores managers' roles in developing themselves, their staff and peers. Five themes are considered including: the line manager and HRD; self-development; developmental roles such as coach, mentor, peer mentor, counsellor and appraiser; the limited literature on developmental behaviours; and supporting and developing line managers as developers. The chapter concludes with discussion of the conceptual framework and research questions which have emerged from the complete literature review.

### **2. THE LINE MANAGER AND HRD**

This section considers the rationale and implications of the devolution of HRD responsibilities to line managers, the barriers to effective devolution and the relationship with the HRM/D function.

#### **2.1 Devolving HRD to the line**

There has been growing recognition that responsibility for a range of HRD activities has been devolved increasingly to the line manager (Mumford, 1993; Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Heraty and Morley, 1995; Bevan et al., 1995, Hyman and Cunningham, 1998; de Jong et al., 1999; Ellinger et al., 1999a; National Skills Taskforce, 2000). Heraty and Morley (1995) argue that such devolution can be highly effective as line managers are well placed to assess training needs and deliver training in the workplace. Higgins and Thomas (in press) have found that receiving high levels of developmental assistance can increase employee commitment to the organisation.

However, the effectiveness of managers supporting workplace learning depends significantly on whether they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes (Leicester, 1989; Heraty and Morley, 1995; IPD, 1995; Thomson et al., 2001) and on whether the organisational climate is supportive of such activity. There is therefore a

pressing need to identify the development needs of line managers with regards to their developmental roles (AMED, 1991).

This devolution of HRD responsibilities reflects the wider devolution of people management responsibilities over the last decade (e.g. IPD, 1995; Cunningham and Hyman, 1999). Concerns have emerged regarding such devolution including the willingness of line managers to undertake this work; insufficient training for line managers to perform their new role; and increased workloads (IPD, 1995; Cunningham and Hyman, 1999). These concerns will be discussed further in Section 2.2 below.

Salaman (1995) suggests that the growing interest in Human Resource Management *per se* has heightened interest in management and the development of management skills, and he argues that in all models of Human Resource Management 'the job of the manager is fundamentally reconstructed and is seen as pivotal' (p.12).

Sisson (1990), argues that four features are associated with HRM:

- i. Stress on integration of personnel policies both with one another and with business planning more generally.
- ii. Locus of responsibility for personnel management no longer resides with specialist managers but is now assumed by senior line management.
- iii. Focus shifts from management- trade union relations to management-employee relations, from collectivism to individualism.
- iv. Stress on commitment and exercise of initiative, with managers now donning the role of 'enabler', 'empowerer' and 'facilitator'.

The second and last of these features supports the normative view that managers are the drivers and deliverers of HRM. Such devolution underlines:

The central role of line managers in the effective integration and implementation of human resource strategies. It is they who interpret and communicate the business plans and attempt to link – at an operational level – the human resource policies to strategic business goals; it is they who operate the procedures and monitor the performance; it is they who devote time and

departmental resources to individual and team development; it is they who, in many ways, influence the subculture of their department or business unit...yet...line managers are not always equipped or committed to carry out this role (Thomson et al., 2001, pp.126-127).

In addition the drive towards empowerment in the 1990s, arguably a product of 'soft' HRM, further stresses that managers and employees need to participate in developmental activities and the need for managers to adopt developmental responsibilities.

Managers...are expected to acquire developmental skills which enable them to manage their newly empowered staff in innovative or liberating ways (Hyman and Cunningham, 1998, p.95).

Writers such as McGovern et al. (1997), Mumford (1993) and de Jong et al. (1999) argue that there has been limited empirical research into the roles line managers play in HRM and HRD. Thus there is a need for empirical research, such as this, into the developmental role of managers. However, McGovern et al.'s study (1997) found that effective devolution of HRM had been inconsistent across a range of private and public sector organisations. Indeed the study concluded that the findings were contrary to the 'developmental humanism' that underpins many models of HRM and that:

...developmental humanism under-estimates the extent to which short-term pragmatism is embedded within capitalist enterprises (McGovern et al., 1997, p.27).

The organisations subject to investigation in this study are non-profit distributing voluntary organisations whose values, as discussed in Chapter 2, are not based on capital accumulation, thus the conditions may be more conducive for developmental humanism to flourish. Therefore the values of the case study organisations are explored in Chapters 6, 7 and 10.

Bevan et al. (1995) and AMED (1991) argue that the line manager's role in development is likely to increase, with the former identifying that skills required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century manager include development, coaching and counselling. Salaman (1995) also argues that the:

...key managerial competences...are those which support the management of performance or the management of learning, for this is seen as the key activity of managers qua managers (p.5).

Mumford (1993) has outlined a range of activities managers may undertake in developing (managerial) subordinates within the contexts of formal development systems and within everyday management activities, as demonstrated in Table 4.1 below.

Within formal system of development	Within the direct managerial context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal of performance</li> <li>• Appraisal of potential</li> <li>• Analysis of development needs and goals</li> <li>• Recognizing opportunities</li> <li>• Facilitating opportunities</li> <li>• Giving learning a priority</li> <li>• Selecting opportunities in tune with learning styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using management activities as learning</li> <li>• Establishing learning goals</li> <li>• Accepting risks in subordinate performance</li> <li>• Monitoring learning achievement</li> <li>• Providing feedback on performance</li> <li>• Acting as a model of managerial behaviour</li> <li>• Acting as a model of learning behaviour</li> <li>• Using learning styles and learning cycle</li> <li>• Offering help</li> <li>• Direct coaching</li> <li>• Looking for deputizing/delegating opportunities</li> </ul>

**Table 4.1 Development Activities (Mumford 1993, p.155).**

Bevan and Hayday's study (1994) into the devolution of people management responsibilities to the line concluded that it:

...may also bring with it a more explicit shift in responsibility for the development of staff from the centre to the line manager (p.4).

Their respondents felt that devolution should be a result of line managers expressing an interest in having more staff management responsibility in line with their business accountabilities. However, the authors found that devolved HRM responsibility was frequently pushed down with little consultation. They also found that there was limited definition of staff management duties and limited training, apart from in specific personnel systems such as recruitment and appraisal.

A further IES study (Bevan et al., 1995) identified a growing recognition that line managers could adopt more innovative staff development roles such as coach and

counsellor to support self-development strategies, career counselling and stress management. The rationale for this perception of managers was that:

...the effective utilisation and deployment of employees' skills represented an important way of influencing corporate performance, and that allowing line managers to play a more active role in this would ensure that organisations have the skill flexibility at local level they will need (p.42).

The specific skills required for staff development included the identification of training and development needs, on-the-job coaching, assessment and counselling.

Mumford (1993) provides five reasons why managers develop others:

- i. They pursue the resolution of problems and in the process accidentally aid the development of others;
- ii. They believe that improving the performance of others will reflect well on their own;
- iii. Derive personal satisfaction from seeing someone grow;
- iv. Develop own skills, knowledge and insight as result of sharing experience with others; and
- v. Organisation demands they do so through formal development schemes.

AMED's (1991) study of 'professional' developers found four reasons why they helped others learn:

- i. to enable others to develop to their full potential;
- ii. to make the organisation more profitable or financially efficient;
- iii. to develop themselves; and
- iv. to give people skills to do their job.

Thomson et al. (2001) have identified a correlation between line manager involvement in development and the existence of formal management development policies, shared responsibilities for management development, competency-based management development and a higher than average use of personal development plans. They also found that where the individual's line manager was involved in

management development the impact of management development was doubled. However, half their sample rated their line managers' involvement as low. Therefore normative perceptions of extensive line manager involvement in development activities may be exaggerated. Section 2.2 below discusses the possible organisational and personal barriers to such involvement.

## **2.2 Barriers**

A range of barriers to effective devolution of HRM, and HRD particularly, to line managers have been identified (Cabinet Office, 1991; Storey, 1992; Cabinet Office, 1993; Heraty and Morley, 1995; McGovern et al., 1997; Hyman and Cunningham, 1998; de Jong et al., 1999; Thomson et al., 2001). These include: conflict between operational and developmental duties; managers' perception that they will gain little from taking on such responsibilities; lack of time; short-termism; lack of strategic direction; inadequate support from personnel and top management; lack of role clarity; and lack of accountability and performance monitoring. In particular a concern is whether or not line managers have the required authority and competencies for developmental roles.

A number of Bevan and Hayday's (1994) respondents identified conflict 'between the need to manage and develop staff and the need to achieve business targets' (p.6). Interestingly the personnel role that line managers were most unclear about and reluctant to adopt was that of staff development. They identified three problems.

Firstly, in the area of assessing individuals managers were uncomfortable about using appraisals to determine pay and to identify training and development needs. Some managers were also reluctant to make medium or long-term predictions about individuals' potential, and felt they had insufficient knowledge to make such judgements, and that they needed more guidance on how to perform this role.

Secondly, with regards to corporate matters HRM managers felt there was a conflict between having a devolved approach to personnel accountability whilst trying simultaneously to maintain a corporate view. For line managers the challenge here could be letting their best staff go to other jobs within the organisation.

Thirdly, for line managers a consequence of having responsibility for staff development requires them having to be aware of, and discuss the needs of individual members of staff. Yet,

...for many the annual appraisal interview often represents too much dialogue, so conducting an ongoing dialogue with individuals about their work preferences, development and career potential can be a low priority (pp.8-9).

Many managers expressed concern about how they would cope with pressure from staff demanding some form of career development and progression, particularly in those organisations which had become flatter. Concern was also expressed by a significant minority that:

...actively developing some staff would amount to training subordinates to be better than them. This was, for some, a threatening notion, and one which HR managers had not seemed to recognise (p.9).

They conclude that for many line managers these are very real problems and make day-to-day relationships with some of their staff very difficult.

Indeed, several felt that it made managing good performers as difficult as managing poor performers (p.9).

They also found that the pressures felt by line managers were a consequence of devolution of a wide range of business activities. These pressures were present in three forms: role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. Firstly, in terms of role conflict most of the line managers interviewed felt that the increasing number of roles they were expected to perform were increasingly in conflict. For example, the need to meet business objectives was felt by most to be in direct conflict with their staff development roles of coach and mentor. A consequence of this emphasis on such objectives is that managers feel they have insufficient time to give to such responsibilities. Cunningham and Hyman (1999) confirm this:

## *The Line Manager as Developer*

A majority of line managers demonstrated varying degrees of frustration at being unable to devote sufficient time to integrative aspects of managing their people, such as by appraisal, training and simple one-to-one contact because of the dominance of 'harder' priorities (p.25).

Secondly, in terms of ambiguity some line managers were confused about what the organisation, and the HR function really wanted from them. This ambiguity was expressed by:

...the need to be both a task-orientated business manager and a more socially-orientated manager of people (Bevan and Hayday, 1994, p.16).

This ambiguity may be exacerbated by the low priority given to HRM activities in managerial appraisals (McGovern et al., 1997; Sisson and Storey, 2000).

Rarely is it the case in UK companies that the extent to which a manager develops his or her own immediate staff is regarded as the critical measure of how well the manager is doing the job. Yet in our research comparing British and Japanese managers we found that the Japanese tended to place subordinate development as one of the highest priorities when defining the nature of the managerial role. In contrast, UK managers would much more readily point to the need to be seen shouldering 'responsibility' and meeting financial and production targets as the essence of their job (Sisson and Storey, 2000, p.64).

Keep and Rainbird (2000) develop this point further:

For as long as managers in the UK see themselves primarily as doers, fire-fighters or as 'Action Man/Woman' rather than as reflective practitioners the scope for wide reaching and permanent organizational change will be limited. If learning at a fundamental and deep level is not at the heart of what it means to be a successful manager, it seems unlikely that organizational learning will easily take root within the organizations which these managers manage and lead (p.191).

Thirdly, many managers felt they had to play too many roles, such as 'business manager', 'personnel manager', 'coach and mentor', 'corporate player' and 'professional specialist', and that it was difficult to perform all these roles competently.

Managers' effectiveness as developers depends on whether they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes (Leicester, 1989; Storey, 1992; Heraty and Morley, 1995; IPD, 1995; de Jong et al., 1999). Heraty and Morley (1995) argue that such abilities are partly influenced by a manager's position in the organisation's hierarchy, their responsibilities and their work environment.

An IPD study (1995) raised concerns about the competence of line managers to carry out HRM roles. It was felt by both line managers and personnel managers that there was a lack of support for line managers, particularly in the area of training for line managers. This lack of training not only covered personnel management issues, but also more general management training issues particularly those relating to motivation, a critical skill and knowledge area for effective staff development. Lack of resources, a heavy workload, lack of time and resistance to training from line managers were all reasons given for ineffective training of line managers. Storey (1992) argues that an impediment to line managers behaving as developers of others is their own lack of development.

The problem of lack of development of the human resource tends to reproduce itself. Managers who have themselves received little education and training are less likely to recognise or approve the need for investment in the training of their subordinates (p.213).

In their study of empowerment Hyman and Cunningham (1998) argued that the biggest constraint was the failure to continually develop managers, who in turn are unable or unwilling to develop their subordinates. They also found that some managers found it difficult to adopt a more facilitative style of management that would support development.

### **2.3 Relationship between line Managers and the HRM/D function**

The literature highlights the relationship between line managers and the HRM/D function as critical in determining the effectiveness of line managers in delivering HRD effectively (Bevan and Hayday, 1994; IPD, 1995; Heraty and Morley, 1995; de Jong et al., 1999).

Bevan and Hayday (1994) identified evidence of tension between the HR function and line managers, which sometimes limited the extent to which real devolution can be achieved. Firstly, some line managers are unwilling to accept that devolved staff management is part of their job. Secondly, even amongst those line managers accepting people management as part of their role, most have a limited view of the things they should be doing and of those which they expect to be conducted by or led from the corporate personnel function. Thirdly, personnel professionals are reluctant to release their responsibilities to line managers contrary to public statements.

Two staff development areas explored by Bevan and Hayday (1994) were appraisal and training needs analysis. They found that appraisal was the policy most likely to have well-developed support for line managers, including training and detailed procedures. The analysis of training needs was an area where HR managers offered support, and line managers recognised that they needed such support. However, a common problem highlighted by HR staff was that line managers saw training courses as the only way to develop their staff. There was a clear need to persuade line managers that other, more innovative, development interventions existed. Bevan and Hayday concluded that:

...in both these areas the processes and procedures were predominantly seen as being owned by the HR function, while the rhetoric of the HR function placed them firmly in the domain of the line managers (p.11).

The IPD study (1995) found that the responsibility for training and development tended to be shared, but with a greater involvement of personnel in consultation with line managers. This study tended to take a very traditional perspective of training by focusing on systematic training and on training courses in particular, with no consideration of the role of managers in providing 'direct' developmental support in the workplace. The study identified that personnel were more heavily involved in the administration and delivery of courses, whereas line managers had more responsibility for determining who attends training. Some organisations had progressed further and made managers responsible for the design, delivery and timing of training. In these situations personnel adopted the role of providing guidance,

support, 'trainer training' and the provision of resources. Conversely, in some organisations managers felt that:

...of all the personnel issues delegated to the line, line managers were probably weakest in ensuring that staff were adequately trained and in monitoring their development. This is mainly because it is an area that does not demand immediate attention. As one line manager explained: 'Managers only think about training if a problem occurs' (IPD, 1995, p.21).

Bevan and Hayday (1994) argue that to maximise the potential of the partnership between personnel and line management the following need to be implemented:

- i. Be clear about what HR role line managers want and what skills they need to perform them;
- ii. Define what 'ownership' really means – distinguish it from 'dumping';
- iii. Clarify the training and support available to the line and how it can be accessed;
- iv. Move from rule books and procedures to standards and values;
- v. Review the state of HR development in the organisation: how well equipped are the line managers to cope with increased pressure from staff?; and
- vi. Keep two way communication channels open.

### **3. SELF DEVELOPMENT**

Research into professional developers found they scored relatively highly on self-development, self worth and self-identity (AMED, 1991). It is argued here that those managers who engage willingly and effectively in staff development will also display similar attributes.

Self-development has been defined as learners taking:

Responsibility for their own learning: what they learn, when they learn, with whom they learn, where they learn and how they learn (Irvine and Beard, 1999, p.360).

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) describe the purpose of self-development as being:

Primarily concerned with interventions to further the setting and achievement of an individual's own personal development plans and future career aspirations. Usually instigated by the individual, albeit within a supportive organizational framework (p.5).

Pedler et al. (1994) argue that self-development is based on the premiss:

...that any effective system for management development must increase the manager's capacity and willingness to take control over, and responsibility for, events – particularly for themselves and their own learning (p.3).

They describe self-development as personal development, with the individual taking primary responsibility for their learning and for choosing the means to achieve this. Other purposes of self-development include: career development and advancement; improving performance; developing specific qualities and skills; and, self-actualisation.

Irvine and Beard (1999) argue that self-development is concerned with both personal and management development.

If you develop the manager, you develop the person; if you develop the person you develop the manager (p.362).

Self-development has grown in recent years due to:

- An increasing recognition of its value in managing change.
- A recognition of the need to manage change.
- Unwillingness of managers to accept traditional approaches to management development.
- A growth in supporting infrastructure e.g. open and distance learning.

(Stewart, 1999b).

Self-development has also been closely linked to continuous professional development, the principles of which are that:

- Development should be continuous with the professional (*or manager*<sup>9</sup>) always seeking to improve performance;
- Development should be owned and managed by the learner;
- CPD is a personal matter and the effective learner knows best what they need to learn;
- Development should begin from the individual's current learning state;
- Learning objectives should be clear and wherever possible should serve organisational or client needs as well as individual goals; and
- Regular investment of time in learning should be seen as an essential part of professional (*managerial*) life, not an optional extra

(Irvine and Beard, 1999, pp.359-360).<sup>10</sup>

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) argue that self-development is a concept that complements current thinking about both management learning and the context within which it occurs. Firstly, the emphasis on individual learning styles, the distinctive features of adult learning, and the importance of reflection upon experience, discussed in Chapter 3, highlight the importance of self-direction in the learning process. Secondly, the scale and pace of change, and the constraints on resources, make self-development an important approach to learning.

An important facet of self-development is its emphasis on learning to learn and self-awareness which are critical for managers' ability to support the development of others (Mumford, 1993; Salaman, 1995).

...managerial helpers need to understand for themselves the learning process involved in effective learning...If you do not understand the main features of how managers [*individuals*] learn, especially the relationship between how you learn and how others might learn differently, your capacity to help is limited (Mumford, 1993, p.80).

Developing awareness of one awareness of one's management style is a major step in initiating personal learning, and in learning about how you work with others to help (or hinder) their learning (Salaman, 1995, p.115).

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<sup>9</sup> Author's parenthesis

For self-development to work effectively organisational support is required in terms of finance, time, management commitment and a supportive organisational structure. Training activities will also tend to move from traditional structured and didactic training to facilitating the personal growth of self-developers (Stewart, 1999b). Self-development is often structured around personal development plans and may involve a learning contract.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENTAL ROLES**

Five developmental roles – coaching, mentoring, peer mentoring, counselling and appraising - are explored to gain insight into developmental processes and the behaviours that managers may practice to support the learning of others.

##### **4.1 Coaching**

###### *4.1.1 Definition*

Coaching has been defined as:

...a work-centred activity, which is undertaken as a normal part of any manager's responsibility (Singer, 1974, p.7).

###### *4.1.2. The Coaching Process*

The coaching process has been described as:

...a process by which a manager, through discussion and guided activity, helps a member of staff to solve a problem or carry out a task better. The focus is on practical improvement of performance and development of specific skills (Kalinauckas and King, 1994, p.5).

Coaching thus focuses on line managers guiding their subordinates in day to day tasks, rather than the more holistic, dynamic and long-term perspective of mentoring. Consequently coaching has not enjoyed the same attention and promotion in recent

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<sup>10</sup> Adapted from the IPD

management literature as mentoring. Yet with its focus on the line manager-subordinate relationship it could with more extensive research potentially provide significant insights into the behaviours of 'Developmental Managers' particularly as the seminal UK work on coaching (Singer, 1974) was published more than twenty-five years ago.

Coaching has been described as a powerful developmental strategy (Singer, 1974; Mumford, 1993) given that:

- most of an individual's learning takes place on the job and that the coach/manager can influence the benefits staff gain from work experience, having considerable scope to create new challenges;
- the coach is a role model and therefore influences the behaviour and development of staff;
- staff participate in setting objectives which stimulates learning and ensures commitment to the achievement of objectives;
- control information must be available, so staff can monitor performance; and,
- frequent informal contact is more important than infrequent formal contact.

Parsloe (1992) identifies four coaching roles:

- i. 'hands-on' when working with inexperienced learners;
- ii. 'hands-off' when developing higher performance with experienced learners;
- iii. 'supporter' when helping learners use a flexible learning technique; and
- iv. 'qualifier' when helping a learner develop a specific requirement for a competence-based or professional qualification.

For coaching to be effective the coach should: ensure the coach and individual have the same objectives; where possible, give subordinates new tasks or responsibilities which 'stretch' them; allow individuals to feel they have responsibility; encourage individuals to ask questions; acknowledge learning takes time; give individuals feedback; and, ensure method used is adjusted to meet needs of subordinate (Singer, 1974).

This suggests that coaches have to be aware of principles of learning, discussed in Chapter 3, such as the Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984), Learning Styles (Honey and Mumford, 1986), learning curve and motivation for learning (Otto and Glaser, 1970).

In adapting coaching tactics to the needs of a subordinate there is one paramount consideration which needs to be followed. This is the importance of helping the subordinate to learn. The coach himself requires feedback as to whether learning, or a desire to learn exists. If he is stimulating learning then the coach will know he has the appropriate method (Singer, 1974, p.54).

All of the above concepts are potentially significant for this research into developmental relationships, as coaching is likely to be part of the line manager's range of developmental tools. Singer's (1974) work suggests that coaching has more to offer than may be currently thought, indeed it could be argued that his justification of coaching is not too dissimilar to that provided for mentoring in the mentoring literature. More recent American research places coaching very much within the empowerment paradigm, where coaches become 'enablers of the learning process with the intent to help employees learn and develop' (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999, p.760).

#### *4.1.3 Characteristics and skills of the coach*

Singer (1974) argues that:

The boss who wishes to coach should therefore recognise that far from 'playing god', 'advising' or 'telling' he is in reality a partner in a catalytic process through which both he and his subordinate will find solutions to the work problems which beset them (p.41).

The characteristics of good coaches have been described as: recognition that a major part of a manager's job is leading and co-ordinating the work of others, through 'coaching, guiding and involving subordinates rather than giving instructions' to achieve goals; and interest in and knowledge of their staff (ibid. p.68).

He identifies the skills of the coach as: observation of self and staff; appraisal to assess how much new learning has been acquired through coaching; discussion of

diagnosis and solution of work problems, rather than imposition of a solution; and delegation to develop the individual and ease the manager's workload. Singer argues that the most important skill of coaching is listening to demonstrate to the employee that:

...his superior manager is not only taking an interest but feels that the subordinate has something worthwhile to say. This is a sound foundation upon which to build (p.78).

Mumford (1993) also identifies a range of skills necessary for effective coaching:

- Active listening – paying full attention, ignoring distractions.
- Reflective listening – reflecting back to the speaker what has been heard to clear up misunderstandings, forcing them to analyse their own ideas and to show active listening.
- Open listening – listening with an open mind by suspending judgement to let the individual work an idea through.
- Drawing out – encouraging the individual to talk about their ideas, feelings and aspirations, helping by asking open questions.
- Recognising and revealing feelings – identifying the feelings of other and self and being able to talk about them.
- Giving feedback – giving clear reaction to specific behaviour with sensitivity in a constructive way.
- Agreeing goals – making sure each side of the partnership understands what they have to do.
- Deciding what coaching style to use – using questions to encourage reflection or to challenge or to instruct.
- Adapting to preferred learning styles.

That the coaching relationship should be based on respect is emphasised by Singer's (1974) view that:

...the ideal coaching session is as between equals, not as between supervisor and subordinate (p.81).

As the coach's task is to analyse staff learning needs and assist their development, they need to open up, rather than inhibit discussion by: not making judgmental statements; constructive questioning; letting the individual propose their own ideas; empathising; not putting individuals on the spot by exposing their weaknesses; and encouraging staff to develop their own thinking.

However, it should be noted that not all managers find it easy to adopt this facilitative role of coaching, instead of a more directive management style. Indeed some managers find it challenging to switch from a prescriptive to an empowering style, and may lack the skills to coach effectively (de Jong et al., 1999).

## **4.2 Mentoring**

### *4.2.1. Definition*

There is often confusion in the literature, and in practice, between coaching and mentoring, however Clutterbuck (1998) usefully outlines the differences between coaching and mentoring in Table 4.2.

<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Mentoring</b>
Concerned with task	Concerned with implications beyond task
Focuses on skills and performance	Focuses on capability and potential
Primarily a line manager role	Works best off-line
Agenda set by or with the coach	Agenda set by the learner
Emphasises feedback to the learner	Emphasises feedback and reflection <i>by</i> the learner
Typically addresses a short-term need	Typically a longer-term relationship, often 'for life'
Feedback and discussion primarily explicit	Feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviours

**Table 4.2 Coaching v Mentoring (Clutterbuck, 1998)**

A widely promoted definition of mentoring is that it is:

...a process in which one person (mentor) is responsible for overseeing the career and development of another person (protégé) outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship (Research Conference on Mentoring, 1994).

#### *4.2.2 Line Managers and mentoring*

Mentoring does not typically involve the individual's line manager directly (Clutterbuck, 1991; Gibb and Megginson, 1993; Mumford, 1993), as:

...mentors distinguish their function by their power and authority. Line managers will tend to be coaches, concerned with immediate performance in tasks and projects. The mentor, an organisationally tangential figure, can take the long-term view for the organisation and the individual (Conway, 1994, p.12).

However, the processes and behaviours involved in mentoring and particularly the holistic emphasis of mentoring could provide a valuable insight into developmental relationships.

#### *4.2.3 Structure*

Mentoring can be formal, linked to organisational objectives, or informal (Clutterbuck, 1991). The former has received considerably more coverage in the literature (e.g. Clutterbuck, 1991; Megginson and Gibb, 1993; Ritchie and Connelly, 1993). Whereas the latter may reveal more significant developmental behaviours or depths to developmental relationships than hitherto explored.

Clutterbuck (1991) makes some valuable points about mentoring. Formal mentoring programmes generally involve a mentor, protégé, protégé's line manager and possibly a trainer. However, in practice the line manager may be excluded, albeit unintentionally, thus reducing the potential influence the line manager may have on an individual's development. This may be somewhat short-sighted given that the line manager is likely to be working with the individual being developed on a day to day basis.

*Formal* mentoring programmes require: top management commitment; acceptance of time and emotional demands involved; careful matching of mentor and protégé; and mutual respect.

Clutterbuck (1991) argues that *traditional formal* mentoring can work in most companies regardless of size, culture or market sector. This claim may be open to challenge in voluntary organisations because of their particular culture, limited hierarchy and often decentralised structures, although some of the behaviours may be adopted by voluntary sector 'Developmental Managers'.

Informal mentoring is not managed, structured, nor formally recognised by the organisation.

Traditionally, they are spontaneous relationships that occur without external involvement from the organization. In contrast, formal mentorships are programs that are managed and sanctioned by the organization (Chao et al., 1992, p.620).

Gibb and Megginson (1993) highlight the dilemma of balancing formality with the spontaneity of informal mentoring. It could be contended that informal mentoring is more likely to be present in the voluntary sector.

Mentoring is not necessarily the forced mentoring found in formally structured mentoring programmes. Mentoring is an unselfish process. It is altruistic. It is interpersonal. It is a voluntary pairing of two individuals for mutual personal and corporate gain. Mentoring affects many aspects of organizational behaviour including leadership, organizational culture, job satisfaction and performance (Applebaum et al., 1994 p.70).

Indeed it is argued here that there is little understanding of informal and spontaneous development, not surprisingly due to their informality. Yet such incidents and actions may have a significant impact on the development of the individual. The fieldwork phase of this research explored the nature and processes of informal and spontaneous development in Chapters 8 and 10.

#### *4.2.4 Benefits of Mentoring*

A number of authors have identified the following benefits from mentoring.

Protégés benefit from: easier induction; improved self-confidence; learning to cope with the formal and informal structure of the organisation; career advice and

advancement; managerial tutelage; personal support and counselling; enhanced job satisfaction; role modelling; commitment to company; individual needs being met; and, insights into reality (P. A. International Survey, 1987; Clutterbuck, 1991; Gibb and Megginson, 1993).

Mentors benefit from: enhanced job satisfaction and enrichment; increased peer recognition for identifying potential; career advancement; pride; and self-fulfilment (P. A. International Survey, 1987; Clutterbuck, 1991).

Organisations benefit from: improved succession planning and management development; stable corporate culture; faster induction; better communication; reduced training costs; increased motivation and productivity; reduced turnover and labour costs (P. A. International Survey, 1987; Clutterbuck 1991; Gibb and Megginson, 1993).

Greater awareness and understanding of the positive behaviours of mentoring combined with the identification of transferable skills for the Developmental Manager could provide increased opportunities of such benefits rather than focusing only on an elite group of managers (Gibb and Megginson, 1993).

#### ***4.2.5 Criticism of Mentoring***

Whilst the literature above, much of which is prescriptive, extols the benefits of mentoring there is also a need to recognise the limitations of mentoring. Some of the limitations and criticisms of the concept and practice are discussed below.

Recent trends in organisational transformation such as delayering have reduced the number of managers in the hierarchy and as a consequence there are fewer potential mentors available (Jackson, 1993). Busy senior managers have less time for developmental roles.

There can also be perceptions of elitism where the opportunity of having a mentor is restricted to high fliers (Kram, 1985; Gibb and Megginson, 1995; Hay, 1995). Ritchie and Connelly (1993) also note that much of the prescriptive literature ignores issues

of control within the mentoring relationship. There is also a need to acknowledge line managers' perceptions of mentoring relationships (ibid.).

With regards to social transformation, the last thirty years has seen increasing feminisation of the UK labour market. Whilst only a half of women were in or seeking any sort of work in 1971, this had risen to two thirds by 1983 and almost three-quarters by 1999 (British Social Attitudes, 2000, p.101). However, women in the labour force still face inequality (Wilson, 2002). Women in the UK only hold 19% of all management positions and 3.6% of directorships (Cabinet Office, 2000). The lack of role models and of (women) mentors are two reasons given why women's career development is blocked (Mumford, 1985; Arnold and Davidson, 1990). Problems with cross-gender mentoring relationships have also been highlighted (e.g. Arnold and Davidson, 1990; Applebaum et al., 1994).

...while all mentoring relationships may suffer from the general problems of power alignments, negative feedback and receiving too much protection and favouritism, women are more likely to suffer specific problems when they are mentored by a man. While male mentors can provide benefits for women, particularly in regard to power and access to formal and informal networks, women may find themselves having to cope with unwanted sex-roles, sexual tension and increased public scrutiny (Arnold and Davidson, 1990, p.17).

Mentoring therefore should not be seen as a nostrum for redressing inequality in the workplace. For example there may be dangers that it will be used to reinforce current cultural norms such as 'male' characteristics being deemed more appropriate for managers. Wilson (2002) concludes from a range of studies that such perceptions continue to block the career development of women managers. Successful managerial behaviour often equates with images of masculinity such as rationality, measurement, objectivity, control and competitiveness. Women are equated with 'feminine' characteristics such as caring, nurturing and sharing (such as we might expect developmental managers to demonstrate). Therefore mentoring of women by men runs the risk of women being expected to adopt 'masculine' managerial behaviours.

Ragins et al. (2000) found that women with formal mentors were less satisfied with formal mentoring programmes than men. McDougall and Beattie (1997) also found this in their study comparing peer and hierarchical mentoring. Respondents with

experience of both felt they were more inhibited with their hierarchical mentor due to feeling that anything they said could have an impact on their career. Status was also seen as a barrier. Respondents felt it was easier and more appropriate to discuss personal feelings and insecurities with a peer mentor. Respondents also found that the nature of transactions varied between hierarchical and peer mentoring. They described the former as being more directive and one-way, contrary to much of the literature on mentoring (e.g. Clutterbuck, 1991). Whilst the latter was seen as a 'two way process' involving sharing. Peer mentoring is discussed further in 4.3 below. Higgins and Kram (2001) also argue that there is a need to look beyond the traditional model of mentoring.

The limitations described above could significantly inhibit the development of formal mentoring in voluntary organisations, given their stress on anti-discrimination, and in the social care field, where women make up 81% of the workforce (EOR, 1998). However, care should be taken not to stereotype based on gender, particularly as it may be organisational, rather than personality traits, that may determine management style (Wajcman, 1998 cited by Wilson, 2002). This provides another argument for investigating voluntary sector organisations to provide insights into the management style of managers generally neglected by mainstream management literature.

A further challenge facing designers of mentoring programmes is trying to effectively match mentors and proteges as mentoring's:

...psychosocial functions depend largely on the interpersonal chemistry between two individuals...[and] attempts to find criteria on which selection can be made have yielded little reward (Carter, 1994, p.18).

This study whilst focusing on line managers, rather than mentors per se, by identifying developmental behaviours may offer some insight to those attempting to identify such criteria.

In terms of implementing mentoring programmes Cunningham and Eberle (1993), based on an empirical study, identified differing expectations between mentors and protégés that could limit the efficacy of mentoring programmes. Whilst Ragins et al.

(2000) concluded from their study into mentoring that having a mentor does not necessarily guarantee positive work outcomes. The outcomes are dependent on the quality of the mentoring relationship. They also found that some marginal mentoring relationships survived perhaps because the protégé received some limited career assistance or did not want to risk the negative consequences that might result from terminating such a relationship.

A final concern of the author's is the growing perception in the UK that mentoring is a panacea to a whole range of business, educational and societal problems.

#### *4.2.6 Context of Mentoring*

Ritchie and Connelly (1993), researching mentoring in public sector health and social care organisations, suggest there is no single agreed model of mentoring that public organisations can adopt. Public sector models utilise private sector models as a source. They acknowledge the tradition of mentoring-like activities among many public sector professions e.g. nursing - preceptorship, social work - supervision. Such tradition may be replicated informally, and indeed formally, in social and health care voluntary organisations. They argue there is integration between mentoring practices for management and for professional purposes, because of the need for accountability in the public sector. Experience of mentoring within the public sector lies within the professions, whereas in the private sector it lies with managers. However,

...the question arises as to whether the fit is so neat when a private sector style of mentoring is applied in public sector organisations, which have a different ethos and where a new style of management is a recently imposed political solution to the perceived problem of excessive public expenditure (p.275).

If a new model were appropriate for the public sector (ibid.), a natural extension of this would be the development of a unique model(s) for the voluntary sector. Indeed,

...in the new public sector organisations, mentoring has a more basic function (than fast-track) of developing a management culture in service areas, where the use and expenditure of finite public resources require more efficient management and are subject to public scrutiny and control (p.278).

The voluntary sector, particularly in the care field, is also experiencing similar developments to the public sector, as described above. A secondary issue therefore for this research is whether the focus of mentoring (if it exists), informal or formal, is developmental or managerial or both?

*4.2.7 Mentoring functions and process*

Kram (1983) identifies two types of mentoring functions. Firstly, *career functions*, which include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments, are the aspects of the relationship, which primarily enhance career advancement. Secondly, *psychosocial functions*, which include role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship, are the aspects of the relationship which primarily enhance a sense of competence, identity and effectiveness in the managerial role.

Clutterbuck (1998) has outlined what developmental mentoring involves and this is presented in Table 4.3 below.

<b>Developmental mentoring involves:</b>		
<b>Always...</b>	<b>Sometimes...</b>	<b>Never...</b>
Listening with empathy	Using coaching behaviours	Discipline
Sharing experience	Using counselling behaviours	Appraisal
Mutual learning	Challenging assumptions	Assessment for a third party
Professional friendship	Being a role model	Supervision
Developing insight through reflection	Opening doors	
Being a sounding board		
Encouraging		

**Table 4.3 Developmental Mentoring (Clutterbuck, 1998)**

*4.2.8 Mentor Competences*

Clutterbuck (2000) has identified ten core competences for mentoring. These are:

- i. Self-awareness – mentors need high self-awareness to recognise and manage their own behaviours within the helping relationship and to empathise appropriately.

- ii. Behavioural awareness – understanding how others behave and why they do so.
- iii. Business or professional experience and judgement. Mentors can help protégés acquire such experience and judgement by encouraging reflection.
- iv. Sense of proportion/good humour - if used appropriately, can help develop rapport, help people see issues from a different perspective, and release emotional tension.
- v. Communication competence. Here the mentor should demonstrate a range of communication skills:
  - Listening – opening the mind to what the other person is saying; demonstrating interest/attention; encouraging them to speak; holding back on filling the silences
  - Parallel processing - analysing what the other person is saying, reflecting on it, preparing responses.
  - Projecting – crafting words and their emotional ‘wrapping’ in a manner appropriate to the situation and the recipient.
  - Observing – being open to non-verbal signals; adapting tone, volume, pace and language appropriately.
  - Exiting – concluding dialogue with clarity and mutual understanding
- vi. Conceptual modelling – effective mentors have a range of models they can utilise to help protégés understand the issues they face. According to the situation and the protégé’s learning style it may be appropriate to present these models in verbal or visual form, or use them as a framework for asking questions.
- vii. Commitment to their own continued learning – effective mentors become role models for self-managed learning.

They seize opportunities to experiment and take part in new experiences. They read widely and are reasonably efficient at setting and following personal development plans. They actively seek and use behavioural feedback from others (p.33).

- viii. Strong interest in developing others – effective mentors have an innate interest in achieving things through others and in helping others recognise and achieve their potential. Clutterbuck argues that this instinctive response is critical in developing rapport, and motivating the protégé and building their confidence.

ix. Building and maintaining rapport/relationship management, which has five characteristics:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Trust:       | will they do what they say?<br>will they keep confidences?                                 |
| Focus:       | are they concentrating on me?<br>are they listening without judging?                       |
| Empathy:     | do they have goodwill towards me?<br>do they try to understand my feelings and viewpoints? |
| Congruence:  | do they acknowledge and accept my goals?   |
| Empowerment: | is their help aimed at helping me stand on my own two feet?                                |

x. Goal clarity – the mentor helps the learner sort out what they want to achieve and why.

Whilst these competencies refer to mentors, who typically are not an individual's immediate line manager, they are compared in Chapter 12 with the developmental behaviours identified in the primary research to ascertain if there are any commonalities.

### **4.3 Peer Mentoring**

Peer learning is an informal developmental process and focuses on colleagues of equal status. Peer relationships may serve some of the same critical functions as mentoring, however the lack of a hierarchical dimension in a peer relationship may make it easier to achieve the communication, mutual support and collaboration necessary for effective learning (Kram and Isabella, 1985; Smith, 1990). Such relationships may be particularly significant for development in the voluntary sector with its lack of hierarchy and emphasis on informality and empowerment. Peer relationships, which establish 'a forum for mutual exchange in which an individual can achieve a sense of expertise, equality and empathy' (Kram and Isabella, 1985,

p.129), are also likely to appeal to the values of voluntary sector managers and professionals.

Kram and Isabella (1995) identified three types of peer relationship:

- i. Information Peer where the primary function is information-sharing.
- ii. Collegial Peer where the primary functions are career strategising, job-related feedback, and friendship.
- iii. Special Peer where the primary functions are confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback and friendship.

They argue that it is the special attribute of mutuality which makes peer relationships different from hierarchical developmental relationships. This has been described in management development as the *Principle of Reciprocity* (Mumford, 1993) and in project work as mutual mentoring (Smith, 1990)

Building on this work McDougall and Beattie (1997) have developed the concept of peer mentoring.

A process where there is mutual involvement, for encouraging and enhancing learning and development between peers (p.425).

They have identified five clusters of behaviours, which may be demonstrated in these informal learning partnerships:

- i. Communicative behaviours: discussing, listening and questioning, collaborating and summing up;
- ii. Affective behaviours: helping, supporting, encouraging, reaffirming, understanding, and calming;
- iii. Cognitive behaviours: explaining, advising, accessing and sharing information, playing Devil's advocate, exchanging; developing and bouncing ideas with the partner;
- iv. Learning behaviours: facilitating, reflecting, taking on different perspectives, coaching, modelling on the partner;

- v. Challenging behaviours: criticising constructively, disagreeing, and providing a good discipline for progress.

They identified significant benefits from these relationships including: having a sounding board; support; confidence building; mutual learning; gaining a different perspective; motivation; access to a wider network; and, having a confidante, friend and 'a safety net' helped individuals cope with stress.

Peer mentoring has the potential to offset the constraints of traditional mentoring, whilst harnessing the benefits of mutuality and encouraging the creation of a climate for learning, which may prove to be particularly appropriate for the voluntary sector. both in terms of values and economics.

This research considers the influence of peer learning on the development of managers and employees; and in Chapter 12 explores the comparability of the behaviours identified in the typology of Peer Mentoring above with the developmental behaviours of line managers in the case study organisations.

#### **4.4 Counselling**

Counselling is considered here because it:

...supports the learning process by helping people examine and come to terms with their own fears, motivations and blocks to progress (Clutterbuck, 1998, p.9).

One definition of workplace counselling is 'preparing the emotional ground for learning' (ibid. p.56). This involves clearing blockages such as fears, repetitive behaviours, and tunnel vision which prevent individuals from recognising, acknowledging and understanding development needs, deciding to do something about it, planning how to tackle it and sustaining the motivation to achieve personal change. Counselling is therefore:

...not primarily concerned with solving problems or seeking particular answers; it is about helping people to understand more clearly how they are managing a situation, how they make

things easy or difficult for themselves, and how they restrict their ability to solve problems. Answers to the problem should emerge from counselling but the nature of that answer can only be known by the client (Clark, 1990, p.65).

Whilst much workplace counselling will be the remit of internal specialists, training staff or external agencies, line managers may play a part in 'limited' counselling of their staff, particularly in relation to development. Counselling for learning involves the following behaviours:

- Helping people develop the confidence and motivation to tackle a learning task/seize a learning opportunity.
- Helping them towards insight into their own drives and fears so they can recognise and accept the need for improvement or change.
- Helping them plan what and how they will change (i.e. how they will learn).
- Helping them to develop coping strategies to overcome barriers to achievement and to learning.
- Being able to offer support, or simply to listen sympathetically, when needed.
- Acting as a gateway to other forms of professional help where the learner has specific needs beyond the counsellor's competence (Clutterbuck, 1998, p.52-53)

The skills of counselling are: empathy and detachment; listening and interpreting; leading and following; getting behind the issue; suspending judgement; and moving at the speed of the learner (ibid.).

Clutterbuck (1998) argues that managers involved in counselling should themselves participate in counselling to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the process. He has also developed a useful matrix of counselling activities, shown in Figure 4.1.

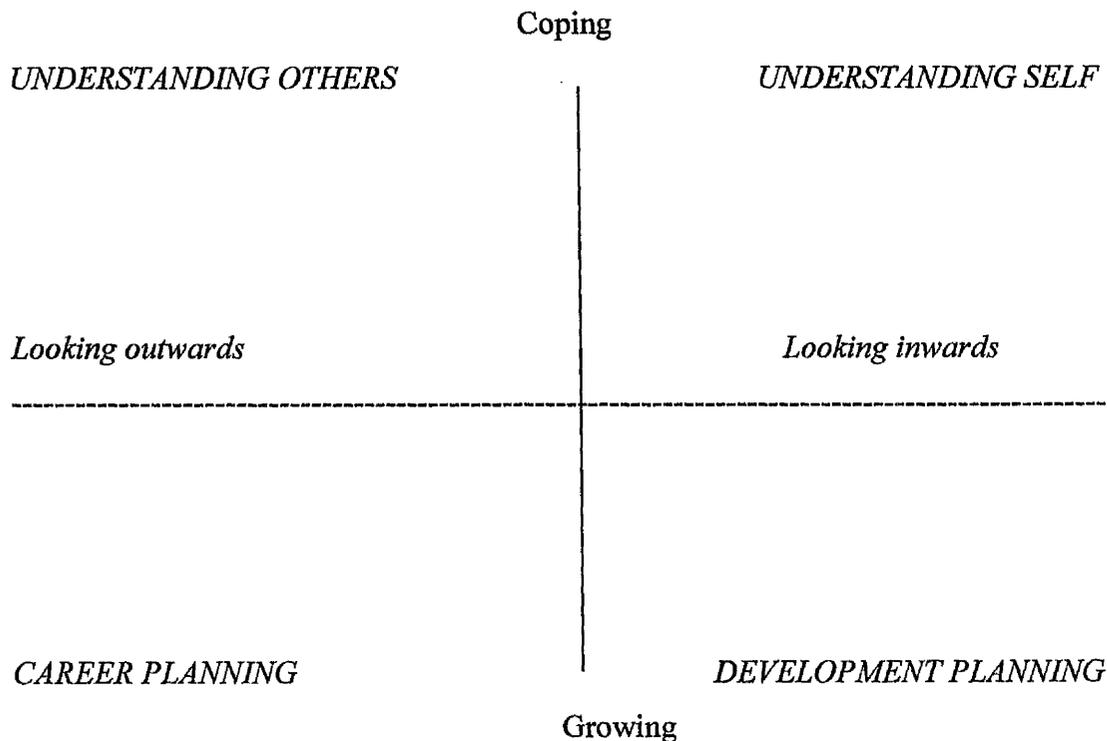
The first dimension is coping and growing. The purpose of the helping relationship may either be coping (coming to terms with the working environment) and/or growing (developing personal competence and/or confidence). The second dimension is looking out and looking in. The perspective of the relationship may be external (how can I affect/master the world around me?) and/or internal (how can I gain greater

insight and mastery over myself?). Four counselling styles emerge from these dimensions.

Firstly, understanding others where the counsellor helps the learner: gain insight into their relationships with others; to become more sensitive to other people's motivations and views; to develop awareness of their impact on other people's behaviour; and to develop strategies for managing relationships more effectively.

Secondly, understanding self where the counsellor helps the learner: gain insight into their own unconscious processes; to recognise and deal with dysfunctional blindspots that affect their social or task performance; and to develop strategies for managing themselves more effectively.

Thirdly, career planning involves the counsellor advising the learner about career choices, helping to evaluate and choose between opportunities, and to develop a career development plan.



**Figure 4.1 Counselling styles (Clutterbuck, 1998)**

Fourthly, development planning where the counsellor helps the learner make use of self-knowledge to develop their resilience, envision what they might become and plan how to get there.

Finally, Clutterbuck argues that every manager should have some competence in workplace counselling. However:

...in practice, many managers will not have sufficient self-understanding or interest in others to fulfil this role with sensitivity. Others may find it difficult to disengage, to separate their own needs and perceptions from those of the learner (p.69).

In the case of managers in this study they may, given their professional backgrounds, be able to overcome across both these barriers, particularly the first.

#### **4.5 Appraising**

As discussed earlier, in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, an HRD task often devolved to line managers is appraisal involving the assessment of past performance and the identification of future development needs (Bevan and Hayday, 1994; IPD, 1995).

Clearly appraisal is used for many purposes (see e.g. Long, 1986; Carlton and Sloman, 1992; Beaumont, 1993; Fletcher, 1993; Taylor, 1998; Redman, 2001) but in this study only those aspects relevant to developmental roles and social care organisations will be considered below.

Myland (1997) argues that well developed performance appraisal systems have much to offer social care organisations through encouraging:

...managers and staff to meet on a regular basis to discuss performance issues in an objective and constructive way (p.3).

The appraisal meeting is a two-way process and part of an ongoing dialogue, which should summarise the individual's performance to date and identify how the individual can fulfil their potential. The appraiser and appraisee should be focused on

looking forward, collaborating to build strengths, address weaknesses and consolidate performance standards. Myland continues by identifying benefits for the organisation, managers, and appraisees.

For the organisation effective appraisal can contribute to a higher standard of service and care, consistent with the stated aims and values of the organisation. Also if appraisal is designed as an ongoing process it should facilitate timeous and constructive feedback on performance, thus contributing to effective communication within the organisation. Motivation and morale are higher amongst employees who enjoy job satisfaction and regular feedback, both of which appraisal can enhance. This can contribute to improving standards, staff retention and identification of individuals with potential.

Managers benefit through enhanced interpersonal skills, coaching and effective time management, and by gaining insight into their own abilities as well as those of their staff.

Individuals benefit through increased job satisfaction, and fulfilling potential.

There is, however, acknowledgement of possible problems. The most significant of these is time.

Consistent monitoring and feedback on performance can be almost impossible in a fast moving and unpredictable environment (ibid. p.9).

In addition the time taken to prepare and conduct appraisals can be considerable.

Mumford (1993) and Woodall (2000) also highlight tensions between the performance and development elements of appraisal.

There is an inevitable tension between the hard edge of reviewing performance, and the apparently softer management issue of development needs. On the one hand development needs must be centred on carefully identified performance issues. However, the process of identification if not carried out sensitively may destroy the willingness of the subordinate to

accept the reality of any performance defect or the relevance of the development need or solution (Mumford, 1993, p.145).

A focus on tasks, objectives and outcomes gives priority to short-term considerations, and squeezes out long term development. This goes a considerable way to explaining the poor record of line managers in facilitating the development of their direct reports. Line managers may potentially have a key role in assisting development through providing an opportunity for debriefing and guided reflection but, with little training in coaching skills and a strong signal that meeting targets is the priority, this is unlikely to show the desired result (Woodall, 2000, p.27)

Another problem identified is inconsistency amongst managers, in terms of their ability and attitude towards appraisal, although this may be addressed through training.

Good communication, through training and regular monitoring are necessary to ensure that every manager appraises fairly and his or her staff are able to access the opportunities that an appraisal scheme can offer (Myland, 1997, p.9).

Such training should be available to all appraisers, and ideally for appraisees too.

In addition to providing time and resources for training in and implementing appraisal processes, appraisal needs to be embedded within the organisation's culture and norms.

One way to achieve this is through assessment of a manager's ability to appraise, coach and develop others within their own appraisal process (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998, p.115).

Myland (1997) concludes that the following twelve factors maximise the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in social care organisations.

1. The objectives of the appraisal scheme are consistent with the organisation's aims and objectives.
2. There must be an obvious link between the culture and management style of the organisation and the method of appraisal devised.

3. The basis for assessment, review and development must be objective and measurable, aligned specifically to job responsibilities, targets and clear standards of performance.
4. Appraisal is not an 'annual' event, but a continuous process – regular meetings take place throughout the review period, so that the appraisal meeting acts as a summary meeting and does not present any surprises.
5. The activity must be two-way, with appraisers and appraisees taking joint responsibilities to promote constructive discussion.
6. The emphasis should be on development not judgement. If there is to be any relationship with reward, then there should be some separation of the reward and developmental aspects.
7. Appraisal must be forward looking, but should be based realistically on the individual's abilities and on what the organisation can offer.
8. Every outcome agreed at appraisal should be followed up.
9. There must be genuine commitment to the process from all managers, especially senior managers.
10. Immediate managers need to be responsible for appraising their own staff, but their commitment and skill must be monitored and reviewed.
11. A senior person should be responsible for 'quality control' to ensure the system runs effectively. The scheme should be subject to regular review and continuous improvement.
12. All participants must understand the objectives of the appraisal scheme and be able to identify with them.

Finally, Myland (1997) argues that appraisers need to develop skills to enable them to effectively carry out five key stages of appraisal. They will therefore need to be able to:

1. Quantify performance requirements in terms of responsibilities, goals and standards
2. Prepare for appraisal meetings thoroughly by reviewing performance and development needs
3. Facilitate feedback with appraisees
4. Plan effectively to meet development needs

5. Follow up action plans conscientiously

## 5. DEVELOPMENTAL BEHAVIOURS OF LINE MANAGERS

As stated in Chapter One there have been relatively few empirical studies, until recently, focusing on the behaviours of line managers as developers. This section explores the still limited work on managers as developers to identify any possible insights into their behaviours.

Mumford (1993) based on his experience of managers helping other managers to develop, rather than through a structured empirical study, identifies in Table 4.4 the following managerial behaviours which facilitate learning.

Managerial behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Democratic/participative decision making style</li><li>• Ability to listen</li><li>• Ability to plan ahead</li><li>• Ability to give timely and explicit direct feedback and providing it at an appropriate time when it can be saved</li><li>• Ability to engage in processes of questioning, reflecting and planning what to do next</li><li>• Ability to listen and reflect, rather than give direct statements</li><li>• Ability to be a good role model</li><li>• Capacity to share understanding of the total learning process</li><li>• Ability to recognise learning opportunities within managerial [operational] activity</li></ul>

**Table 4.4 Managerial behaviours facilitating learning (Mumford, 1993, p.88)**

Recent American and Dutch empirical studies give further insights into the behaviours of line managers as developers.

Ellinger and Bostrom's (1999)<sup>11</sup> recent exploratory study of 12 managers as coaches revealed 13 behaviour sets of managers as facilitators of learning. They have clustered into two clusters of behaviour, empowering and facilitating (see Table 4.5 below). Whilst their distinction between empowering and facilitating behaviours is somewhat unclear their study offers a welcome insight to the topic. They stress that

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Ellinger and Bostrom used critical incidents to collect data, however the authors only considered learning from the managers' perspectives, whereas this research study has also explored the employees' perspective. However, like this research study the managers selected were identified as effective developers by their respective organisations. This article was not consulted until after the fieldwork and primary data analysis stages were completed.

given recent increased interest in organisational learning and the learning organisation it has become evermore critical to acquire empirical knowledge about how managers actually coach staff.

Within the empowering cluster the two most significant behaviours were question framing and being a resource. The former involved managers asking employees questions to encourage them to think of their own solutions, rather than the manager providing them directly. Managers suggested that they tried to frame such questions in a ‘non-threatening, non-confrontational, non-judgemental’ way. Such questions tended to get employees to focus on the possible consequences of their actions. The second behaviour revealed managers providing information and other resources to their staff.

<b>Clusters of behaviour sets: emergent themes and frequencies</b>	<b>No (322)</b>	<b>% (100)</b>
<b>Empowering cluster</b>		
Question framing to encourage employees to think through issues	33	10.25
Being a resource – removing obstacles	25	7.76
Transferring ownership to employees	17	5.28
Holding back – not providing the answers	11	3.42
<b>Facilitating cluster</b>		
Providing feedback to employees	66	20.50
Soliciting feedback from employees	5	1.55
Working it out together – talking it through	55	17.08
Creating and promoting a learning environment	33	10.25
Setting and communicating expectations – fitting into the big picture	19	5.90
Stepping into other to shift perspectives	19	5.90
Broadening employees’ perspectives – getting them to see things differently	14	4.35
Using analogies, scenarios and examples	17	5.28
Encouraging others to facilitate learning	8	2.48

**Table 4.5 – Clusters of behaviour sets, emergent themes and frequencies (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999, p.758).**

Within the facilitating cluster the most significant behaviours were providing feedback, talking it through and creating and promoting a learning environment. They identified three types of feedback: observational, reflective and third party. Observational feedback involved managers reporting on observed behaviour. With reflective feedback managers ‘held the mirror’ so employees could assess how their behaviour affected others in the organisation. Third party feedback involved managers soliciting feedback from the employee’s other contacts, such as with 360 degree appraisal. In ‘working it out together – talking it through’ managers facilitated

learning through discussions about problems, working towards solutions together and to 'generally bring closure to issues' (p.763). 'Creating and promoting a learning environment' involved managers trying to develop learning opportunities and create systems for shared learning.

A more limited study by de Jong et al. (1999), based solely on the views of HRD specialists, identified line managers adopting three types of developmental roles. The analytic role involves analysing and solving performance problems. The supportive role involves creating favourable conditions for learning. Finally, the trainer role involves directly influencing work behaviour.

Finally, a recent survey conducted by Gallup (Buckingham, 2000), covering 200,000 employees across more than a dozen industries identified four critical management attributes from an employee's perspective:

- i. Having a manager who shows care, interest and concern.
- ii. Knowing what is expected of them.
- iii. Having a role that fits their abilities.
- iv. Receiving positive feedback and recognition regularly for work well done.

The Gallup study also found that teams rating managers highly on these four factors were more productive and profitable, had higher customer ratings and had lower staff turnover.

There is little discussion in the above studies of the inhibitory behaviours that line managers may demonstrate, although Mumford (1993) provides a list of reasons why helpers fail to help:

- i. Failure to recognise opportunities for helping an individual to learn.
- ii. Failure to recognise the specific needs of an individual.
- iii. Failure to agree what is being attempted.
- iv. Inability to use a style appropriate to the learner.
- v. Inability to adapt to implicit or explicit expectations of open dialogue.
- vi. Inability to adjust power relationships.

- vii. Conflicts on expectations and offers of help.
- viii. Lack of skill in giving and receiving uncomfortable feedback.
- ix. Lack of organisational support.
- x. Not giving time to development.
- xi. Insufficient or inappropriate development as helper.

The above discussion confirms that line managers play a critical role in developing employees and contribute to improved organisational performance. These studies have also given some insights into the behaviours of managers as developers. Their findings are compared with those of this study in Chapter 12.

## **6. SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING THE LINE MANAGER AS DEVELOPER**

### **6.1 Supporting line managers in their developmental role**

The Cabinet Office (1993) proposed a model for effective HRD devolution. This identified the need for a coherent HR strategy derived from the organisation's goals and included: top management commitment to change demonstrated by their behaviours and actions; effective communication of strategy to managers; the role of line managers being clearly defined; line managers being involved in establishing the agenda; the personnel and training function providing support to help line managers to perform their new roles; line managers being made accountable to ensure they take their responsibilities seriously; and HR strategy being evaluated to make sure that the new approaches are helping the organisation meet its objectives.

Bevan and Hayday (1994) present two models of HR support for line managers. The first is based on the HRM function providing training to support line managers in those areas they find difficulty, notably staff development. Organisations adopting this approach spent time persuading managers that by investing time on staffing matters they could have a tangible impact on their business goals. Line managers that the researchers spoke to however reiterated the paradox they faced delivering short-term goals at the expense of progressing medium or long-term goals. In some organisations there was an attempt to clarify the criteria against which line managers'

performance was to be assessed, thus suggesting to managers that their staff management accountabilities were of similar standing to their other business targets.

The second involves aligning the HRM function more closely to operational management, and involves a more explicit client-customer approach, in effect adopting an internal consultancy approach.

## **6.2 Developing line managers as developers**

Given the increasing responsibilities being devolved to managers, serious consideration has to be given to firstly the development of managers themselves and secondly to provide training for their HRM, and particularly HRD responsibilities (Mumford, 1993; McGovern et al., 1997; Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999; Buckingham, 2000).

If managing organizational learning, strategic adaptation, and facilitating learning are some of the challenges being posed to managers and leaders today, significant challenges also exist for those charged with the task of management development (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999, pp.766-767).

### *6.2.1 Management Development*

Since the seminal reports of Handy, and Constable and McCormick in the late 1980s there has been a massive expansion of management development activity and of literature on the condition and nature of management development in the UK.<sup>12</sup>

Holden (2001) argues that management development should be regarded as a holistic process as it is:

...more than just management education and training. It involves the holistic development of the manager, taking account of such factors as: the needs, goals and expectations of both the organisation and the individual; the political, cultural and economic context; structures, and systems for selection, reward and monitoring performance (p.421).

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion see Thomson et al. (2001) who have just published an excellent macro overview of the current state of management development in the UK.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) provide an extensive definition of management development that integrates the key elements of a range of definitions of management development, which tend to focus on the purposes and processes of management development, to which they have added a third, prerequisites for effectiveness.

Building on their definition of management development in Table 4.6 Woodall and Winstanley have created a model of management development which they argue demonstrates management development as a bridge and a nexus between organisational development and self-development. In other words management development has the twin aims of developing the individual for their own and the organisation's requirements. The model is presented below in Figure 4.2.

A vast range of management development activities has been described in the literature. Woodall and Winstanley (1998) provide a useful summary of some of the most popular activities that may be delivered in work-related or off-the job environments. They remind us that the selection of such activities for individuals should consider their needs and their learning styles.

The management policies and practices of each organisation have been examined to see whether they satisfy the prerequisites identified by Woodall and Winstanley, and to assess the interaction between self-development, management development and organisational development.

	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>
<i>Organizational development</i>	Processes to develop organizational structures, culture and management systems to enhance the achievement of organizational objectives, especially with regard to enabling organizational change	Action research based around formal work teams working on their values and beliefs and trial-and-error learning with and from each other	Work in developing corporate objectives. The creation of a sense of purpose and acknowledgement of the need for change. A theory Y approach to the workforce
<i>Management Development</i>	Primarily oriented towards developing individuals in ways which are complementary with the organization and its objectives for meeting the individual's own career and development needs	Formal and informal activities and processes which provide opportunities for individuals to develop cognitively in their understanding of management and behaviourally in their managerial skills and competences	A positive attitude towards learning and a willingness to develop and change in the learner. Capability on behalf of the facilitator or developer. Support from the organization
<i>Self-development</i>	Primarily concerned with interventions to further the setting and achievement of an individual's own personal development plans and future career aspirations. Usually instigated by the individual, albeit within a supportive organizational framework	The development by an individual of their own personal development plans, an individual devising their own programme of development activities. This may include MD activities and career-planning activities	Some self-motivation to develop on the part of the individual, and an ability to take initiative in this area. Requires some external support.

**Table 4.6 The purposes, processes and prerequisites of management development (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998, p.5).**

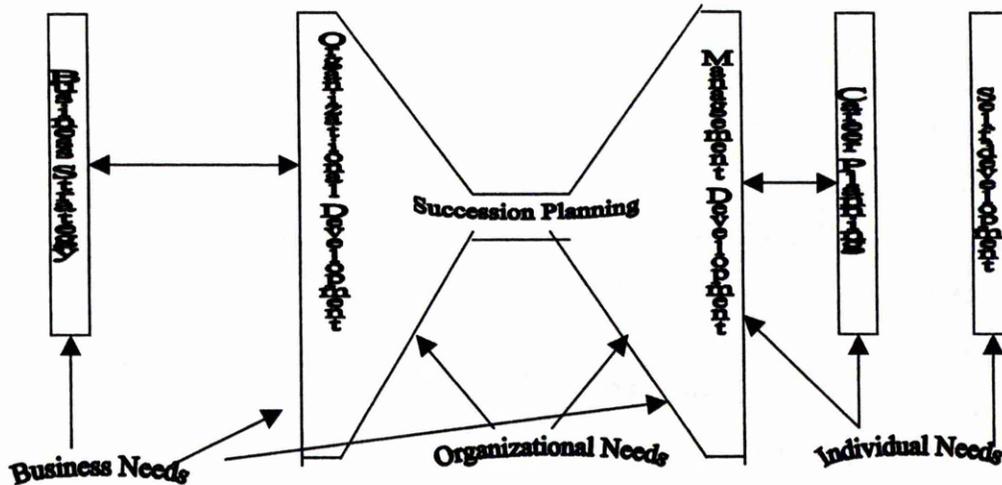


Figure 4.2 Management Development in the context of organizational and self-development (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998, p.10)

<i>On-the-job experiential methods</i>	<i>Off-the-job</i>	<i>Techniques used in off-the-job management development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action learning</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Sponsorship</li> <li>• Role modelling</li> <li>• Job enrichment</li> <li>• Job rotation</li> <li>• Secondment</li> <li>• Special projects</li> <li>• Task forces</li> <li>• Deputizing</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Visioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management education</li> <li>➤ Qualifications</li> <li>➤ Short courses</li> <li>➤ Seminars</li> <li>• In-company management training</li> <li>➤ Workshops</li> <li>➤ Seminars</li> <li>➤ 'academies'</li> <li>• External providers</li> <li>➤ Specialist packages</li> <li>➤ Customized</li> <li>➤ Outdoor development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures/presentations</li> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Syndicate/discussion groups</li> <li>• Distance/open learning materials</li> <li>• Work-related projects</li> <li>• Games and stimulations</li> <li>• Role plays</li> <li>• Individual/group presentations</li> <li>• External speakers</li> </ul>

Table 4.7 Management Development Interventions (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998, p.158).

### 6.2.2 Training Line Managers as Developers

The limited empirical research on line managers and HRM demonstrates that training and development, and experience are significant influences in the development of people management skills (McGovern et al., 1997; Cunningham and Hyman, 1999). It has also been found that managers in 'empowering' organisations are more prepared and more confident in their people management duties (Hyman and Cunningham, 1998).

An AMED (1991) study of professional ‘developers’ explored how they developed as developers by asking:

- how they became a developer;
- what they did in their role as a developer;
- what skills and attributes they used;
- what values they held;
- their pictures or models of development;
- what they saw as future trends in development of organisations and people and the implications of these; and,
- their views on an educational development programme for developers.

These questions have informed the primary research, as will be seen in Chapter 5.

The AMED respondents had a strong commitment to both self-development and to the development of others as colleagues, friends, organisation members and citizens.

Developmental and humanistic values pop up everywhere. Developers appear as optimistic and idealistic people who like to live out their values (p.67).

These values are likely to be present in voluntary social care organisations.

When asked what had influenced their development as developers, the most frequent responses (in rank order) were: people – colleagues, guides and mentors; successful and positive experiences; and the perception that people and/or organisations need help in their development; and, values.

The AMED study concluded from their evidence that ‘typical’ developers:

- Have had two or more previous jobs.
- Have a high level of formal qualifications.
- Are strongly motivated by their own self-development and by a desire to make a contribution to their colleagues, organisation and/or society.

- Are motivated by a desire to know more, to develop further.
- Are not strongly motivated by money and organisational careers (note: a significant number of the sample were self-employed consultants).
- Operate on the basis of strongly held values – about development as an idea, about self, the nature of organisations and (sometimes) society (e.g. equity, fairness, equal opportunity).
- Put people first as their single biggest source of learning – as mentors, bosses, colleagues, friends.
- See their own experience as a potent source of learning.
- Try to practice what they preach and engage in various forms of self-development.
- Value risk-taking and see the importance of learning from tackling things at which they are not competent.
- Are fascinated by newness in people, ideas, models, and theories.
- Describe their life histories in terms of turning points or developmental events.
- Need the experience of success to keep going, but have often learned much from adversity (especially women).
- Value autonomy above order, respect for the individual over regulation and professionalisation of practice
- Are optimistic, hopeful and encouraging (pp70-71).

Respondents were asked to rank three out of six skill clusters they thought particularly important for their work.

Skill Cluster	No.	%
1 Initiating, proposing, confronting, challenging	411	64.9
2 Being practical, seeing opportunities, putting theories into practice	398	62.9
3 Planning, seeing ahead, having vision	362	57.2
4 Supporting, listening, nurturing, maintaining	348	55.0
5 Reflecting, reviewing, learning from the past	186	29.3
6 Theorising, generalising, seeing overviews, conceptualising	146	23.1

**Table 4.8 Skill Clusters (AMED 1991)**

Interestingly the lowest priorities were for reflecting and theorising, two critical elements of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984), perhaps because those engaged in ‘professional’ development tend to have stronger activist tendencies rather than

reflector and theorist tendencies (Honey and Mumford, 1986). In the future respondents felt there would be a shift away from initiating, proposing, confronting, towards planning, seeing ahead, and having vision.

In terms of identifying how developers' developmental needs can be met, whilst acknowledging the need for a significant element of self-determination in any development programme, the authors highlight the following areas for inclusion:

- The nature and process of development of individuals, groups and organisations.
- The integration of individual and organisational development.
- The nature and importance of diversity in organisations.
- Wider issues and their implications for developers, particularly:
  - People issues, such as demographic changes and changes in people's expectations of work such as flexible work, reward, career and development patterns
  - How development can make organisations more businesslike; the implications of development becoming business-led rather than personnel driven
  - Ecological and ethical issues
  - Global issues.
- The nature and use of a range of methods and approaches such as: teambuilding; mentoring; coaching; self-development; learning company; TQM; competences; action learning; change/project management; and continuous improvement.
- How to select methods that will be appropriate to a particular situation.
- The implications of the growing importance of development as a function of line managers.

The type of development programme identified by developers was one with a strong emphasis on self-development, self-awareness and developing through work itself; and secondary interest in other life experiences, mentors and action learning and self-development groups, planned apprenticeship, secondments/sabbaticals and reading.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The literature review has demonstrated the growing movement to devolve HRD responsibilities to line managers. Therefore there is a pressing need to enhance our understanding of developmental relationships between managers and their staff.

As Mumford (1993) and others argue there has been limited empirical research into the actual roles that line managers play in HRM/D. However, the view has been expressed that the 'developmental humanism' that underpins many normative models of HRM (and HRD) is overwhelmed by the short-term pragmatism of capitalist ventures. Voluntary organisations may not be so susceptible to capitalist values, and their managers may consequently feel more able to undertake development activities. This has been explored in the fieldwork.

Recent research into management development in the UK indicates that line managers are more likely to be involved in supporting development when the organisation has a formalised strategy for development. The relationship between formal organisation strategies and management behaviour is explored in Chapters 6,7 and 10.

A range of reasons have been identified for managers (and others) having an interest in developing others. This research has explored what motivates voluntary sector Developmental Managers to facilitate the learning of others.

Significant barriers to the effective devolution of HRD have been identified. A major barrier identified to effective devolution is seen as the lack of development of managers themselves. It is contended here that managers who are engaged in developing their staff will also participate in continual learning themselves through self-development. The fieldwork explored whether line managers perceive individual and organisational barriers to effective devolution, and also explores their development background and attitude towards learning.

Whilst there has been limited literature focusing on the role of the line manager as developer a few publications, normative and empirical, have identified a range of facilitative behaviours and, to a lesser extent, inhibitory behaviours. The behaviours

identified in this literature are highlighted in Table 4.9 below, along with those identified from the five developmental roles – coach, mentor, peer mentor, counsellor and appraiser. As can be seen there are significant overlaps between these descriptions.

Coaching	Mentoring	Peer Mentoring	Counselling	Appraising	Line Managers as Developers
Observation (of self & others) Appraisal Discussion Delegation Listening Drawing out Recognising & revealing feelings Feedback Agreeing roles Questioning Instruction Adapting to preferred learning styles (based on Singer, 1974; Mumford, 1993)	Self-awareness Behavioural awareness Experience & judgement Sense of proportion/good humour Communication Conceptual modelling Commitment to own learning Strong interest in developing others Rapport/ Relationship management Goal clarity (Clutterbuck, 2000)	Communicative Affective Cognitive Learning Challenging (McDougall & Beattie, 1997)	Empathy & detachment Listening & interpreting Leading & following Getting behind the issue Suspending judgement Moving at the speed of the learner (Clutterbuck, 1998)	Interpersonal skills Coaching Time management Performance review Feedback Planning (Myland, 1997)	Caring Democratic/ Participative decision-making Empowering Planning Listening Questioning Feedback Understanding & applying learning theory Empathy Broadening employees' perspectives Using analogies, scenarios & examples Role model Encouraging others to facilitate learning (Based on Mumford, 1993; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; de Jong et al., 1999; Buckingham, 2000)

**Table 4.9 - Matrix of Developmental Behaviours**

These roles will be compared with the results of the primary research in Chapter 12. As discussed in Chapter 3, all of these roles require managers to have some understanding of how adults learn. The fieldwork has explored the extent of understanding of adult learning that managerial respondents had.

The literature recognises that managers need support and development for their HRD roles and responsibilities, including exposure to management development. Support can also be provided by having a coherent HR strategy which is clear about the role of line managers, by providing training to line managers for staff development, and the HRD function acting as an internal consultant to line managers. The relationship between line managers and the HRM/D function has been identified as a significant factor in the efficacy of line managers. The relationship between the HRM/D

function and line managers in the case study organisations is explored in Chapters 6,7 and 10.

## **8. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The aim of this thesis is to identify the developmental behaviours of line managers in voluntary organisations. To achieve this aim a conceptual framework and five research questions have been developed following the literature review presented in chapters 2-4.

The exploratory conceptual framework in Figure 4.3 was developed to identify the key variables and their potential relationships to each other (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Links between these conceptual variables and the empirical findings and analysis are indicated by the chapter number(s) in each box.

The research questions are:

1. What do line managers do *to facilitate* learning?
2. What do line managers do *to inhibit* learning?
3. What *motivates* line managers to develop staff?
4. What influence do *individual* factors have on developmental behaviours?
5. What influence do *organisational* factors have on developmental behaviours?

To address these questions this thesis has focused on Developmental Relationships between managers and learners. Dependent variables investigated include the interaction, and content of the relationships. These relationships were then analysed, by examining their interaction, process and content, to identify the behaviours of Developmental Managers. In addition the influence of independent variables on Developmental Relationships were explored including gender, learning styles, motivation to learn and to support learning, educational background and career experience. This analysis enabled the author to identify developmental behaviours. The outcomes of such relationships were also explored to identify personal and organisational learning, as well as enabling the identification of competencies that Developmental Managers possess and require to be developed in.

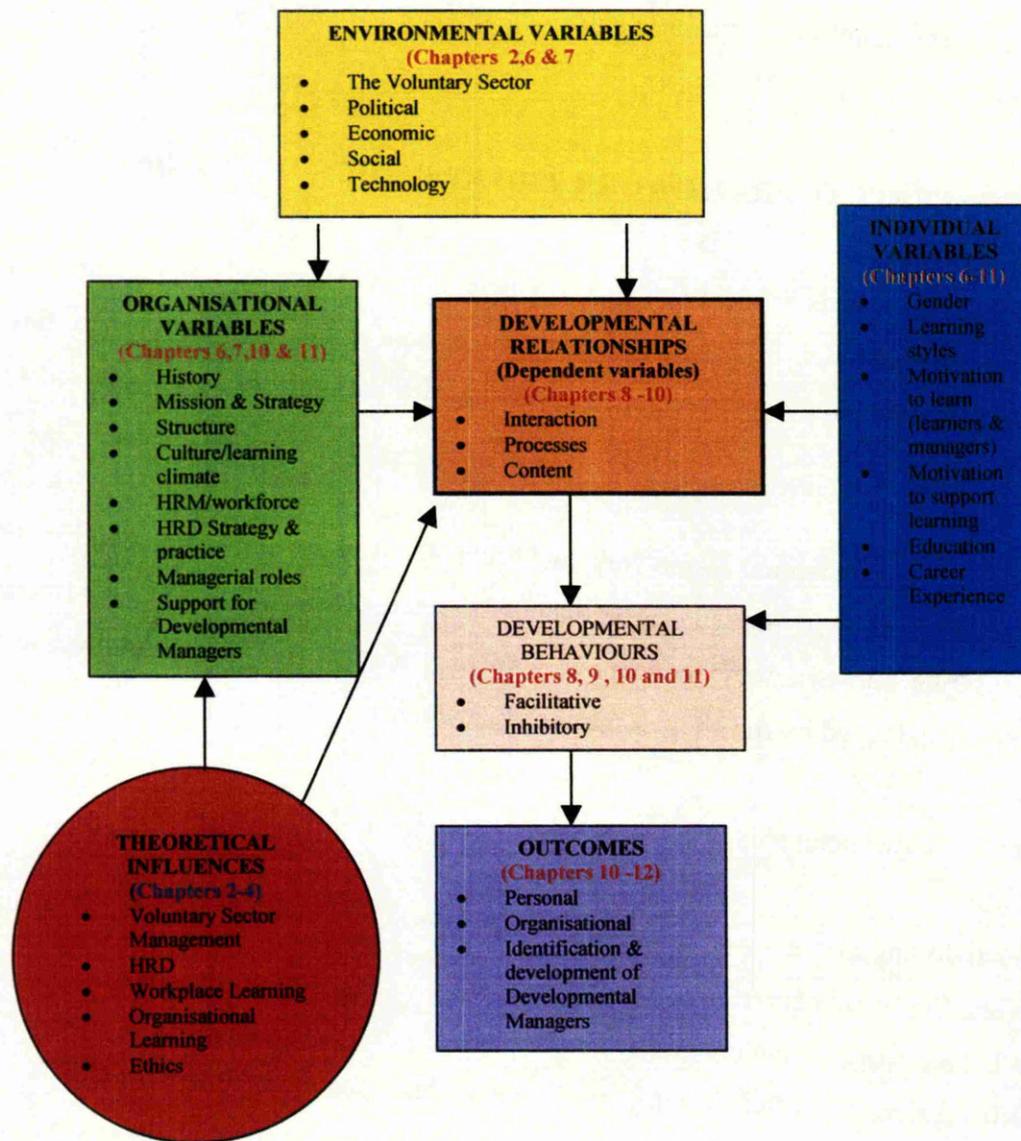


Figure 4.3 Conceptual Framework

Secondary questions explored the need for Developmental Relationships by exploring the environmental and organisational variables that drove learning in the respective organisations. These included environmental drivers, such as social policy, and organisational drivers, such as corporate mission and HRD strategy.

As has been seen in Chapters 2-4 this study has been underpinned by a range of theoretical disciplines including voluntary sector management, HRD, workplace learning, organisational learning, ethics, adult learning and management development.

This conceptual framework reflected the initial problem definition. However, it was recognised that it was likely during the fieldwork stage that the framework would be redefined to some degree as the field was likely to reveal surprises. Indeed research should be viewed as a learning process as:

...continuous redefinition and reconceptualization facilitate more fundamental learning and the production of significant learning (Andersen et al., 1995, p.19)

However, this element of induction needs to be balanced by effective use of existing theory and effective framing of research questions, whilst still allowing the field to talk (ibid.).

A summary of how the themes identified in Chapters 2-4 link with the primary data findings and analysis in Chapters 6-10 is presented in Appendix 2. Please note that some common themes emerge from the two mainstream chapters and the voluntary sector chapter, for example the discussion on HRD and management development.

Chapter 12 provides a comparative analysis between the theories and concepts presented in Chapters 2-4 and the findings that have emerged from this study.

## **CHAPTER 5 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the research strategy adopted for this study. The chapter begins by outlining how the literature review was conducted. The chapter then explores the epistemological debate in management research before outlining the methodology and methods adopted. Finally, the chapter concludes with the limitations of the research strategy adopted.

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature sources were identified from a range of databases including ABI-Inform, CIPD and Emerald, and by following up references in journals and texts. Latterly, the Internet was used, which proved particularly helpful for accessing electronic journals.

The literature review was conducted in two stages. Firstly, an initial review into mainstream management and voluntary sector literature was carried out. At this stage there was limited literature on the research topic, the line manager as developer, and on the study's context, the voluntary sector. Following this phase an initial conceptual framework, described in Chapter 4, was developed. Secondly, towards the end of the study the literature was revisited and the author found that the literature on both the subject matter, the line manager as developer, and the context of the research, the voluntary sector, had grown. These developments in the literature demonstrate the growing topicality of this study.

### **3. EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEBATE**

The epistemological debate in the social sciences, and management research, is dominated by two research paradigms - positivism and phenomenology (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). The central tenet of positivism is that the social world exists externally and that its properties should be measured by objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition. Whereas the phenomenological view is that the world and reality are not objective and exterior,

but that they are socially constructed and given meaning by people (ibid.). For example, in this study developmental relationships are constructed by managers and their staff, whilst being interpreted both by respondents and the researcher.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) describing the task of the social scientist suggest it:

...should not be to gather facts and measure how often certain patterns occur, but to appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience. One should therefore try to understand and explain why people have different experiences, rather than search for external causes and fundamental laws to explain their behaviour. Human action arises from the sense that people make of different situations, rather than as a direct response from external stimuli (p.24).

Andersen et al. (1995) also distance themselves from the rational approach of positivism. They advocate that for researchers to see the world as it is they need to empathise with the field, as the field:

...through symbolic interaction, ascribes meaning to things and phenomena in a community of reflexive discourse. A micro-cosmos in its own right, in which individuals relate practically to phenomena in which the researcher is interested. Consequently the researcher can learn much more from empathizing with the field's creation of meaning than from viewing the field as a sub-contractor of data (p.144).

Given that this study was trying understand and explain why people have different constructions and meanings regarding their developmental experiences at work it was decided to adopt a phenomenological approach utilising qualitative methods as they are:

...interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Van Maanen, 1983, p.9).

The strengths, weaknesses (see Table 5.1) and key features (see Table 5.2) of these respective paradigms are described below.

*Quantitative methods and positivist paradigm*

Strengths:

- provides wide coverage of the range of situations
- can be fast and economical, and
- may be of considerable relevance to policy decisions, particularly when statistics are aggregated

Weaknesses:

- methods tend to be inflexible and artificial
- ineffective for understanding processes or significance that people attach to actions
- limited for generation of theories
- due to focus on current or recent events difficult for policy-makers to infer what changes or actions should take place in the future

*Qualitative methods and phenomenological paradigm*

Strengths:

- ability to look at change processes over time
- to understand people's meanings
- to adjust to new issues and ideas as they emerge
- to contribute to evolution of new theories
- also provide a way of gathering data which is seen as natural rather than artificial

Weaknesses:

- data collection can be time and resource consuming
- analysis and interpretation of data can be difficult
- qualitative studies may appear disorganised because it is harder to control their pace, process and end-points
- policy-makers may give less credibility to studies rooted in a phenomenological approach

**Table 5.1 - Strengths and Weaknesses of Positivist and Phenomenological Paradigms (based on Easterby-Smith et al., 1991)**

Due to lack of insight into processes or the significance that people apply to actions, quantitative methods were inappropriate for this study as it was trying to understand behaviour in specific situations and how people *felt* about their developmental interactions. Whereas qualitative methods could facilitate: the understanding of how people feel about developmental relationships; the development of new ideas about developmental relationships; and ultimately, contribute to new theory thus enhancing our understanding of management learning. The researcher acknowledges the limitations posed by qualitative methods and allowed for the fact that both data collection and analysis would be time consuming. It is hoped that the rigour and insights gained by this study will convince policy makers where appropriate.

The research strategy utilised here is based on a predominantly phenomenological approach, utilising intensive field studies, as a study of how actors create a shared meaning system or world view was regarded as the only way to produce the type of knowledge desired (Andersen et al., 1995).

	<i>Positivist paradigm</i>	<i>Phenomenological paradigm</i>
<i>Basic beliefs:</i>	The world is external and objective	The world is socially constructed and subjective
	Observer is independent	Observer is part of what observed
	Science is value-free	Science is driven by human interests
<i>Researcher should:</i>	Focus on facts	Focus on meanings
	Look for causality and fundamental laws	Try to understand what is happening
	Reduce phenomena to simplest elements	Look at the totality of each situation
	Formulate hypotheses and then test them	Develop ideas through induction from data
<i>Preferred methods include:</i>	Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured	Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena
	Taking large samples	Small samples investigated in depth over time

**Table 5.2 - Key features of positivist and phenomenological paradigms  
(Easterby-Smith et al., 1991, p.27)**

## 4. RESEARCH DESIGN

### 4.1. Definition

Research design has been defined as a plan that:

...guides the investigator as he or she collects, analyzes and interprets observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation. The research design also defines the domain of generalizability, that is, whether the obtained interpretations can be generalized to a larger population or to different situations (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996, p.98).

However, this definition is very much from the positivist school with its emphasis on describing, coding and counting events whereas phenomenology with its emphasis on qualitative methods concentrates more on:

...exploring in much greater depth the nature and origins of people's viewpoints, or the reasons for, and consequences (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991, p.1).

The basic elements of empirical, scientific exploration include (Andersen et al., 1995):

- development of a prior picture of the empirical world under study;
- the asking of questions of the empirical world;
- identification of the data to be sought and the methods to be used;
- determination of the relations between the data;
- use of concepts; and.
- interpretation of findings.

The conceptual framework, presented in Chapter 4, outlines how these elements were considered for this study. The initial literature review enabled the researcher to develop a picture of the field to be studied, to identify research questions and identify the data to be sought from the field. The methodology, methods and analytical processes adopted are described below.

#### **4.2. Selection of Methodology**

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) identified five key choices pertinent for research design. These are outlined in Table 5.3 and are discussed below in reference to this study.

Researcher is independent	vs	Researcher is involved
Large samples	vs	Small numbers
Testing theories	vs	Generating theories
Experimental design	vs	Fieldwork theories
Verification	vs	Falsification

**Table 5.3 - Key choices of research design (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991, p.33).**

#### *4.2.1 Involvement of researcher*

They suggest the extent of a researcher's involvement with the research subject is influenced by the researcher's philosophical view. The positivist view tends to study individuals as if objects under the influence of external forces. Whereas phenomenological approaches are based on the belief that people have the ability to choose how they act and to give meaning to their own experiences. Some approaches such as action research and co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1996; Reason, 1988) actively involve research subjects in the research process. Within this study action research would be inappropriate, as the objective is not, in the short term, to change organisational behaviour. However it was critical that respondents had the opportunity to give meaning to their own experiences, through in-depth interviewing. On the completion of this study the researcher is considering adopting an action research approach to develop this subject in the long-term.

#### *4.2.2 Sampling*

Here the choice is to sample across a large number of organisations through a survey or focus on a small number of organisations over time. Whilst the former provides greater coverage, the latter provides for greater depth of analysis. Although quantitative approaches may identify correlations they do not explain why they exist nor do they necessarily eliminate external factors which may have influenced the results.

#### *4.2.3 Theory or data*

Key epistemological questions here is which should come first - theory (positivist) or data (phenomenological)? The positivist paradigm would argue that research should start with a theory or hypothesis and then seek data to confirm or disprove that theory. The advantage of this approach is that it provides initial clarity of what is to be researched and data can be collected relatively easily. However, the results of such a strategy may be limited, merely confirming what is already known or indeed the results may prove inconclusive with little explanation of why. Within the scope of this particular study there is relatively little theory about the subject, or the sector

within which it is being researched, this therefore makes it difficult to identify specific theory for testing. In addition the phenomenological preference of the researcher meant that a more 'open' research strategy was attractive, whilst acknowledging that questions posed and consequent interpretations could have been influenced by the researcher's prior knowledge of mainstream management development and the literature review undertaken for this study.

A phenomenological approach, based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), allowed the researcher to develop theory through 'comparative method' by the utilisation of in-depth interviews with different developmental managers in different voluntary organisations.

Andersen et al. (1995) argue that if we accept that scientific theories are merely capable of capturing limited aspects of the things themselves, the theories of the field - where the social field's creation of meaning and use of common-sense concepts enables the inhabitants to manage everyday life - must be granted a status at least similar to that of the academic field. This view of the social field's development of theories falls within the grounded theory tradition and therefore theory and empirical work should interact.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasise that to achieve theoretical integration, the researcher must sample theoretically for case histories. The basic logic followed in this type of research involves the scrutiny of one case in detail and then the pursuit of further cases that enable modification of the emergent theory. Cases are selected based on the theoretical criteria emerging from previous investigations and selected because they appear to demonstrate some general principle(s), and thus face the theory with the patterning of social events under different conditions (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Such an approach would allow the researcher to test the theory emerging from this study in other organisational contexts.

Eisenhardt (1989) argues that the process of reconciling differences across cases or researchers increases the likelihood of creating new theory. Testable theory is also likely to be produced with constructs which can be easily measured as they have already undergone repeated verification during the theory-building process.

Field research, is therefore a challenge to grand theory, and is a means to create:

...a practice within social science research for developing theories capable of explaining specific phenomenon and developmental processes characterizing specific societies. General universal theories merely constitute the framework for starting the game (Borum, 1995, p.138).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose two main criteria to evaluate the quality of a theory:

- i. It should be sufficiently analytic to enable some generalisation, as Yin (1989) also argues for case study approaches
- ii. It should be possible for people to relate the theory to their own experiences, therefore sensitising their own perceptions

These criteria informed the quality control processes of this thesis, particularly with regard to the development of theory. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) acknowledge that some, particularly those from a positivist perspective, criticise grounded theory claiming that it lacks clarity and standardisation of methods. They argue however that it is a more flexible approach which can provide new insights and explanations, which this thesis sought to achieve.

#### *4.2.4 Experimental designs or fieldwork*

This study utilised fieldwork rather than experimental design as the objectives of the research were best met by studying individuals within real organisations rather than assigning subjects to an experimental or control group.

#### *4.2.5 Verification or falsification*

Much of the debate here focuses on the positivist paradigm. However ideas of 'truth' and 'proof' are also of relevance to phenomenologists, who should be careful not to be over influenced by their own views and experiences. Researchers therefore should look for evidence that contradicts as well as confirms what they believe to be

currently true (ibid.). For this research this was particularly important as the researcher had some familiarity with the organisations being investigated. Therefore, for example this study has looked for contrary evidence by identifying inhibitory as well as facilitative behaviours.

Whilst the ideas of validity and reliability were originally developed for quantitative approaches there is no reason why such ideas should not be utilised in phenomenological approaches, although as Table 5.4 below demonstrates the interpretation of these terms varies between philosophies.

	Positivist viewpoint	Phenomenological viewpoint
Validity	Does an instrument measure what it is supposed to measure?	Has the researcher gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of informants?
Reliability	Will the measure yield the same results on different occasions (assuming no real change in what is to be measured)?	Will similar observations be made by different researchers on different occasions?
Generalizability	What is the probability that patterns observed in a sample will also be present in the wider population from which the sample is drawn?	How likely is it that ideas and theories generated in one setting will also apply in settings?

**Table 5.4 - Questions of reliability, validity and generalisability (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991, p.41)**

Reliability in this study has been addressed by interviewing a substantial number of respondents for a qualitative study, namely 60 individuals.

The criteria for choice for research design include (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Andersen et al., 1995):

- i. Personal preference of researchers themselves - this researcher is more comfortable with the phenomenological view of the world and also felt more equipped with the skills for qualitative rather than quantitative methods.
- ii. Aims or context of research to be carried out - the research aimed to explore, understand and explain, not test, human behaviour and therefore a phenomenological approach was more appropriate. Easterby-Smith et al. pose

the question ‘Is it the things themselves, or peoples views about them, that are important?’ (p.41). In this research it was the latter that was important and the research questions require individuals to explain their view of these relationships, why they were involved (or not) in developmental relationships and how they interpreted what happens to them within these relationships. It is their view of the interaction of these relationships that provided the critical data.

- iii. Will the research be valid, reliable and generalisable - the rigour of the research methods used met the first two criteria and it is argued that although a case study approach was adopted it possessed sufficient analytic generalisability to be of value.
- iv. The resources available to the study - in this case there was one part-time researcher.

In conclusion Yin (1989) provides a framework to help researchers decide which methodological option to select depending on the research questions being asked. This framework is depicted in Table 5.5 below:

As this study’s central questions were how and why developmental managers develop others, focused on contemporary events and were behavioural events over which the researcher had no control it is argued that the Case Study methodology was the most appropriate.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Form of Research Question</i>	<i>Requires control over behavioural events</i>	<i>Focuses on contemporary events</i>
Experiment	how, why	yes	yes
Survey	who, what,* where, how many, how much	no	yes
Archival analysis (e.g. economic study)	who, what,* where, how many, how much	no	yes/no
History	how, why	no	no
Case study	how, why	no	yes

**Table 5.5 - Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies (Yin, 1989, p.17)**

## **5. CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1. Definition**

In his seminal work on case study methodology Yin (1989) defines the case study as:

An empirical inquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context;
- the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;  
and in which
- multiple sources of evidence are used (p. 23).

He argues that case studies are not ethnographies, though Andersen et al. (1995) argue that there is no such distinction and that empirical studies can include a number of case studies. The latter prefer the term '*field study*', which they regard as synonymous with case study, but provides a distinction from the teaching perspective of case studies. This research study incorporated an ethnographic element, which is discussed below.

Yin (1989) identifies four main applications of case study methodology.

- i. Explanatory - explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey and experimental strategies. Such an approach addresses the *how* and *why*.
- ii. Descriptive - describe the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred.
- iii. Illustrative - evaluation of an intervention in descriptive mode e.g. journalistic account of Watergate.
- iv. Exploratory - explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear single set of outcomes.

This study utilises both descriptive and explanatory applications.

In this study the case study approach has been applied at two levels:

- i. Micro-case studies - focus on the individual developmental relationships to explore the fundamental questions posed by this study, i.e. the nature of developmental relationships to identify developmental behaviours.
- ii. Macro-case studies - focus on the case study organisations to explore the secondary questions posed by this study i.e. the influence of organisational variables on developmental relationships and behaviours.

## **5.2. Limitations of Case Study Research**

There a number of arguments highlighting potential limitations of the case study strategy which are discussed below:

### *5.2.1 Lack of rigour*

Yin (1989) counters this by suggesting that other approaches also often lack rigour, including some statistical studies which only provide the illusion of rigour.

### *5.2.2 Little basis for scientific generalisation.*

Yin (1989) counters this by suggesting there can be multiple-case studies, as used in this study. In addition, their aim is to expand and generalise theories through analytical generalisation rather than scientific generalisation.

This debate is discussed more fully by Gill and Johnson (1997) who conclude that:

Theory-building, case study research may perhaps be most appropriate when little is known about a topic and where in consequence there can be little reliance on the literature or previous empirical evidence (p.124).

Case study methodology was therefore appropriate for this study as there is limited knowledge about developmental relationships, the role of the developmental manager, and in particular there is a paucity of literature on management development in the voluntary sector. Also it is unlikely that a part time PhD researcher will create ‘grand theory’, although clearly the intention to contribute to knowledge is fundamental.

### 5.2.3 *Generation of excessive data*

Yin (1989) stresses that case studies are not ethnographies and can be done quickly and economically. However, he is less clear on how this can be achieved and it could be argued in practice that case studies could include an ethnographic element, as in this study. Therefore, there is a risk that researchers will generate a vast amount of data which may make it difficult to distinguish the most significant variables from those peculiar to an individual case.

Despite these potential limitations of the case study approach he argues it has considerable strengths and is:

The preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (p.13).

He continues that the case study approach allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as organisational and managerial processes, all of which are key elements within this particular study. Finally 'the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with full variety of evidence - documents, artefacts, interviews and observations' and such use of varied methods contributes to the process of triangulation.

### **5.3. Case Study Design**

Components of case study design include (ibid.):

- i. A study's *questions*: e.g. Why are some managers regarded as more effective developers? How do they effectively develop staff? How do organisational culture, structure and values influence the developmental manager? How do developmental relationships work?
- ii. Its *propositions*, if any: Where there are propositions they direct attention to something that should be examined within the scope of study. There is a risk

that without propositions the researcher might be tempted to include ‘everything’ which is impossible to research effectively. The propositions in this study include: that the developmental role of managers is likely to increase as the significance of workplace learning continues to grow; and that managers in the voluntary sector, due to less emphasis on hierarchy and control, are likely to operate in an environment conducive to learning.

- iii. Its *unit(s) of analysis*: i.e. the fundamental problem of defining what the ‘case’ is. The case may be - an individual; or an event or entity that is less well defined than a single individual e.g. decisions, programmes, implementation process, or organisational change. Definition of the unit of analysis (and therefore of the case) is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined. In this study the unit of analysis are the critical incidents within each individual developmental relationship contained within the respective case study organisations.
- iv. The *logic linking the data to the propositions* - a possible approach is ‘pattern matching’ i.e. several pieces of information from the same case may relate to some theoretical propositions;
- v. The *criteria for interpreting the findings*: there is no precise way of setting the criteria for interpreting these types of findings. Interpretation could involve comparing at least two rival explanations e.g. to see whether respondents described their learning within these relationships at a personal or organisational level. In addition the analysis has looked for contrary evidence by attempting to identify inhibitory behaviours, not just positive developmental behaviours.

The latter two components are the weakest and least well-developed components of case study methodology. However, Yin’s stress on the importance of maintaining a chain of evidence for corroboration and validity may reduce this element of weakness. This enables an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions. The process should be tight enough that evidence presented is the same evidence that was collected, no original

evidence should have been lost through carelessness or bias and therefore fail to consider the 'facts'.

If these objectives are achieved, a case study will have also addressed the methodological problem of determining construct validity, thereby increasing the overall quality of the case (Ibid. p.102).

Finally, Yin (1989) developed a framework for conducting multiple-case study research, which was utilised in this study, and is depicted below in Figure 5.1.

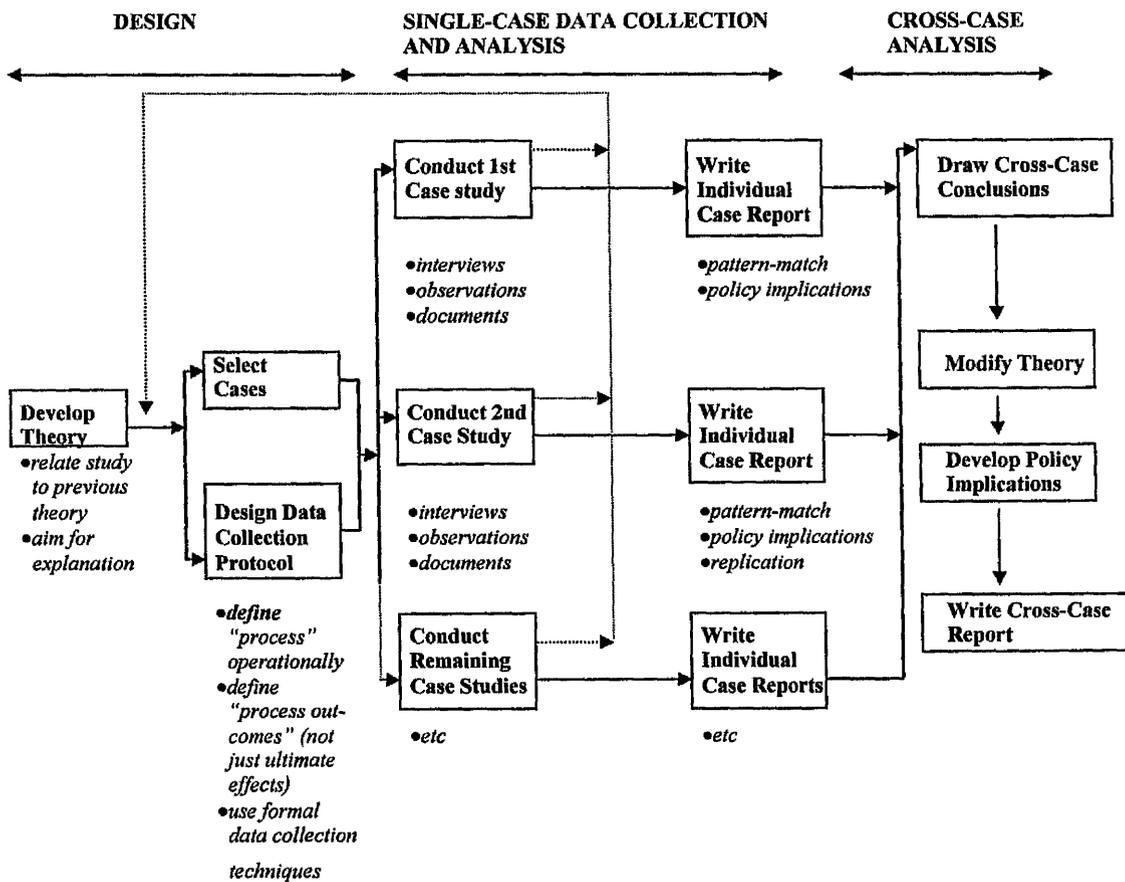


Figure 5.1 Case Study Method (Yin, 1989, p.56)

## **6. SELECTION OF CASE STUDY ORGANISATIONS**

### **6.1 Access**

Fortunately there was little difficulty here as the researcher had contacts, primarily HRM and training managers - often the gatekeepers to management research, in a number of voluntary organisations.

Two case study organisations were selected Quarriers and Richmond Fellowship Scotland (RFS). Both are large voluntary sector employers, therefore they provided a substantial population to select subjects from. They are highly regarded in their respective fields and have undergone considerable growth in recent years, and therefore provided a dynamic environment to research. Furthermore, both have aspirations to be learning organisations and their learning and development practices have been externally recognised through IiP accreditation.

The researcher has connections with both organisations and this also facilitated access. Firstly, she is a non-executive director and charity trustee in Quarriers. Secondly, she has provided consultancy services to RFS in the past. The methodological and ethical considerations of these relationships will be discussed in participant observation below.

### **6.2 Population and Sample**

The population covered in this study were all paid staff employed in the case study organisations. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 outline the demographic profiles of the research populations and samples.

Staff Group	No. of Male Employees (% of workforce)	Sample of Male Employees (% of males)	No. of Female Employees (% of workforce)	Sample of Female Employees (% of females)	Total No. of Employees	Sample of total employees (% of workforce)
Executive	5 (62.5%)	2 (40%)	3 (37.5%)	2(66%) <sup>13</sup>	8	4 (50%)
Service Managers	4 (36%)	1 (25%)	7 (64%)	3 (43%)	11	4 (36%)
Project Leaders	7 (22.5%)	1 (14%)	24 (77.5%)	5 (21%)	31	6 (19%)
Others	151 (22%)	3 (2%)	541 (78%)	19 (3.5%) <sup>14</sup>	692	22 (3.1%)
Relief	37 (20%)	0	147 (80%)	1 (0.68%)	184	1 (0.54%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>204 (22%)</b>	<b>7 (3.4%)</b>	<b>722 (77%)</b>	<b>30 (4.1%)</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>37 (4%)</b>

**Table 5.6 – Gender Distribution of Population and Sample at Quarriers**

Staff Group	No. of Male Employees (% of workforce)	Sample of Male Employees (% of males)	No. of Female Employees (% of workforce)	Sample of Female Employees (% of females)	Total No. of Employees (% of workforce)	Sample of total employees (% of workforce)
Executive	4 (80%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 <sup>15</sup> (100%)	5	1 (20%)
Area Managers	6 (85%)	3 (50%)	1 (15%)	1 (100%)	7	4 (57%)
Service Managers	10 (33.3%)	2 (20%)	20 (66.6%)	4 (20%)	30	6 (20%)
Others	140 (33%)	3 (2%)	284 (67%)	9 <sup>16</sup> (3%)	424	12 (2.8%)
Relief	10 (26%)	0 (0%)	28 (74%)	0 (0%)	38	
<b>Total</b>	<b>170 (33%)</b>	<b>8 (4.7%)</b>	<b>334 (66%)</b>	<b>15 (4.5%)</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>23 (4.6%)</b>

**Table 5.7 – Gender Distribution of Population and Sample at RFS**

The researcher asked the HR Director of Quarriers and the Training and Quality Manager of RFS to nominate managers they regarded as ‘competent’ or ‘good’ developers of people. The criteria for nomination included past or current involvement in HRD activities such as acting as SVQ assessors or verifiers, contribution to central training courses, low staff turnover, apart from individuals being promoted, and few discipline problems.

The employees selected for interview were a cross-section of each manager’s staff and included full-time and part-time staff, permanent and temporary staff,

<sup>13</sup> Interviewed as a key informant

<sup>14</sup> 2 respondents were interviewed as key informants

<sup>15</sup> Interviewed as key informants

<sup>16</sup> 1 respondent interviewed as a key informant

professional, semi-professional and non-professional staff. In addition staff who worked different shifts such as permanent night shift were also included. Few relief staff were included as they only work occasionally.

In total 41 developmental relationships<sup>17</sup> were explored.

All respondents were asked if they wished to participate and the researcher provided a brief outline of the research to be given to each respondent. No respondent refused to participate.

### **6.3 RIGOUR**

To minimise bias, due to the researcher's familiarity with both organisations, the researcher needed to be aware of her own views and feelings and try to ensure that these did not influence either the research design or analysis. Care was taken to ask probing, rather than leading questions, to ensure that a full understanding of motivation and behaviour was gained, rather than making assumptions.

Ideally for purposes of rigour, as well as wider understanding, it would have been beneficial to select managers for this study who were regarded as ineffective developers. However, it was considered ethically and practically difficult to select such managers, as both the researcher and the organisations were concerned that such a strategy would have caused undue disruption within the case study organisations by creating tensions between managers and staff, and possibly raising expectations of staff. Ethnographic researchers need to take care not to meddle in the affairs of the organisations they are researching. However, those managers selected for the sample, and their staff, were asked to identify situations when managers had inhibited, rather than facilitated, development and this provided an opportunity to find contrary evidence. The researcher believed that both managers and staff would be able to identify negative as well as positive experiences, and they did. In addition, managers were asked to describe the problems and difficulties they faced in developing their

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<sup>17</sup> In most cases more than one member of a first line manager's staff were interviewed

staff, as well as identifying their motivation for developing their staff and the practices they utilise.

## **7. RESEARCH METHODS**

The use of multiple sources of evidence is crucial for corroboration. The most important advantage is:

...the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation (Yin, 1989, p.97).

Triangulation being the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1970).

In this study participant observation, in-depth qualitative interviews and documentary analysis have been used to facilitate triangulation. These methods are discussed below.

### **7.1 Participant observation**

#### *7.1.1 Introduction*

Participant observation was used to gain insight into the influence of organisational variables on developmental relationships, such as: the organisations' history and culture; learning climate; workforce and HRD strategy; managerial roles; and support for Developmental Managers. Such observation also informed the researcher prior to conducting interviews with respondents. To gain worthwhile data through interviewing it is essential that the researcher establishes rapport with respondents, rather than imposes the academic world on them. To facilitate this an understanding of the language and culture of the respondents is helpful (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

Participant observation has its roots in ethnography, where researchers focus on the manner in which people interact in observable and regular ways (Gill and Johnson, 1997) and participate in:

...people's daily lives over an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said and asking questions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.2).

Watson (1994) describes graphically the process of undertaking ethnographic research with managers, which involves:

...feeling one's way in confusing circumstances, struggling to make sense of ambiguous messages, reading signals, looking around, listening all the time, coping with conflicts and struggling to achieve tasks through establishing and maintaining a network of relationships. But this is what we do all the time as human beings. This is how we cope with our lives. And it is what managers do in their more formalised 'managing roles' (p.8).

He goes on to suggest that the work of the researcher and the manager are similar crafts.

Both crafts involve close attention to language, formal and informal, speaking and writing as well as observing. And it is through language, formal and informal, official and unofficial, that the bulk of the business of management is conducted. It is through speaking to each other that all us make sense of the worlds we move in, whether we are trying to make sense of things as managers, as researchers or as part of our ordinary lives (p.8.).

Given the potential insight into managerial and organisational life offered by ethnography it seemed appropriate that a study seeking to understand developmental interactions should utilise such an approach. Watson and Harris (1999) argue that the key is to get:

...closely involved...with managers to learn more about the day-to-day activities of managing and especially, to find out how managers cope with (manage!) the challenges that their work roles entail (p.16).

Ethnographic studies satisfy three simultaneous preconditions for the study of human activities (Baszanger and Dodier, 1997), namely:

- i. The need for an empirical approach;
- ii. The need to remain open to elements that cannot be coded at the time of the study; and

- iii. A concern for grounding the phenomena observed in the field.

The advantages of participant observation include flexibility and the ability to develop more intimacy with respondents thus providing greater access to information and the motives of respondents. The disadvantages include: the closeness to unique events may limit their classification and generalisability; 'intimates' may be an atypical sample; the presence of the researcher may influence behaviour; and, unusual events may be viewed as normal by the researcher (Gill and Johnson, 1997). In this study these potential limitations have been minimised by including two organisations in the study and using other data collection methods such as interviewing and documentary analysis.

### *7.1.2 Field Role Taxonomies*

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) identify four types of participant observation roles. Firstly the 'researcher as employee' adopts the role of employee, which may or may not be explicit. This is appropriate where the researcher needs to be fully immersed and experience the work or situation directly. Secondly, they identify the 'researcher as explicit role'. Here the researcher has negotiated their entry and can move around, observe, interview and participate in work as appropriate. The third role is 'interrupted involvement'. In this role the researcher moves in and out of the organisation to deal with other work or to carry out other forms of complementary data collection, such as interviewing. There is little actual participation in the work of the organisation. The final role is that of 'complete observer'. This is a much more detached role where the researcher engages in no interaction with the research population but merely observes, similar to work study. This last role has little to offer the phenomenological researcher seeking to understand the world of those being studied.

As a full time academic, undertaking a part-time PhD, the most appropriate role for the researcher was a combination of 'interrupted involvement' and 'explicit role'. This approach allowed the researcher to move around the organisations, observe, interview and participate as appropriate, whilst still maintaining contact with normal

employment duties. This hybrid-role also facilitated the operational and ethical requirements of both the organisations and the researcher.

The role of 'researcher as employee' was inappropriate as the main work of these organisations is social care and the researcher does not possess the appropriate skills. There was however a small element of this latter role as the researcher is a member of Quarriers and was able to utilise this role in management committee activities, such as meetings. Thus the research role could also be described as a 'participant-as-observer' (Gill and Johnson, 1997). The 'complete observer' role (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Gill and Johnson, 1997) was viewed as being inappropriate in social care settings, as service users may have found the lack of interaction both intrusive and potentially threatening in what is after all their homes. The author acknowledges that the downside of being open about one's purpose is that people may not behave naturally when you are present.

### *7.1.3 Participant observation in practice<sup>18</sup>*

Operational issues considered included: the negotiation of access; consideration of the researcher's impact on and relationships with those being observed; objectivity in interpreting observations; the personal style to be adopted in observation; and the approach taken to field notes.

Access for the participation observation and interview phases was initially discussed with the 'main gatekeepers' to the organisations – the Director of Human Resources of Quarriers and the Training and Quality Manager of RFS. It was stressed that visits to sites would be handled sensitively with minimal disruption and no intrusion into 'private' activities e.g. staff supervision sessions or observation of personal care of service users. In particular it was stressed that projects should not put on anything special for visits, rather it would be better to see them as they are.

It was also emphasised that anything heard or seen would be treated in the strictest confidence. There would be no report back on individual employees or individual

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<sup>18</sup> The author has had a chapter published on the methodological implications of this first phase of research in McGoldrick et al, 2002.

projects to senior management. A composite report would be provided to both organisations after the research was completed, but it would not be possible to identify any individuals from it. Finally, it was stressed that it should be made clear to all potential participants that they were free to refuse involvement, particularly in Quarriers where the researcher did not want to abuse her position as a 'volunteer manager' of the charity.

The next stage was discussion between the gatekeepers and their Chief Executives. All were supportive and keen that a range of projects be involved. The proposed research was then discussed with other senior staff and they supported the research. One senior staff team, quite rightly, requested that a short written summary should be provided to staff before asked if they wished to participate, i.e. *informed consent*, and this was happily complied with for both organisations.

The main phase of participant observation was a three-week period in each organisation, although it continued at a lower level throughout the fieldwork phase to allow attendance at meetings and training courses relevant to the research study. The programme for each three week period was organised respectively by the HR Department at Quarriers, and the Training Department at RFS. In effect they organised an 'induction programme'.

A range of activities was included in the participant observation process. Visits to a cross-section of projects or services in both organisations, representing different types of operations and older and newer parts of each organisation were undertaken. It was felt to be more appropriate to see a range of projects to provide breadth and to get a 'feel' for the organisations, rather than spend a long time in one particular project which may have provided more depth but may have been atypical of the organisations as a whole. This proved so during the research as the diversity of each organisation, created by the different types of work activities became apparent.

These visits involved: an informal interview with the project leader (Quarriers) or the service manager (RFS) which covered such subjects as the project's history, purpose, staffing and a description of a 'typical day' in order to see 'their' world; a tour of the project, often led by a service user; and participation in project activities where

appropriate, such as lunch with service users and staff. These visits also provided an opportunity to observe interaction between managers and staff, and between staff and service users. Overall these visits provided a valuable insight into the front-line work of the organisations, which previously had only been viewed from a strategic perspective, and indeed provided several examples of developmental incidents.

There was also observation and participation in meetings. The researcher also participated in training courses covering such issues as the organisations' values and their approaches to staff development. The researcher acted as a participant on these programmes working alongside managers and staff. Discussions with key informants also provided valuable insights into the learning climate of the organisations, as discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 10.

In terms of the researcher's impact on the research population the Human Resource and Training staff at Quarriers and RFS reported a range of reactions to proposed visits – happy, bemused and 'what's in it for us?' In previous interactions with staff in both organisations the researcher had been invited to visit a number of projects by managers and staff keen to 'show off' their work.

In practice without exception staff, some of whom had been met before, were both welcoming and open. Most knew of the researcher and what her connection with the organisation was. Although at Quarriers one relatively new project leader asked for an explanation of the role of a Council of Management member. Most staff appeared comfortable and confident to speak about the work of their project. A few appeared initially nervous but soon relaxed. Few used these visits as an opportunity to gripe, although a number of concerns were expressed about organisational policies.

The researcher had been concerned, as discussed above, that projects might put on special events or present their project in an artificially positive light. However, whilst staff devoted time and effort to the visits themselves there was little evidence of the projects being 'sanitised' for these visits. Indeed it is difficult to do this given the unpredictable nature of some service users. A tour of one project revealed a kitchen, used by service users, full of dirty pots and plates reflecting the reality of working

with this particular client group – if the project manager had wanted to create a false impression the kitchen would have been cleaned by staff.

With regards to objectivity the researcher, particularly in the case of Quarriers, made a conscious effort to put to one side existing preconceptions – about the organisations as a whole, projects and individuals – which had largely been formed through involvement in strategic and consultancy activities. Overall objectivity was maintained, although it was inevitably fascinating to hear about particular events or issues from a front-line perspective which had previously only been viewed from a senior management perspective.

The researcher, however, had not been prepared for the various emotional feelings that were experienced. After some visits there was elation about seeing the amount of positive work being undertaken to help the vulnerable members of our community. A particular ‘high’ was having lunch with the children in a small residential unit and seeing how secure they were in this environment. Other visits, particularly those for the young homeless in Quarriers, caused feelings of distress that such projects were still required in the late 1990s, just as they had been when our charity had been founded in Victorian Glasgow. On one visit discomfort was felt at being shown round an establishment by service users with behavioural problems. Although there were staff in the vicinity the researcher was concerned about her reaction if the service users presented challenging behaviour. The researcher was also impressed by the amount of fund-raising that staff engaged in to purchase ‘extras’ for their projects.

Lofland (1971) suggests that researchers need to pay due attention to their behaviour and dress. Great care was therefore taken to remind individuals about the purpose of the research and to stress the confidentiality of anything seen or heard. When interviewing a relaxed style and loose structure were adopted. At all times interest in what was being said or shown was maintained. This approach seemed to work. Generally a few prompts were all that was required as respondents talked willingly and volunteered much of the information required. In terms of dress generally ‘smart but casual’ attire was worn, particularly in settings where children were present. More ‘business-like’ clothing was worn at formal meetings.

Good practice suggests that field notes should be written up as soon as possible after observation to minimise loss of data. The nature of some observations allowed, with the permission of respondents, brief notes to be taken during observations. Immediately following observations, where possible, fuller notes were recorded either in writing or by dictaphone. The researcher also recorded her feelings during observations. On return home full field notes were written up on a PC. It was felt important to do this to minimise confusion between different experiences. Occasionally this proved problematic when two observations followed closely one after the other. Full writing up of field notes was also sometimes disrupted by job demands. Despite being warned by a colleague, the author found that it was tiring to return from a day in the field and then have to start writing up field notes in the evening.

In conclusion, this period of participant observation provided valuable insights into the activities and culture of each organisation, and proved to be excellent preparation for the in-depth interviews that followed.

## **7.2 Interviews**

Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence, because most case studies are about human affairs (Yin, 1989, p.90).

### *7.2.1 Structure*

The use of structured interviews where each respondent is asked a series of prepared questions with a limited set of response categories (Burgess, 1984; Fontana and Frey, 1994) was rejected as whilst:

...such an interviewing style often elicits rational responses...it overlooks or inadequately assesses the emotional dimension (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p.364).

Emotion is an important quality for the understanding of developmental relations. Qualitative interviews were therefore utilised in this study as they are designed to understand the meanings respondents attach to issues and situations in contexts and

terms that are not imposed *a priori* by the researcher (Jones, 1985a; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Fontana and Frey, 1994). Easterby-Smith et al. argue that semi-structured or unstructured interviews are appropriate when:

- it is necessary to understand the constructs the interviewee uses as basis for opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation;
- there is a need to understand the respondent's 'world' so that the researcher may influence it e.g. through action research;
- step-by-step by logic of situation is unclear;
- subject matter is highly confidential or commercially sensitive; and,
- interviewee may only be truthful in the confidentiality of a one-to-one situation.

Such interviews were therefore appropriate for this study as there was a need to understand respondents' opinions about developmental incidents and relationships, and because there is little understanding of such relationships due to the limited research to date. Although there was limited commercial sensitivity for this topic there was potentially a high degree of personal sensitivity and thus people may have been more comfortable and open in a one-to-one situation. There was no intention to influence the respondents' world through the likes of action research or co-operative inquiry, as discussed previously above. However, the researcher hopes that the outcomes of this study will influence the development of managers in the long-term.

It is argued however that whilst unstructured interviews may appear to have no structure they should have a framework for the conduct of the interview to ensure that the respondent is relating experiences and attitudes relevant to the research problem. Indeed Jones (1985a) argues that:

...there is no such thing as presuppositionless research. In preparing for interviews researchers will have, and should have some broad questions in mind (p.47).

Therefore the questions developed are grounded in theory and earlier models, although framed as openly as possible in the phenomenological tradition. The unstructured interview is therefore flexible, but controlled (Burgess, 1984). It is also

important to consider the links between the conceptual framework, the data collected and the methods utilised (Burgess, 1984; Jones, 1985a).

A wholly non-directive style of interviewing was not utilised as it can lead to ambiguity and respondents making assumptions about what the researcher wants. Researchers are more likely to get good data if subjects are informed about the research topic, albeit in broad terms and their interest aroused (Jones, 1985a). The researcher also hoped that interviewees would see relevance in the research, as they would be discussing their own learning and relationships, and that this would encourage them to be open and thus provide a rich source of data. This proved to be the case. Although a framework to develop themes is necessary the researcher should not be constrained by them (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991) and therefore in this research a semi-structured approach, utilising a topic guide, was adopted to allow the researcher flexibility to explore emerging lines of enquiry.

Finally, it must be remembered that interviews are a form of social interaction. Respondents will attribute meaning and significance to particular research situations, as well as to the research topic under discussion. Their interpretation of the researcher's interests, attitudes, values and reactions to them will contribute to their definition of the research situation. Therefore to obtain good data the researcher needs to develop trust with the respondents, so they will be confident that data will not be used against them (Jones, 1985a; Fontana and Frey, 1994). Trust was developed with respondents through the researcher's prior relationships with the host organisations. Also the earlier phase of participant observation was seen as a commitment to and an interest in the research population. In addition Jones (1985a) recommends that a commitment is given to respondents that they will be given access to the findings, and it is intended to provide them with a summary of the findings.

### *7.2.2 Interview Design*

Much HRM research has focused on the views and experiences of managers and has not considered the views of employees (Kamoche, 2001). This study has however redressed that imbalance by interviewing both managers and their employees.

To explore the nature and content of developmental interactions interviews incorporated the use of Critical Incident Technique. This is an approach which:

...rather than collecting opinions, hunches and estimates, obtains a record of specific behaviours from those in the best position to make the necessary observations and evaluations (Flanagan, 1954, p.355).

This method has been used by qualitative researchers to great effect with in-depth interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991), and particularly to research natural learning processes of learning at work (Easterby-Smith and Thorpe, 1997). However, the technique has been criticised because of the potential difficulty of recall and the danger of individuals using hindsight to explain the past. Nevertheless, by asking individuals to focus on actual behaviours, and by asking them 'to track back to particular instances in their work lives and to explain their actions and motives with specific regard to those instances' (ibid. p.83), helps to minimise the limitations of hindsight. Indeed Marsick and Watkins (1997) argue that there is a need for more studies, such as this, which focus on the reflective learning/intervention relationship.

More rigour could have been achieved by asking both parties in the developmental relationship to recount the same incident, however that would have resulted in the researcher disclosing confidential information. However, in practice a number of respondents volunteered the same developmental incidents as their 'partner'. This technique had already been used effectively by the researcher to investigate developmental relationships between colleagues in a variety of organisational settings (McDougall and Beattie, 1997; Beattie and McDougall, 1998). This technique also supports the application of interpretative interactionism, which focuses on epiphanies:

...those interactional moments that leave marks on people's lives [and] have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person (Denzin, 1989, p.15).

Thus the subject of inquiry becomes dramatised by a focus on existential and untypical moments in peoples lives, thereby providing richer and more meaningful data (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

Four interview structures were developed for employees, first line managers, senior line managers and key informants (See Appendices 3-6).

All interviews were taped with the permission of the interviewee. No participant seemed uncomfortable with being taped, as long as they didn't have to listen to themselves. The author transcribed all interviews.

This phase was carried out during a sabbatical, which enabled the author to immerse herself, without interruption, in the fieldwork.

### *7.2.3 Interview Questions*

Interview questions were informed by the literature review described in Chapters 2-4.

Initial questions gathered biodata about respondents such as gender, age, qualifications and career experience.

All respondents' attitudes to learning were explored by asking them questions regarding their self-development (AMED, 1991; Pedler et al., 1994). Respondents were asked if they kept their own learning up-to date, if they had recently undertaken or were currently undertaking any form of study or training, and they were asked to identify their most recent learning experience in the workplace. Finally, they were asked how they preferred to learn and if they knew their own learning style. If they did not know their learning style they were asked to complete a Learning Style Questionnaire (Honey and Mumford, 1986), at the end of the interview, and the results were then explained to them.

Both first line managers and senior line managers were then asked questions about their role(s) as a developer of people. They were asked how they felt about having some responsibility for developing their staff (Cabinet Office, 1993; Mumford, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; Bevan et al., 1995; IPD, 1995; Hyman and Cunningham, 1998; Ellinger et al., 1999a). They were then asked if they were involved in developing anyone other than their own staff (AMED, 1991; Clutterbuck, 1998). This was to explore if any managers were engaged in mentoring (Kram, 1983; Clutterbuck,

1991; Gibb and Megginson, 1993; Mumford, 1993; Ritchie and Connelly, 1993) or peer mentoring (Kram and Isabella, 1985; Smith, 1990; Beattie and McDougall, 1998). They were also asked if they had any other developmental roles such as contributing to central training programmes or specialist training roles, e.g. first aid or safety, or SVQ assessor/internal verifier.

First line managers and employees were asked to give examples of critical incidents where their manager had facilitated or inhibited their learning. They were asked to describe the actual event by outlining: what happened, what the manager did, what the manager said, what they (as the learner) did, what they said, what they were thinking and feeling at the time, and the final outcome. Such probing enabled the researcher to gather very rich data and it is clearly very difficult to manipulate data when probed to such a degree. First line managers and senior line managers were also asked to identify critical incidents where they had facilitated or inhibited the learning of a member(s) of their staff. As noted in Chapter 8 some incidents were identified by two or three respondents, thus enhancing triangulation.

First line managers and senior line managers were then asked who or what helped them as developers of others. To explore the possible links between their behaviours and their organisation's learning climate they were asked to describe the culture of the organisation (Pedler et al., 1991). Employees were also asked to describe the culture of the organisation. This allowed the researcher to explore whether employee and managerial perspectives were consistent or not.

To explore the possible links between line managers and the HRMD function they were asked if they had received any formal training or support for their staff development roles and how they assessed that development activity (Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; IPD, 1995; Heraty and Morley, 1995). Managers were also asked if they required any further development for their staff development responsibilities (AMED, 1991).

First line managers were also asked if their own line manager (i.e. a senior line manager) was supportive of their development. This was to explore if senior line managers were acting as role models through the example they were setting their

direct reports. As noted above they were then asked to identify critical incidents where their senior line manager had facilitated or inhibited their learning.

Senior line managers were asked to assess the performance of their junior line managers as developers of people. Where possible they were asked to provide examples of their junior manager's performance.

Finally, all managers were asked to identify any barriers to their staff development roles (Cabinet Office, 1991; Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; IPD, 1995).

Interviews with key informants were primarily designed to collect data on organisational variables. These respondents were asked to describe the current strategy and position of the organisation (e.g. numbers employed, types of services and priorities), and what stage of the organisational life cycle the organisation was at, given their different histories. The values and culture of the organisations were also explored (Pedler et al., 1991; Steane, 1997), as these would give insights into attitudes towards learning and the learning climate. The key elements of the HRD strategy (Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996; Wilson, 1999; Walton, 1999) were discussed to explore the level of commitment and approach to HRD in each organisation.

Key respondents were also asked how they saw the role of line managers as developers, and how they were actually involved in staff development (e.g. Mumford, 1993; Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Heraty and Morley, 1995; Bevan et al., 1995; Hyman and Cunningham, 1998). They were also asked to describe 'who' they would regard as a developmental manager and what behaviours they would demonstrate. Their responses were then compared with the author's analysis of critical incidents, thus enhancing the validity of her conclusions. Finally, they were asked what support and training managers received to assist them in their developmental responsibilities (Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994; IPD, 1995; Heraty and Morley, 1995).

Key informants were also a useful source of secondary data providing access to materials such as organisational policies, reports, central training programmes and course materials, and IiP assessments.

#### *7.2.4 Pilot study*

Initial interview structures were tested on 'gatekeepers' who felt the interviews were too lengthy and used too much jargon. The researcher also realised that her initial drafts used the literature too explicitly, contrary to phenomenological approaches. For example, an initial draft had asked managers to identify situations where they had coached or mentored an individual. This was felt to be too directive. Also some respondents may not have understood such language.

Managers do not characteristically see themselves as having operated as coaches or mentors, nor do they see themselves as having being helped by coaches or mentors. When they do describe themselves as having been helped by other people they do not generally attach a role to the statement, but describe a process (Mumford, 1993, p.94).

These questions were therefore replaced by the use of the critical incident technique, described above, which relied on more open questions. The literature could then be reserved for analysing the data, rather than collecting the data.

Following these revisions to the interview protocol pilot interviews were carried out on two first line managers and a cross-section of their staff (n=6). Following completion of each interview participants were asked if there was anything they did not understand or if there was anything that could improve the interview. They indicated that there were no problems with the interviews. On analysing the data from these pilot interviews the researcher recognised that there was a tendency to talk about training courses rather than workplace learning. Therefore future respondents were asked to consider informal learning within their workplace rather than formal learning in training courses. Another minor amendment was to include a question on the culture of the organisation as discussion on this did not always emerge following the question to managers on what had helped them to become a developer of people.

### **7.3 Diaries**

The use of diaries was considered for this study. Such an instrument would have provided additional insights into the developmental relationships being studied, and as they are completed immediately or soon after the event they do not suffer from the recall limitations of critical incident technique. Diaries have been identified as a powerful way for individuals to give accounts of their experience enabling:

...researchers to enter into and participate with the social world in a way that allow the possibility of transformations and growth (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, p.425).

The use of diaries would have also increased triangulation.

However, following discussions with the ‘gatekeepers’ in both case study organisations it was decided that diaries would have been an onerous burden on staff already keeping written records of their development, such as learning portfolios, and other work activities. Interestingly, a number of respondents voluntarily showed these records to the researchers.

### **7.4 Documentary Data**

The researcher was given full access to a range of documentary sources in both organisations. These included strategic plans, annual reports, HR policies, iIP storyboards and assessments. These documents were analysed to gain insights into the strategy, culture and HRD practices of both organisations.

## **8. ETHICS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Ethical issues were considered at all stages of the study: research study design, empirical phases, data analysis and final reporting of data.

A significant ethical issue was that the researcher is a member of one of the case study organisations, and has had a business relationship with the other. Therefore the ethical issues associated with participant observation had to be considered and the research methods utilised had to be particularly rigorous to minimise potential respondent bias. It was believed that the adoption of a multiple case study approach would enhance the validity, reliability and generalisability of this study and minimise any potential contamination from the researcher and respondents.

Ethical issues in ethnographic approaches arise from the relationship between researcher and host organisation, and between the researcher and subjects studied (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Miles and Huberman (1994) have also identified a number of ethical issues that should be considered by qualitative researchers including: consent; benefits, costs and reciprocity; honesty and trust; privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; and intervention and advocacy. They suggest that researchers are often faced with dilemmas between ethics and research rigour and that:

...you often face a choice between two goods, where choosing one means to some degree, forgoing the other (p.295).

An example of such choice is the potential conflict between the demands of validity and avoiding harm. Further ethical dilemmas include: the implications of using overt or covert observation (Lofland, 1971; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Gill and Johnson 1997); the concern that individuals may feel *obliged* to co-operate; and the potential for pressure on the researcher to disclose specific observations.

These ethical issues are discussed further below.

## **8.2 Relationship between researcher, and host organisation; and subjects**

Perhaps unusually for an academic researcher the research was being carried out, in the case of Quarriers, in an organisation of which the researcher is a member. Indeed, the author along with fellow council members carries significant responsibility for the governance of this organisation. Whilst this position removed many of the barriers to access experienced by many researchers the author was concerned that there was a

risk of abusing her position, as she was asking those who report to her for access and there may have been a danger that they would feel obliged to co-operate when it was inappropriate. However, due to the nature of the relationship with senior managers, more one of partnership than employer-subordinate, the author was confident this did not happen. Also the individuals concerned have strong personalities and are not shy from putting across their opinions. This was demonstrated by their view that one part of the organisation should not be included in the participant observation phase and this was accepted readily by the author.

Furthermore, the nature of many social care and voluntary organisations are more informal and less status conscious than much of the public and private sectors. Staff are therefore less likely to feel intimidated by a visit from an 'authority' figure and the author was never aware of putting people on the spot. Indeed many staff volunteered to take part in later phases of the research and appeared genuinely interested in the research topic. Staff are also used to being involved in research studies either from outside agencies or by social work students who have placements in the organisation.

### **8.3 Informed consent**

As discussed above, in 7.1 above, attempts were made to ensure that all participants were fully informed about the nature of the research and their role in it. Whilst subjects were informed prior to the commencement of the research, it was still necessary on some occasions where individuals appeared unclear about its purpose to remind them and advise them it was not necessary to participate.

### **8.4 Benefits, costs and reciprocity**

Clearly the researcher gained from this study. However, it is equally important that participants gain too and are not subjected to 'ethnographic vampirism' (McLaren, 1991). Both organisations will therefore be given reports providing valuable data on their learning climate and on the role that their managers play in supporting learning. These will be particularly significant given both organisations' ambitions to be learning organisations. It is hoped that for individual subjects they gained, in the short-term, from reflecting on their own learning and by being given insight into their

own learning styles. Several respondents requested the Learning Styles Questionnaire to use with their partners! In the longer term it is hoped that employees will gain from their managers being better equipped as developers.

### **8.5 Honesty and trust**

Whilst it is hoped that few qualitative researchers are dishonest or abuse trust, it has been suggested that some have been 'economical with the truth' about the purpose of their research (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Within both organisations, given the author's long-term relationships, it was critical that trusting relationships were not breached.

### **8.6 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

Key issues to consider here are the level of intrusion into people's lives, the use of information gained and the maintenance of anonymity.

In this study intrusion was minimised by limiting participant observation to manifestations of work that are generally observable. Therefore staff supervision sessions were excluded, despite the fact they would have provided valuable data for this research. However, these are normally conducted in private and individuals may raise personal issues during them.

As the research subjects in interviewing are human beings care must be taken to protect them from harm by ensuring that there is informed consent, right to privacy and protection from physical or emotional harm (Fontana and Frey, 1994). In particular, in this study it was critical not to divulge information from one respondent, however unwittingly, to another. This was particularly important when interviewing the 'partner' of someone previously interviewed.

Confidentiality was preserved by not informing senior managers of what junior staff said, and vice versa. On occasions senior managers asked how the research was progressing. This seemed to arise out of courtesy, rather than to find out what was being said about them or the organisation as a whole. The reply was always 'fine',

without any details being provided. Both organisations were assured that no commercially sensitive material would be published or shared with those outside the organisation. As a trustee of Quarriers this was a responsibility that had to be followed in any case.

Anonymity has been preserved for front-line staff and managers. This was tested by giving a trusted informant an anonymous description of a positive critical incident and she was unable to identify the project or individuals concerned. Code numbers have been used for individual subjects. Clearly, it is more difficult to preserve the anonymity of those in key roles such as Chief Executive, HR Director and training specialists. They have accepted that they will be identifiable and were offered the opportunity to read drafts before publication.

## **8.7 Intervention and advocacy**

Miles and Huberman (1994) pose the central moral question for the ‘fly on the wall’ researcher:

What do I do when I see harmful, illegal or wrongful behaviour (p.293)?

In the case of Quarriers the author’s position as a Director and Trustee had to take precedence over the researcher’s role and any such incident dealt with under those legal obligations. Fortunately this dilemma was not faced. The researcher did however have to restrain herself from advocating on behalf of a key informant on an issue that both believed passionately in. However, as this arose at a meeting that a Council member would not normally attend the researcher would have been abusing her position.

## **9. ANALYSIS**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The empirical approach adopted in this study created complex analytical demands on the skills of the researcher.

The field being explored also affects the researcher. The actors in the field provide interpretations of themselves and the researcher and add to the demands on, hopes about, and expectations of the researcher's behaviour and product. Moreover, the field...rarely speaks with one voice. Conflicting explanations and expectations often weave the researcher into a web of contradictory pressures. During an intensive field study, the researcher will feel that she is part of the field and its social dynamics. This can be so intense an experience that the research becomes obscured or forgotten (Andersen et al., 1995, p.20).

The researcher therefore needed to take great care to operate effectively and produce knowledge in this context, particularly in those field settings already well known to her.

Key questions addressed when exploring the data included: Which informants and statements are critical to understanding of the field? Which perspective should be imposed on the field? What is the body of analysis, and what can and should be excluded? What theoretical concepts and models are appropriate for this type of data, and how can they be matched? It is also critical when working with the data to distinguish between factual information and (actors') interpretation (ibid.).

Yin (1989) acknowledges that the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult elements of doing case studies, but suggests two general strategies for analysing case study evidence:

- i. *Relying on theoretical propositions* - the preferred strategy is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study i.e. the original objectives and design of case study was presumably based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of the literature and new insights.
- ii. *Developing a case description* - i.e. the development of a descriptive framework to organise the case study and then theorise. This is less preferable than the use of theoretical propositions but is an alternative when theoretical propositions are absent.

The analysis of qualitative data is therefore a process of making sense, of finding and making a structure in the data and giving this meaning and significance for ourselves

and audiences, with the underlying purpose of qualitative research being the understanding of 'the world of the research participants as they construct it' (Jones, 1985b, p.56). However, even with a grounded approach our concepts and frameworks influence how we interpret data and thus there:

...is a constant interplay between the observation of realities and the formation of concepts between research and theorising, between perceptions and explanation (Bulmer, 1982; p.38).

Whilst categories were generated inductively from the qualitative data the process of comparison, contrasting and integration that led to the development of concepts were also influenced by the relevances of the researcher and her audiences as well as those of the participants (Jones, 1985b).

Robinson (1951) criticises the concept of analytic induction in the case study approach claiming that the procedures used are inadequate because they result in 'only the necessary and not the sufficient conditions for the phenomenon to be explained'. Robinson claims that it fails because it does not analyse situations in which the phenomena do not occur, and goes on to argue that if analytical induction is to have rigour, it must rely on statistical inference.

Bloor (1978) counters this by developing an analytical framework that demonstrates how sufficient and necessary conditions may be differentiated in analytic induction without recourse to statistical induction:

- By defining the phenomenon whose variance is to be explained through identifying variations of that phenomenon and categorising or classifying these variations in terms of their shared characteristics and differences. Therefore the author has classified different categories of behaviours demonstrated.
- Create a provisional list of 'case features' common to each identified category of the phenomenon. It is in terms of these features that explanations of the observed variation in the phenomenon will be postulated.
- Identify any 'deviant' cases of the phenomenon that lack the case features common to other cases initially put into the same category. The deviant features are examined to:

- i. modify the list of common case features so as to accommodate the otherwise deviant case
- ii. modify the scheme of classifying variation in the phenomenon to allow the inclusion of deviant cases within a new or modified category thereby creating a new list of categories of the phenomenon.

This allows an analytic framework to be developed to include all the cases of the phenomenon observed during fieldwork. This was done in this study to reduce the initial range of behaviours identified by collapsing categories which overlapped, such as caring behaviours.

- Compare across all the categories of the phenomenon by looking for those case features which are shared by more than one category and for those unique to a particular category. Through these necessary and sufficient conditions associated with each category of the phenomenon it is possible to postulate theoretical explanations (i.e. causes) of variance in the phenomenon that have already been tested through observation.

Eisenhardt (1989) argues that theory generated inductively is likely to be testable, novel and empirically valid but may lack the coverage of 'grand theory'. Barlow and Hersen (1984) suggest that research findings from one case need to be replicated and tested under a variety of conditions to allow generalisation from one situation to another with a reasonable degree of confidence. This was why two case study organisations were selected for this study rather than relying on a single case. Furthermore the interviews with senior line managers, first line managers and employees provided data from 41 micro-case studies.

## **9.2 Analytical techniques**

A number of techniques for analysis of qualitative data were considered and the pilot study was utilised to test not only the methods of data collection, but also the appropriateness of various analytical tools.

Cognitive mapping is a method of modelling the respondent's beliefs in graphical form.

A cognitive map comprises two main elements: persons' concepts of ideas in the form of descriptions of entities, abstract or concrete, in the situation being considered; and the beliefs or theories about the relationships between them shown in the map by an arrow or simple line (Jones, 1985b, p.60).

The analytical process continues by identifying any constructs that seem significant to the individual, and the identification of any contradictions. Process of comparison and integration continues once all individual maps have been completed. Jones advocates cognitive mapping for the following reasons:

- i. The discipline of mapping encourages immersion in the data.
- ii. There is a strong theoretical basis for the technique based on personal construct theory.
- iii. Assists the development of grounded concrete categories and their relationships.
- iv. Mapping helps with the complex *gestalt* of data. Jones finds that the map of the whole interview helps her manage and retain complexity of interrelated data better than methods which involve separating the data.

An alternative to mapping is to categorise data in sentence form rather than in maps. Categories can be marked beside sections of data and then pieces cut out and integrated later. Simultaneously notes can be made about relationships as they are being constructed etc. Categories collected in this way can be compared and this process of comparison leads to further conceptualisation (ibid.). This latter approach was regarded as more appropriate for this study as the researcher is more comfortable working with words and linearly, than working with diagrams.

Two approaches could be considered here, content analysis or grounded theory.

Content analysis involves counting key words and phrases, and then analysing frequencies (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991), as Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) did with their study. The selection of words and phrases would depend on the hypothesis the researcher was trying to prove or disprove. In the case of this study the researcher did not set out with a hypothesis and regards the use of numbers as positivistic. Indeed it could be argued that such counting could lead to overvaluing the significance of some

data and concepts. As discussed earlier in this chapter grounded theory was regarded as a more appropriate approach for this phenomenological study.

Grounded theory provides a more open approach to data analysis which is particularly good for dealing with transcripts. It recognises that the large amounts of non-standard data produced by qualitative studies make data analysis problematic. In quantitative data analysis an external structure is imposed on the data, which makes analysis more straightforward. With qualitative data, however, the structure used has first to be derived from the data. This means systematically analysing it so as to tease out themes, patterns and categories (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991, p.108).

Easterby-Smith et al (1991) support Jones's (1987) argument that grounded theory works because:

...rather than forcing data within logico-deductively derived assumptions and categories, research should be used to generate grounded theory, which 'fits' and 'works' because it is derived from the concepts and categories used by social actors themselves to interpret and organise their worlds (p.25).

They argue that grounded theory is particularly useful for analysing in-depth interviews, as used in this study, and outline seven stages to such analysis, and these were adopted in this study.

- i. *Familiarisation*: re-read transcripts again to allow first thoughts to emerge. When reading unrecorded information should be drawn on as well, such as field notes. Note should be taken of the relationship established between the researcher and interviewee, the general attitude of the interviewee, and the level of confidence in the data gathered. Nuances and intonation may also be significant, so listening to the recorded interviews may be useful.
- ii. *Reflection*: a process of evaluation and critique emerges as data is evaluated in light of previous research, publications and common sense explanations. Questions that might be posed include:
  - Does it support existing knowledge?

- Does it challenge it?
- Does it answer previously unanswered questions?
- What is different?
- Is it different?

For this stage to be effective it is often necessary to be aware of previous research, models and ideas. In this study this stage has been informed by the literature review and will be demonstrated in Chapter 12. This stage sees the development of emergent patterns and ideas.

- iii. *Conceptualisation*: At this stage there is usually a set of concepts or variables which seem to be important for understanding what is going on. For example in this study these include organisational culture, values and learning climate, HRD policies, and nature of the labour force.

However, at this stage the researcher will not be sure just how reliable or valid these concepts are: do they really relate in a consistent way to how the individual views an issue, or has there been misinterpretation of what has been said. What has been said? What is needed, therefore, is for the researcher to go back to the data and search for them, methodically highlighting them when they appear...At this stage the researcher may well come across more concepts that were previously missed, and these can be added to the list (pp.109-110).

- iv. *Cataloguing concepts*: Once it is accepted that the concepts identified occur in people's explanations, then they can be transferred into records as a quick reference guide. Easterby-Smith et al. suggest the use of cards, however in this case computer files and flipcharts were used to record the behaviours, the emergent concepts in this study. They also discuss the issue of labelling suggesting that researchers use their own terms. However, given her phenomenological preferences the author tried as much as possible to use the labels respondents gave for developmental behaviours. The records she kept of such concepts enabled her to trace where they had been derived from.
- v. *Recoding*: Once all references to particular concepts are known, it is possible to return to those places in the data to see what was actually said.

It may, for example be found that what the respondent meant by a particular concept was different to what was understood by it. Or that different people in the same organisation were defining differently what appear to be at face value to be similar concepts. It may even be the case that there are just too many concepts/variables to be manageable. This is an indication that that the coding framework might be too refined [*as was the case initially in this study*], but an equal danger is that it is too crude, or too simplistic. For any of these reasons recoding will be necessary. When any recoding is undertaken, interpretation and analysis also take place (p.110).

- vi. *Linking*: In this stage the analytical framework and explanations should become clearer, with patterns emerging and concepts identified that could fit together. It should now be possible to link the important variables together to develop a more holistic theory. This involves linking empirical data with more general models and involves moving backwards and forwards between the literature and the evidence collected in practice. Andersen et al. (1995) describe this process as the diamond of research.

The research process is thus characterized by alternating, or switching between activities of creating patterns, filling in patterns, exploring data, and theoretical contemplation. Ideas and inspiration emerge from these interacting activities...An attempt to realize these ideas and inspirations is thereafter achieved by applying your resources of data and theories. As a result, ideas are rejected, modified, or realized. Together, the four major activities constitute the diamond of research (pp.197-8).

A first draft often emerges from this stage which should be exposed to others for scrutiny. In this case initial drafts were exposed to the author's supervisor, PhD review seminars, and practitioner and academic audiences.

- vii. *Re-evaluation*: Following the comments of others there may be a need to revise work, as was done here.

Finally, there was consideration of utilising software packages designed for analysing qualitative data, such as Nudist. However, the researcher had no prior experience of using software for qualitative data analysis and was reluctant to experiment in this study, particularly after discussions with colleagues indicated significant limitations in

such products. Furthermore, the use of computer software seemed contrary to a grounded approach and was likely to inhibit intuitive approaches to interpreting data.

### **9.3 Interpretation of qualitative data**

One of the difficulties of interpreting interview data is the assessment of respondents' feelings about the subject as their responses may be affected by their current emotional state, values, attitudes and opinions (Whyte, 1984). Their responses can also be affected by their reaction to the interview situation and may be influenced by ulterior motives, a desire to please or idiosyncratic factors, whereby the respondent expresses only one facet of his or her reaction to a subject (ibid.). Careful framing and management of interviews helped overcome or minimise these problems.

Andersen et al. (1995) also report on the difficulty involved in interpreting respondents' meanings effectively and how it can be useful to explore the feasibility of adapting other researchers' typologies. Typologies developed by other researchers (e.g. Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999) will therefore be compared with those emerging from this study in Chapter 12.

The author, given her phenomenological preferences, was interested in actors' interpretations of significant factors and effects, important incidents, characteristics, key people/roles, and problems/causes. However, she acknowledges that actors' interpretations are influenced by their knowledge, emotion, speculation, background and role, therefore

...the researcher ought to adopt an open, but always critical, attitude to explanations from the field (Andersen et al., 1995, p.203).

Finally, the author also acknowledges that others may interpret the data differently. In this study the dominant discourse was that of learning, but someone using the discourses of for example power or gender may, quite rightly, interpret the data differently.

#### **9.4 Analysis in practice**

Prior to analysis the researcher transcribed the interview tapes herself. Although a laborious and time consuming process this proved to be invaluable as it enabled the author to re-live the interviews and to incorporate annotations about the context of the interview. For example: Was the interview interrupted by staff or service users? What were the interviewee's demeanour, nuances and intonations at different stages of the interview? What were the researcher's feelings about what was going on? This immersion in interview transcription facilitated the initial emergence of categories and also enabled the researcher to see links between different respondents, which would not have been possible if a third party had transcribed the interviews.

The first stage of analysis involved developing profiles for each manager. This involved collating the data collected on them from their own interview, the interviews with their staff, and where appropriate the interview with their senior line manager. An example of a profile is provided in Appendix 7. Each profile was then analysed, several times, to identify actions within critical incidents which contained words and phrases that provided examples of behaviours that facilitated or inhibited learning. These were cut out and clustered with similar examples from other managers. The examples were not reduced to data sets of single words or short phrases as this was viewed to be overly reductionist and may have resulted in the loss of significant data by removing them from their context. As much as possible the language of the respondents was used to label the behaviours in order to retain their meaning. The behavioural clusters were revisited several times and where behaviours overlapped significantly, e.g. encouragement and support, these were placed into the same overall category i.e. caring. Eventually twenty-two facilitative behaviours were identified, which were then allocated to one of nine behavioural categories. An example of a behavioural category is provided in Appendix 8.

The validity of the analysis was tested on several occasions. Emergent findings were presented to key informants in the case study organisations and they confirmed that these behaviours and their labels were accurate based on their experiences. The only debate was over one of the labels used. They felt that the label 'challenging behaviour' was ambiguous, as in social care terms it means someone who is

presenting behavioural problems. However, the label was retained as this was the exact word used by respondents who, in the context of developmental interactions, meant their manager had been stretching them or trying to get them to achieve their potential. Key informants in both organisations respectively read Chapters 6 and 7, which discuss organisational variables, for accuracy and sensitivity. Only minor amendments were suggested and both organisations then gave permission to use the organisations' names in this thesis and subsequent publications.

The behavioural categories have also been presented to SCVO's Annual Lifelong Learning Convention, where they were generally endorsed as demonstrating behaviours of voluntary sector managers. Although delegates working in adult education, not surprisingly, felt there was an over-emphasis on organisational outcomes. The findings, particularly those regarding the partnership between HRD professionals and line managers, have been presented to a voluntary sector HR practitioner's network meeting. The behaviours have also been discussed at academic conferences and seminars, including the British Academy of Management's Annual Conference, an ESRC HRD seminar and the 3<sup>rd</sup> European HRD Conference in Edinburgh in January 2002.

## **10. LIMITATIONS**

A limitation of the research was an initial question raised by the researcher where she asked respondents how supportive their manager was. This may be an example of the researcher's language influencing the respondents as all managers were described as being supportive with replies ranging from 'helpful' to 'very supportive'. In retrospect it would have been more consistent with phenomenology to have begun with the open questions surrounding critical incidents.

Another possible limitation of the research was that the sample of managers selected was regarded by their organisations as generally positive developers, and this was confirmed by the fieldwork. As a consequence generalisations about managers overall are limited. However, this has to be viewed in conjunction with the primary objective of this research, which was trying to identify what developmental managers

do to facilitate the learning of their staff. It is argued that the research design described above has enabled that objective to be achieved.

A final limitation is the fact that the research was carried out within the voluntary sector which, as discussed in Chapter 2, has different values and cultures from the public and private sectors, and thus generalisations across sectors are limited. It is hoped however that given the organisations selected are, in voluntary sector terms, large and engage in 'commercial' activities that there is some basis for comparison across sectors and this will be tested in future research.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter has discussed the methodology and methods used for this research, highlighting the issues raised by such a research strategy and tactics. The chapter has also considered how any difficulties associated with such an approach were minimised.

It is acknowledged that phenomenological research is complex and can be uncertain.

First...defining the empirical field in relation to its context is not an obvious task. Second, no definition of the empirical field will be able to neutralize the multifaceted nature of social phenomena. No matter how narrow the definition or how rich the repertoire of collected data, the exploration will never result in anything other than one of many possible interpretations (Andersen et al., 1995, p.22).

However, this is no excuse for sloppy research or inattention to rigour and the final product should pay attention to the norms of explicitness, consistency and progression (ibid.). This study aimed to be exemplary by: being significant, 'complete', considering alternative perspectives, displaying sufficient evidence, and, being composed in an engaging manner (Yin, 1989).

Three research methods – participant observation, interviews and documentary analysis – have been used to ensure triangulation.

Participant observation was used in this study to gain insight into the influence of organisational variables on developmental relationships. These insights provided valuable information prior to interviews being conducted with respondents and helped the researcher establish a relationship with subjects.

Overall the adoption of the participant observation role worked well, giving the required 'feel' for the culture and work of the organisation to inform the next phase of research – in-depth qualitative interviews. A major disadvantage were the interruptions created by the demands of 'paid' employment, which created distractions and at times undermined the immersion effects of participant observation. However the author's subsequent sabbatical more than compensated for this during the second fieldwork phase.

The value of observing a *breadth* of activities in the organisations provided a more holistic insight into the organisations, than would have been possible if time had only been spent in a few projects.

The researcher believes she had a minimal *impact* on the research population. Two factors contributed to this. Firstly, she already had a relationship with each organisation and was thus not viewed as a 'stranger'. Secondly, employees were well used to being participants in research studies.

Maintaining *objectivity*, as far as possible was achieved by remembering that the organisations were being observed from a researcher's, rather than a manager's or a consultant's, perspective. This only slipped when observing projects with particularly vulnerable groups that led to understandable, but unexpected, emotional responses.

The consideration of appropriate *personal style* for different groups in the research population proved useful as all appeared to comfortable with and prepared to engage with the researcher.

The experience of recording and writing-up *field notes* reflected the good advice contained in the ethnographic literature. To maximise accuracy and richness it was

vital to write notes up as soon as possible. Wherever possible it was helpful to write up one observation before embarking on another to minimise data loss and confusion.

The in-depth qualitative interviews, incorporating critical incident technique, resulted in the collection of rich data which enabled the identification of developmental behaviours. Critical incident technique's use of probing questions limited the ability of respondents to manipulate data.

The consideration of ethical issues at the design phase and during the fieldwork were viewed as critical by these social care charities given their own ethical values, in particular their respect for the dignity of the individual. By giving due attention and priority to such issues trust was further developed with the host organisations and their employees.

The analytical strategy adopted was based on the grounded theory approach, as this is consistent with the phenomenological paradigm and has consequently contributed to the generation of new knowledge.

Finally, the author has acknowledged limitations in the research strategy adopted but has shown how this have been minimised. Overall, the author believes that the approach taken has been both robust and rigorous.

## **CHAPTER 6 – RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP SCOTLAND**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Richmond Fellowship Scotland (RFS) is a voluntary organisation providing services to individuals with mental health problems and/or learning disabilities. These services include residential, home support, day/evening activities, counselling and advocacy schemes, vocational training and employment, research and evaluation. In 1999 these services were delivered through 45 services in 17 local authority areas across Scotland (Annual Report, 1999).

This chapter explores organisational factors, including history, organisational strategy, structure and culture, which set the context for developmental managers' activities and which may influence their behaviour. In particular the chapter examines Human Resource Development (HRD), focusing on HRD strategy and practice, and supervision and appraisal policy.

The chapter is based on analysis of: documents provided by RFS; interviews with key informants – the Training and Quality Manager (T & QM) and an Area Learning Co-ordinator (ALC); managers and staff; and reflection on participant observation, including visits to operational units and HQ and participation in relevant courses. Given the qualitative nature of this study extensive primary data was generated from respondents, however only a small proportion of direct quotes are presented here for supporting and illustrative purposes.

### **2. ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1 History**

Richmond Fellowship was founded in England in 1959 as a provider of therapeutic communities, opening its first Scottish project in 1979. In 1993 Richmond Fellowship Scotland (RFS) became an independent organisation with charitable status in Scotland. Since then RFS has experienced rapid and consistent growth and has developed into one of Scotland's leading voluntary organisations. The organisation

now employs around 700 FTEs, compared to 82 in 1993. Financially the organisation has grown from an income of £200,000 in 1993 to £10m in 2000 (Corporate Plan, 1997-2000; Annual Report, 1999).

The organisational life cycle was described as being at the:

...the mid-point...five years ago we were one of the newer players, seen as innovative. Now we're seen as 'established'. Up until recently we were probably seen as one of the five key players in the field. Now we are in danger of being overtaken by newer, fresher organisations from Scotland and South of the border (T & QM).

Finally, the organisation has twice been recognised as an Investor in People (IiP), most recently in spring 2000. The organisation believes that as:

...an accredited 'Investor in People'... staff training, supervision and appraisal on an ongoing basis is crucially important in expanding our knowledge, awareness, skills and experience (Corporate Plan, 1997-2000).

The influence of the IiP standard can be seen in the organisation's HRD strategy and practice discussed in Section 3.3 below.

## **2.2 Environment**

In 1997 80% of the organisation's services were devoted to supporting individuals resettling from longer-stay hospital care as a result of community care (ibid.). A potential problem for the organisation emerging from such growth, with the imminent establishment of a social care register, is that staff in learning disability are less well qualified than those in mental health.

Voluntary Organisations in Scotland play a significant role in community care service provision, particularly in the field of mental illness. RFS provide 25% of the voluntary sector provision in mental illness accommodation. Further significant growth was envisaged over the period of the 1997-2000 Corporate Plan. Although it was recognised that this was dependent on environmental factors such as political

commitments, funding support for voluntary sector community care initiatives, and latterly by the impact of devolution.

We live in a world where the pace of change is accelerating ever more quickly. Around us can be seen huge structural changes, not least in the new Scottish Parliament, whose existence will undoubtedly herald even more change, which will have economic, legal and social policy implications for the citizens of this country (Chief Executive, Annual Report 1999).

To identify demand RFS examines local authority Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategies and Community Care Plans, which outline current provision, unmet needs and strategic intentions. This enables the organisation to identify areas where it may have an opportunity to expand its services.

Whilst acknowledging that the growth of the *contract culture* has increased competition RFS wishes to continue the tradition of working co-operatively with voluntary sector colleagues where appropriate (Corporate Plan 1997-2000). The organisation is for example a member of umbrella bodies such as Community Care Providers for Scotland (CCPS) and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), both of which encourage the transfer of learning and good practice across the voluntary sector. However, concerns were expressed about how price sensitive the contracting process was becoming.

The dynamics and challenges of this complex environment were acknowledged recently by the Chair of the Management Committee.

In these days of constant change the ever-increasing challenge is for us all to learn, so that we can be continually responsive to new challenges (Annual Report, 1999).

Whilst the Chief Executive stated that the organisation typically views such challenges positively.

As a learning organisation, we will also continue to be alert to our contemporaries' experience in the Community Care Sector and to other sectors where transferable findings can help inform our ongoing evolution (ibid.).

### **3. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS**

#### **3.1 Strategy**

The organisation's vision outlined in its most recent annual report states that:

We believe in, support and promote, the rights of people who have a mental health and/or learning disability (ibid.).

The mission of RFS is:

To strive to ensure that the best possible high quality services continue to be delivered in respect of individuals with mental health difficulties or learning disability. This aims to meet these individuals' rights, aspirations and needs, and those of their carers, in assuming as much power and control as possible over their own lives (Corporate Plan, 1997-2000).

Service users' rights include having a voice, equality, choice and opportunity (Annual Report, 1999). Consequently, RFS is changing services by moving from 'institutionalised' homes/projects to people living in their own homes through supported living. This has resulted in the need to reconfigure services that are only 5-6 years old, which at their conception had seemed innovative but now seem dated.

[Therefore] managers have to think about their services being developmental and evolutionary; it's not something that should ever stay static because service users don't stay static (BSLM2).

The organisation's corporate aims and objectives are:

- i. To ensure each service-user is fully respected as a unique individual and that a fundamental person-centred orientation is central to all organisational activities.
- ii. To maximise the rights of individuals with mental health difficulties or learning disabilities.
- iii. To promote equality of opportunity.
- iv. To establish, operate and monitor high quality innovative services.

- v. To promote further growth of the organisation whilst learning from experience, just as previous development of the organisation had been 'underpinned by the emphasis on organisational learning ' (Annual Report, 1999).
- vi. To provide high quality training, development and learning opportunities for staff and service users and external agencies when appropriate.
- vii. To work with 'communities to reduce prejudice and promote a better understanding of how community care can succeed'.
- viii. To work in partnership with voluntary and statutory sector colleagues with the intention of promoting a more co-operative and inclusive society.
- ix. To promote models of positive mental health and good practice both in community support services and in the supportive relationship with staff, thus demonstrating a link between organisational practice towards service-users and staff.
- x. Ensuring that the organisation continues to operate as a coherent whole, with effective devolution of responsibility, e.g. devolution of staff development to line managers, and sound communication systems.
- xi. To strive for continuous improvement throughout all organisational functions.
- xii. To provide a comprehensive personnel service to staff with appropriate consultative arrangements.

(Based on the Corporate Plan, 1997-2000)

Whilst the Corporate Plan translates these aims and objectives into departmental plans, and sets targets and standards for a range of organisational activities there is an acknowledgement that these are 'moving targets' as the organisation responds to changing circumstances. It is argued in the corporate plan that:

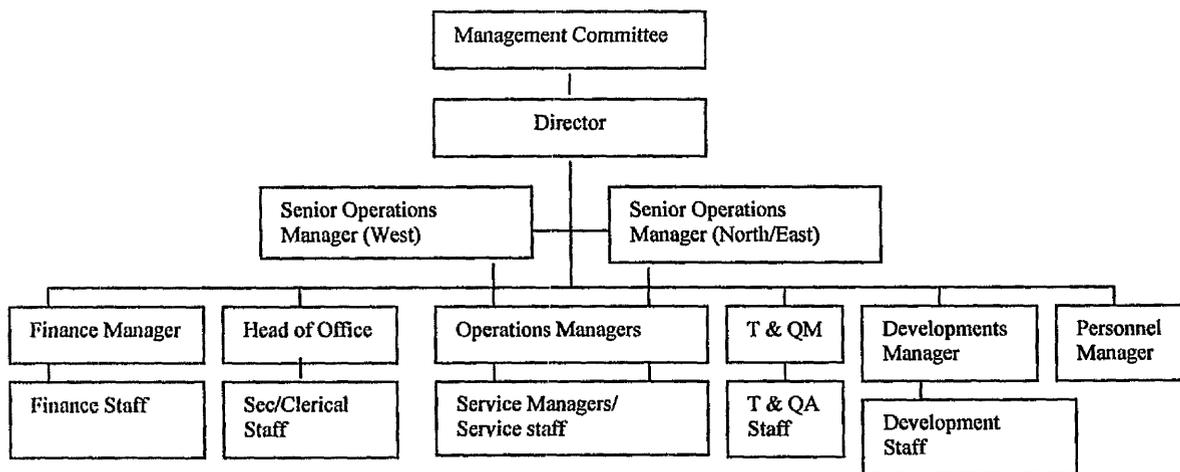
The organisation has to constantly move as a body, changing and improving its shape and styles of service-delivery as it listens and learns from the reflected experience of its service-users' aspirations and needs and others' experience elsewhere (ibid.).

Finally RFS believes that it is well placed to provide services in this field in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of its:

...sound values-base, effective management and financial controls and a highly trained and motivated workforce whose flexibility and commitment ensures that the individual service-users aspirations and needs are paramount (ibid.).

### 3.2 Structure

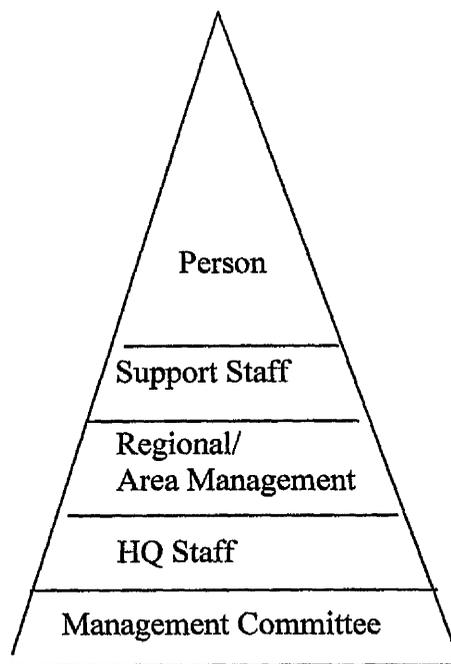
The organisation had recently restructured to make it more responsive to service user needs and to reflect its recent growth. An additional senior manager was appointed to oversee development in the North and East of Scotland. The nomenclature of first line managers was changed from Project Managers to Service Managers, as they may be required to manage more than one site (Annual Report, 1999).



**Figure 6.1 Organisational Chart**

Whilst the organisation has a traditional hierarchical structure it believes that it has a functional structure based on its rationale for existence. This is presented in Figure 6.2 below.

An important aspect of this structure is RFS's management committee which incorporates 'a wide representation of stakeholders - health, social work, housing, business, finance, law and human resources' (Annual Report, 1999) - thus providing an opportunity to tap into a range of knowledge bases.



**Figure 6.2 - Functional Structure**

### **3.3 Culture**

As a values-based organisation the organisation has chosen to practice the social model of care, rather than the medical model, as:

...it is about people actually having quality of life and choice, and getting to live real lives (ALC).

A senior line manager cogently described the organisation's values as:

...seeing people as people rather than learning disabilities or people with support needs...which informs the whole way you approach them...with dignity and respect...about rights...about empowering people...about people having a right to a voice in the community...a right to normal living (BSLM3).

He continued that in RFS, in comparison to other organisations that he had previously been employed,

values *do* directly inform the way people work and I think that is a huge strength (BSLM3).

Outcomes of this values base have been the development of person-centred planning and inclusion policies. The latter is designed to maximise participation of service users within their communities. The former is designed to emphasise that social care provision should be driven by the individual, rather than being professionally led,

by really looking at the individual and what their needs and wants are (ALC).

One grassroots employee felt a valuable intervention by the organisation had been the holding of a Social Inclusion Conference which had enabled staff from across the organisation to meet and work together on:

How RFS as an organisation promotes inclusion? What does that mean for staff? How do support workers promote it? What does it mean for service users (BSM3)?

Observation of staff at training courses and in their workplaces generally revealed that they were very enthusiastic about and enjoyed their work although they found it challenging, some described it as 'exciting'. They also appeared keen to participate in learning. Further discussions with staff confirmed they were generally positive about working for the organisation, and in particular were positive about culture at the local level, although they were also prepared to criticise. They generally believed that the organisation possessed positive and appropriate values that were practised by many staff, as described by staff at different levels.

It is an idealistic organisation. I think a lot of very good people work for it. I think a lot of people see their job as a vocation within RFS...I think it is a relatively modern organisation...I think the organisation's values are probably best represented in the people and the people who actually do the job. I suppose they are genuinely caring values, it's enthusiastic about what it does and it gets right in there (BSM1).

I think the value-base is person-centred, it's very service user-led. I think they have worked hard and continue to work hard at services to look at ways of including service users. We've obviously got a big inclusion agenda (BLM2).

I think the culture is very much about being an enabling organisation and enabling not only the clients that we come into contact with but also the members of staff (BSLM4).

It was also recognised that managers had a significant influence 'about the kind of culture that exists' (BSLM4).

There was however acknowledgement that it was not always easy to put these values, such as social inclusion, into practice particularly given the views of some sections of society where there was still stigma associated with mental health problems in particular.

Also the view was expressed by some staff that values may be practised inconsistently across the organisation partly because of its rapid growth. Although it was acknowledged that the organisation had recently taken steps to cope with growth through its approach to quality and 'standardisation of practice' (BLM2).

However, at times staff felt the increased paperwork now used in the organisation meant less time was spent with service users. Although they recognised the need to provide evidence of support and that the 'bureaucracy involved you would get with any larger organisation' (BSM4). The size of the organisation meant that at times even managers felt frustrated that they had to go back to the centre to get answers or decisions, which may seem *disempowering*. There was also some recognition that the emergence of the 'contract culture' was having an impact on RFS and the voluntary sector as a whole.

I think the culture changes regularly and there is more than one culture around as well. I would say there are several because the organisation has grown so much in the last few years and it has had to become contracting, outcome oriented for a number of reasons mostly to do with the culture that we bid for contracts in. I think all voluntary organisations have to an extent lost the individuality that they had. There is more in terms of outcomes and objectives for us to meet (BSM10).

The view was also expressed that some staff found it difficult to adjust to the culture of an expanding and more businesslike organisation as:

...it has undergone a phenomenal rate of growth and has also gone through a lot of change, a lot of which has been very positive even though painful for some (BSLM3).

One first line manager expressed the view that the organisation was

...growing too quickly because we should concentrate on being the best and not the biggest (BLM4).

On a more prosaic level several longer-serving staff recalled how in the past all staff could meet together in the equivalent of a large living room.

Several staff felt that some of the above problems were being reduced due to improvements in the organisation's communication processes, through the likes of regular newsletters, memos and managers' meetings. One commented that there was 'a lot of communication and sharing of information organisationally' between workers within geographical areas and across the organisation at training courses (BSM4). Staff were also involved in collaborative projects. For example, senior support workers were developing an information database on community resources for service users. Another member of staff welcomed the involvement in projects of management committee members and senior staff, demonstrated by their commitment to attending open days.

With regards to the organisation's growth a particularly positive aspect from the employees' perspective was that it has provided significant opportunities for career development and service user development as well as organisational development.

It's for their own [staff] development obviously but also the development of services and even the organisation too; so everybody is involved - it's been good (BLM1).

Despite the challenges of growth, increasing bureaucracy and business-like practices the organisation's ethos of putting service users first was still clearly evident at local service level and the following example is credited to a first line manager's influence.

It [the service] has a very supportive, very friendly environment. It's not just about delivering support. The people that use the service have a need in terms of they have left an institution, they're not completely comfortable with being away on their own and building their own lives. They want that halfway in-between and I would say that is a real big priority here and it's constant because the staff team has changed hugely...Everybody who comes in learns very

quickly to take that on and enjoys working like that and a lot of the credit for that goes down to BLM5 because that is the type of ethos he puts forward to people...He is most concerned about the service users but staff are a big part of that and he knows that the two go together (BSM10).

Finally, the organisation's desire to be a learning organisation could be seen in its most recent corporate plan, as one of its goals was:

To ensure that this learning organisation's staffing and all other resources are continuously used most effectively and efficiently (Corporate Plan, April 2000-March 2003).

To achieve this RFS recognised it needed to:

- Develop an effective ICT system.
- Increase effectiveness of communication within the organisation, sharing of best practice and promotion of new ideas.
- Be aware of and use people's skills and talents.
- Monitor use of staff and continuity of support.
- Ensure job descriptions and person specifications continue to reflect workplace needs.
- Monitor recruitment and movement of staff internally.
- Continually review service user needs and aspirations.
- Facilitate the evolution of services in consultation with stakeholders.
- To continue to improve and develop services.
- To achieve 'best value' in all financial transactions.
- To continue developing a culture of ongoing learning throughout the organisation.

(*ibid.*).

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

##### **4.1 HRD strategy**

In RFS the personnel function and the HRD function are located in separate departments. The personnel department's aim is:

To ensure that the organisation's commitment is achieved by valuing staff and managers, assisting them in their roles (*ibid.*).

The department's objectives are to secure:

- i. Effective and consultative employee relations
- ii. Accurate, reliable and flexible human resources information
- iii. Maximum equality of opportunity in employment
- iv. Effective and professional Human Resource Management

(Corporate Plan, 1997-2000)

The Chief Executive expressed the corporate view of HRM.

Conventionally organisational resources tend to be viewed in terms of the financial means and other physical resources available. Whilst the Richmond Fellowship Scotland balance sheet is healthy, we are a human service organisation and without any doubt, our greatest asset is our staff. The quality of staffing at the Richmond Fellowship Scotland in terms of their accumulated knowledge, attitudes and activities is second to none and they will continue to receive full support within this organisation as we all move forward together (Corporate Plan, April 2000-March 2003).

A first line manager felt that RFS was:

...a very good employer...it's well paid I would say for working in the care field and it's very committed to development (BLM3).

However, several employees expressed reservations about the lack of trade union recognition.

Training and quality functions are located within one department. The rationale for this is that feedback from quality assurance reviews was identifying learning and development needs and opportunities.

During the research study the training function was undergoing a major transition as part of the overall strategic and structural changes. This involved moving from a

highly centralised function with full time and seconded staff to a largely decentralised function where training services would be delivered by four Area Learning Coordinators (ALCs) in four geographic areas.

The current training plan's aim was to further develop and expand training, development and learning in line with Investor in People accreditation. The plan had 6 objectives:

- i. Develop, deliver and evaluate the internal training programme in line with organisational objectives.
- ii. Evaluation and expansion of accredited training. This reflects RFS's need to increase qualified staff, as well as the desire of staff themselves to get qualifications. The organisation is an SVQ accredited centre.
- iii. Expansion of resources available to training
- iv. Further develop the internal learning climate. This included the targets of training all 'supervisors' in coaching and mentoring, and individual staff development planning established throughout the organisation.
- v. Develop external training consultancy.<sup>19</sup>
- vi. Maintain Investor in People recognition.<sup>20</sup>

(based on Training Plan 1998-2000).

The emerging learning strategy emphasised 3 themes:

- i. Moving from training to learning
- ii. Line managers being seen as key facilitators of learning
- iii. Getting staff to see learning/CPD as:

...professional responsibility for their own learning, just as they encourage service users to take responsibility for their own learning (T & QM).

The clear link between HRD and quality in the organisation can be seen in the development of a draft joint Learning and Quality Strategy. Its aims are:

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<sup>19</sup> This objective was dropped due to pressure to meet internal demands

- i. Continuous improvement of individual/team learning
- ii. Develop organisational learning
- iii. Ensure service user involvement
- iv. Improve external profile
- v. Continuous review of activities

(Draft Learning and Quality Strategy, 2000)

There was already evidence that RFS was trying to influence other agencies through learning and development activities through offering visits, placements and contributing to training events in other organisations.

I think the organisation should be an educator, part of that is giving people opportunities to come and visit (BLM5).

#### **4.2 Supervision and Appraisal**

A key element of HRD strategy is the Supervision and Appraisal Policy (1998), which provides a framework for line managers to review the development of their staff, as:

...regular staff supervision and appraisal are essential to realising RFS's commitment to deliver the best possible high quality services.

The objectives of the Supervision and Appraisal Policy are to ensure:

- i. That all staff carry out responsibilities to the organisation's agreed standards, and receive constructive feedback on their performance.
- ii. That all staff are provided with the day to day support they require, recognising the considerable demands of their posts.
- iii. That all staff have developmental opportunities to ensure they have the skills required to undertake their work and assist in their ongoing professional development.
- iv. That staff are consulted and involved in decision making regarding their individual work.

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<sup>20</sup> The organisation successfully achieved reaccreditation in the Spring of 2000. A number of staff

- v. That within the supervision and appraisal systems, staff enjoy equality of opportunity and respect for their differences, values and perceptions.

(Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy, October 1998, p.1).

RFS's model of supervision recognises two types of supervision. Firstly, informal supervision involves ad hoc consultation on day to day issues and discussions with a supervisor during everyday work. By contrast, formal supervision is a planned 1:1 session, with an agreed agenda. The session is expected to last a maximum of one hour; in fact the researcher found several examples where supervision went on longer than this. Supervision should also be recorded (*ibid.*).

Formal supervision is the process by which a 'supervisor' enables a worker to practice to the best of her/his ability. This responsibility in some instances was delegated to relatively junior members of staff e.g. a senior support worker may supervise resource workers. Supervisors and supervisees are expected to jointly develop and agree a supervision contract.

Within RFS supervision has four main functions.

- i. Management - monitoring the overall quality of individuals' work and ensuring that all work is carried out in accordance with organisational policy and procedures by:
  - Ensuring staff are aware of the responsibilities of their post.
  - Setting and maintaining standards for individual work practice.
  - Ensuring staff work to existing policies and procedures.
- ii. Learning and development - promoting the development of staff to ensure they work to their full potential by:
  - Enabling staff to reflect honestly on their performance.
  - Assisting staff in setting realistic development goals.
  - Enabling staff to develop and realise their individual learning plan
- iii. Support - monitoring the overall health and emotional well being of staff with regard to the impact on or of the work undertaken by:

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apparently commented that the researcher's interviews helped them prepare for the IIP assessment!

- Being alert to employees' emotional and physical health and the consequent impact on their work.
- Creating a supportive climate for staff to look at their practice and its impact on them as a person.
- Enabling a person to work more confidently and independently.

iv. Mediation by:

- Representing individual needs and opinions where appropriate to higher management.
- Discussion and briefing about organisational developments relating to their work.
- Involvement of staff in decision making about their work.

(ibid.)

Supervision is provided to staff once every three weeks. As part of the reaccreditation process for IiP the training department conducted a staff survey to explore supervision practice. They found that 60% of staff received supervision regularly. Reasons given for supervision not being carried out at regular intervals included: staff shortages, managers changing jobs and some supervisors lacking supervision skills. The results of the survey were disseminated throughout the organisation which made staff feel they were being listened to and that something was being done with the information they had given. As a consequence the training department developed a remediation plan to rectify the gaps in supervision practice in parts of the organisation.

Supervision was recognised as a key source of learning by managers and staff.

I thought it was great you had someone giving you this reassurance, direction if required and feedback on what you were doing (BLM5).

The organisation believes that appraisal:

...will enhance the growth and development of the service by improving and accelerating the growth and development of the staff who provide it (ibid.).

All staff are covered by the appraisal process with the first appraisal taking place six months after their start date and thereafter annually. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that appraisals are carried out within this timetable and may delegate the responsibility to the individual carrying out supervision. Prior to the appraisal information may be gathered from a range of people who interact with the individual employee such as service users, advocates, family members, other workers, and peers. In addition the appraisee undertakes a self-evaluation. Outcomes from the appraisal process are the agreement of clear objectives for future work, supervision and learning and development. With regard to the latter a copy of the individual's learning and development plan are sent to the training department to inform future training activities.

A guidance note issued to employees and managers provides advice on how to complete the Individual Learning and Development Plan. Staff are advised: to be as specific as possible by identifying exactly the area(s) they wish to develop work based skills; to set specific goals, objectives or targets to facilitate evaluation of what has been achieved; and, to develop an action plan outlining how they will achieve their learning outcomes. Managers and staff are encouraged to think beyond training courses and to consider such methods as information gathering, reading/literature review, effective use of structured supervision, informal local training/role modelling, as well as formal training courses (Individual Learning and Development Plan, November 1999). That these Learning and Development plans had made a positive impact on staff could be seen by several staff willingly showing their plans to the researcher.

Following a review of supervision, appraisal and learning and development systems in November 1999 it was felt that information on an individual's learning history was dispersed in various places and that it would be useful for it to be kept in one place. This has led to the development of an Individual Support and Development Portfolio. Staff can record: personal details; academic and professional qualifications; career record and previous employment history; supervision contract, calendar, agenda and notes; learning and development plan and log; and, pre and post course evaluation forms (Individual Support & Development Portfolio, 2000). Such record keeping assists CPD processes. To support this particular development the organisation is

increasingly using Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles Questionnaire (1986) to help managers and staff understand how they and others learn. Again as with the Learning and Development plans some staff proudly showed the researcher their portfolios. One volunteered:

I take that with me no matter where I go...It's taught me a lot and that's what my job is all about (BSM6).

### **4.3 HRD Practice**

The new training programme reflects the emergent HRD strategy in particular the decentralisation of learning and development activities. The organisation is providing a smaller central programme which will be complemented by ALCs developing tailored training to meet individual and team needs (Learning and Development Programme, May 2000-October 2000). ALCs will work closely with first and senior line managers (the subjects of this study). ALCs will be line managed by Area Managers for their day-to-day operational work, and by the Training and Quality Manager for their personal development. In effect the ALCs are moving from a traditional training delivery role to an internal consultancy role. The Training and Quality Manager will still retain overall responsibility for the delivery of learning and development throughout the organisation.

One ALC reported what this meant in practice. She felt the changes had led to more emphasis on individual learning through the individual learning and development plans. She felt the big difference for her focusing on a specific geographical area was:

...the fact that I know the people I am working with. I can actually go to their team meetings and find out what their real issues are (ALC).

This she argued shows that the organisation is actually listening to staff and tailoring learning activities for them. She sums up the role of the ALC as being:

...able to facilitate learning rather than actually standing up doing talk and chalk (ALC).

A senior line manager whilst welcoming the decentralisation of learning and development felt that it would be challenging for senior and first line managers, and indeed staff, having more responsibility for directly influencing how learning needs are met compared to the past.

I think there has been a temptation, inclination and practice to say 'thank God we've got central training'...So I think people taking on ownership of that will be both quite difficult but also if we can do it I think it will benefit us (BSLM3).

The training programme offers a range of courses covering organisational policies, social care and management. Staff valued the central training programme not only for the content of the courses themselves but also the opportunity to meet staff from other services because it:

...allowed you to meet other people who were peers and talk to them and also learn from them (BSLM4).

Two courses which introduce new staff to the structure, policies and values of the organisation were attended by the researcher.

The first of these was the one-day central core induction held at headquarters. Its aim was to give participants an understanding of the organisation's history, aims and philosophy. The Chief Executive led this substantial and significant session. In describing the history of the organisation he stressed some of the fundamental principles on which the organisation was built. These included:

Standing on the same platform of humanity as people we serve; working together *with* the individual; not doing things to people; and partnership.

He then gave a very powerful and moving introduction to the history of the organisation by placing it within the context of the history of social care in the UK and demonstrating the shift from large-scale institutional care to community care. In particular he stressed that the organisation was values-driven, that 'our ethos is everything' and that services should be targeted to meet the needs of individuals. A challenge for services was 'keeping them alive, keeping them going, helping them

develop, keeping the vitality' to ensure that the organisation remained flexible. He also stressed the link between training and the provision of quality services. He highlighted that funders queried the amount of training the organisation carried out as they did not provide such extensive training for their own staff. However, the organisation's view was that it required to provide learning opportunities for staff because if it believed that 'service users have the capacity to grow and develop, staff need to be facilitators and educators' therefore the same principles needed to be applied to staff development. He argued that 'without learning and development services will stultify'.

He concluded by outlining the qualities required by staff to work in the organisation and these were:

- Warmth
- Empathy
- Genuineness
- Potential-seeking
- Focus
- Flexibility
- Hard work
- Soft heart and a hard head

The Chief Executive engaged very effectively with the new staff, and impressively was able to remember everyone's name, which helped make them feel valued. Staff responded in a very positive manner to his session.

The second introductory course was the 2-day core values course. The objectives of this course included giving participants:

- An opportunity to examine their own values and influence of these in their work.
- A knowledge of the values used in person centred planning and inclusion.
- An increased awareness of the impact of discrimination on their own lives and on the lives of those they work with.

- A knowledge of the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy.  
(Core Values Course handout, 1999)

The course emphasised the importance of identity and self-esteem in social care. Staff were encouraged to think firstly about their own identity and what had shaped their perceptions of their own identity.

As well as internal training courses the organisation offers access to accredited training such as SVQs and Open University qualifications such as 'Mental Health and Distress'. The latter involves study groups and staff have the choice to undertake these courses purely as personal development or they can attain CATS points. Staff also have access to external courses and conferences, where relevant to their development.

## **5. LINE MANAGERS AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.1 Role of line managers**

To explore the role of line managers as developers key informants and senior line managers were asked to describe how they viewed the developmental role of line managers.

As a consequence of its restructuring exercise described in 3.1 above the organisation had devolved power and responsibilities increasingly to the local level. The redesignated first line managers, 'Service Managers', were given expanded responsibilities and further opportunities for development (Annual Report, 1999).

Even prior to the changing corporate and training strategies RFS had been encouraging managers, through its 6-day Management Development Programme, to act as facilitators of learning, as they had been recognised as having the 'key role and potential for a bigger role in facilitating learning' (T & QM). Managers were asked to consider how they planned individual development as required by the recently revised Supervision and Appraisal policy. Managers were also encouraged to consider how information gained through the supervision and appraisal processes could be used to

inform learning needs and how these then linked to organisational priorities and issues. Through the course managers were encouraged to behave proactively regarding options for learning and in particular to think beyond courses. They were also stimulated to think about adult learning by thinking about what works for specific individuals. For example, what is their learning style and what has blocked their learning in the past?

An aim of the emergent learning strategy was the continued desire to increase the attainment of accredited qualifications and line managers were recognised as needing to play an increasing role in supporting and assessing these qualifications. RFS includes an element about SVQ assessments in line managers' job descriptions. To date this has not been enforced, as the training department has preferred to use managers who are volunteers. However, the organisation will need to expand its assessors' pool as the pressure grows for more qualified staff.

There was some acknowledgement of potential tensions emanating from managers assessing their own staff such as staff may not be fully open if their own manager is assessing them. There were also concerns about letting staff develop at their own pace, which is more costly to the organisation, and clearly it is time-consuming for line managers to assess staff. However, despite these limitations it was felt that the organisational priority was to get staff qualified, and that line managers were best placed to assess staff they were working with on a daily basis.

The T & QM believed that different line managers held different views about their role in staff development, which could be plotted on a continuum.

It's HRD's role \_\_\_\_\_ Fully embrace developmental role

**Figure 6.3 - Managers' Views about Developmental Role**

Whilst an ALC felt that first line managers saw development as a priority because:

I think as a manager most people know that if they get staff up to a certain standard the place actually runs very well.

Senior managers saw the developmental role of first line managers as critical as their recognition of the development needs of staff meant it more likely that the needs of service users would be met.

I think it is the most important role, it's crucial to what they do...it forces thinking on them so that they consider their staff as the lynchpin...We're here for service users. What we're actually here to do depends on staff actually understanding what they're involved in doing (BSLM2).

There was recognition that the role was becoming increasingly important as the emphasis in the organisation was shifting increasingly towards work-based learning.

There is so much that actually goes on that you are able to help people develop and learn within that sort of [workplace] setting. There is nobody better equipped to do that than the managers who are there and with the people at a point in time (BSLM2).

## **5.2 Support for line managers**

A variety of training courses were provided to support line managers in their role as developers. These included elements of the 6-day management development programme, discussed above in 5.1, such as learning and management development, managing change, managing people and personal effectiveness, which provided managers with background material on learning and staff development. Several managers commented that they had found this a useful learning experience.

Managers have also had access to coaching and mentoring training. An ALC felt the former was valuable because the course design involved being introduced to key concepts and then practising them in the workplace before coming back for a follow-up day to reflect on what had been learned, a good example of Kolb's learning cycle being put into practice. The organisation has also recently launched a 2-day Developing People course designed to enable participants to:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of learning organisations as a concept and practical ways to influence learning with the organisation.
- Create a working environment conducive to learning and development.

- Assess individual performance, plan, implement and evaluate developmental activities with supervisees.
- Identify developmental activities that complement individuals' preferred learning styles.
- Identify links between different qualifications and how they link to the national framework.

(Learning and Development Programme, May 2000-October 2000).

Three courses are provided on the organisation's supervision and appraisal policy. The first on 'Supervision Policy and Practice' is available for both supervisors and supervisees. Its objectives are that participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of IiP and be able to identify how IiP links to everyday practice in improving and maintaining the quality of supervision and appraisal relating particularly to learning and development.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the organisation's Supervision and Appraisal policy, and work within its standards.
- Develop knowledge of and ensure equality of opportunity and rights to Supervision and Appraisal are maintained.

(*ibid.*).

The second course, 'Skills for Supervisors', is designed for new supervisors or staff who wish to update their supervisory skills .

Finally, more experienced staff have the opportunity to attend 4 half-day workshops to develop their appraisal skills. These workshops focus on the actual work carried out by managers and they are required to ask permission from appraisees to use their appraisal to work through the process in training, albeit anonymously (*ibid.*).

Most, but not all, managers had attended supervision and appraisal training. Such training appeared to be more valued by managers when they were able to explore 'real-life'.

## *Developmental Managers*

It helped you to focus on what supervision is all about and what appraisal is all about. It gave you a good grounding of where to start from. I think the most valuable thing for that sort of course is you also get the chance to share with people, obviously not naming names, situations that you are in and...it's not just you but everybody has experienced it (BLM1).

Interestingly several managers identified the organisation's creative thinking course as being helpful in their role as developers. It had helped them consider ways of getting staff to look at issues from a different perspective by working through 'some of the exercises to unblock them' (BSLM2).

As part of the decentralisation of the Learning and Development function, described above, the four Area Learning Co-ordinators will provide support to line managers by:

- planning learning and development for a specific area.
- being a resource for line managers to help with and/or provide advice related to staff development problems.
- providing 1:1 support to individual staff, particularly to those staff engaged in individual supported living services who can be isolated.

(T & QM).

There had also been some experimentation with action learning sets, with mixed results. Those that had been successful generally focused on people management issues and had participants willing to challenge each other. Training staff currently facilitate these. In the long run it is hoped the sets will become self-facilitating.

Managers identified a range of experiences that had also helped them act as developers. Some identified their own professional training in nursing or social care. Others reflected on their experience of being managed themselves one described how she had thought about:

...who has helped me personally and what I want from a manager and what I want from a supervisor (BLM2).

In particular several managers identified role models who had informed their practice.

I think what has been best for me has been having a manager myself who's been good at that. Who I have felt has developed me, whose given me a chance to stretch my wings a bit and find out what I am capable of (BSLM1).

Some managers identified learning from the experience of managing staff, 'just from the hard graft of doing it' (BSLM3).

Learning from peers and from staff themselves were also recognised as enhancing skills as developers. The line manager below describes how she learnt from one of her peers.

I really respected her. I just thought she had a good handle to her work and how to do things right. She's a great communicator and I learned an awful lot from her, in a fairly informal basis. When I was promoted I could not have done the job without her either, I just felt that it was somebody that I could trust to say 'look I don't know where I'm going with this' and get advice from her (BLM4).

Some also identified the support they got from the Training Department in terms of advice as supportive, a role likely to increase given the decentralisation described above. Their own supervision was also recognised as playing a role in helping them to develop as developers.

Most managers felt they still needed further development in this role. A few expressed concern about their level of competence.

I get very stressed about it and anxious and I worry that I don't do it enough. But I don't mind having that as a responsibility. It's just I have this thing about how good am I at developing people (BLM1).

Some managers were unclear what that development should entail. Those that were clear identified a range of development needs. These included: improving their time management; improving their confidence in handling sensitive issues such as telling people 'this is a weakness and you need to develop' (BSLM1); learning more about

learning styles; reading and learning more about management, particularly people management; improving their skills in assessing development needs and being more objective in their assessment of staff – 'I have tended to delegate or give opportunities more to people I know and I'm confident in. I suppose it's about risk taking with staff' (BLM4); supporting team learning; SVQ assessment; and supervision. Several managers identified that a mentor would be a valuable source of support for their developmental roles. There was also some recognition that managers needed to increase their own professional knowledge base to enable them to pass knowledge on.

### **5.3 Barriers to developmental role**

Managers were asked to identify any factors that hindered their developmental roles. Few barriers were identified and managers made little of them. Those identified, unsurprisingly, were time, workload and resources. Although with regards to the latter there was recognition that RFS devoted more resources to development than other voluntary organisations and that resource problems could be worked round.

One manager also observed that whilst an individual employee's lack of readiness to learn may be a barrier to learning it may not necessarily be due to a lack of willingness to learn but may be due to feeling so stressed they feel unable to take time out. Yet they would probably most benefit from it.

Finally, there was some recognition that line managers are under pressure and not all cope with all aspects of the developmental role.

I think it is a role which different managers struggle with different elements of. I think all my managers are genuinely concerned to do it and see the need for it. I think it is obviously harder for them because day to day they are dealing fairly frequently with some of the major things like staff shortages which absorb a phenomenal amount of time and stress. So I think they feel pulled in a lot of different directions (BSLM3).

#### **5.4 Motivation for line managers**

To explore managers' perceptions of how they viewed their role as developers and what motivated them to undertake such roles they were asked to describe how they felt about having *some* responsibility for helping to develop their staff. RFS has no performance related pay system therefore there is no direct financial reward for performing effectively in this specific role. Assessment of rewards has therefore tended to focus on the intrinsic rewards gained from undertaking developmental roles.<sup>21</sup>

All managers interviewed saw staff development as a critical part of their job.

I really firmly believe that unless we know our staff and unless we know what their development needs are and the areas they excel and which could be utilised I really don't think we can provide a quality service...I see it as a very serious part of my job (BLM4).

Senior line managers in particular saw it as the central element of their job.

It's about developing first line managers and seeing how they're doing their current role and how they're managing their staff (BSLM4).

In some instances they related it to their personal philosophy.

All of my staff know that in terms of my philosophical approach to life I would classify myself as a humanist. I believe that it is necessary for people to grow and to move on in life otherwise they become unhealthy. It's intrinsic to the way that I work...a view of life completely...there must be a movement...there must be a development (BSLM2).

Many managers appeared to enjoy facilitating staff development and gained satisfaction from seeing their staff develop.

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<sup>21</sup> Some managers had other developmental roles e.g. contributing to training courses within and outwith the organisation, SVQ assessors and internal verifiers. However the focus here is on the developmental roles they undertook in relation to their own staff.

I like the responsibility...feel good about developing people, you feel good about seeing people get on...you do get something back out of it...sometimes people say 'thanks a lot', that's nice...It's a nice kind of feeling to know you've been there and helped them (BLM3).

One first line manager described how he had supported an individual he had identified as having potential through a return to education which resulted in promotion. He concluded that for him as a supervisor:

...it was a really powerful thing to see her go through that level when you have that gut instinct when you think people can do it...for me I get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from seeing someone develop to that level (BLM5).

A recently appointed first line manager described the pleasure she was getting from having developmental responsibility for a young and relatively inexperienced member of staff and how it was making her see things from a different perspective.

I am actually delighted to see her grow and develop. She's now saying this is the best job that she has ever had and she's really very pleased. So actually I'm very chuffed about it. I find that I am looking at different things and thinking I'll put that aside and discuss that with BSM11. So it's actually making me think about day to day things rather than just filing them or putting them to one side; I've got another dimension to think about (BLM6).

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

RFS was clearly operating within a highly dynamic environment and had to respond to changes in social policy and social care practice, and cope with ever increasing competition and increasing regulation. HRD policies and practices were not only affected by these external drivers, but also by the requirements of iIP and SVQs.

It was evident that RFS had aspirations to be a learning organisation as demonstrated both by the language used in policy documents, such as the Annual Report and Learning and Quality Strategy, and by respondents' statements. The links between the organisation's practices and learning will be explored further in Chapter 10.

The espoused culture of the organisation was values-based, underpinned by the organisation's commitment to social care models of practice and demonstrated by person-centred planning and social inclusion. This culture appeared to be shared by many employees at all levels, although concerns were expressed given the rapid growth of the organisation that such values may not be consistent across the organisation and may be threatened by the increasing requirement to behave in a businesslike manner. Staff were introduced to these values through the induction and core values courses and the values were reinforced by the behaviour of managers in the workplace.

Human Resource Development was valued by the organisation and was recognised both in policy documents and respondent interviews as ensuring that staff were able to provide appropriate support to service users. Indeed the Chief Executive made explicit reference to this link in his session on the induction course.

There was some evidence that the values of social care, such as person-centred planning, were transferred to employee development. These can be seen most clearly in the supervision and appraisal processes, the development of learning and development plans and learning portfolios. Supervision in particular provided a valuable opportunity for individuals and their supervisors to meet on a regular basis and develop a learning relationship. Within RFS supervision had four main functions – management, learning and development, support and mediation. That these processes were clearly appreciated by employees was demonstrated by interview responses and staff volunteering evidence of outcomes. The links between these processes and managerial behaviours such as standard setting, feedback, and support will be explored in Chapters 8 and 9.

All managers accepted, and many welcomed, some responsibility for supporting their employees' learning. The role was seen as critical, by key informants, senior line managers and first line managers, particularly given the increasing emphasis on work based learning and the increasing requirement for staff to undertake SVQs. There was recognition that managers were best placed to support employee development.

There was some acknowledgement of the tensions between operational and developmental responsibilities. However managers made little of the barriers that might inhibit their developmental roles. The main barriers identified were workloads and time.

Motivation for fulfilling this role included seeing people grow and develop, making their jobs easier, improving the quality of service to service users and seeing things from another perspective.

RFS provided support and tried to ensure that managers understood key principles of adult learning through a range of approaches. These included courses on management development, coaching and mentoring, developing people, supervision and appraisal. Such courses were valued, particularly if they were linked to practice. Written guidance was also provided. An aim of such provision was to encourage managers to think beyond training courses. Managers also reported that they had received individual support from the Training Department. This was likely to be increasingly accessible, given the decentralisation of the training function and the appointment of Area Learning Co-ordinators. Some managers also believed that their professional training, such as social care/work and nursing, had informed their practice as developers of people. Managers also learned how to be developers through informal means, such as reflecting on their own experiences of being managed, identifying role models, learning from peers and through experience.

Most managers recognised that they needed further development to improve their developmental practices. A few expressed concerns that they may not be undertaking this role as competently as they might. Such development needs ranged from time management to dealing with sensitive issues to adult learning. Several identified that they would welcome a mentor to support them in this role.

## **CHAPTER 7 – QUARRIERS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Quarriers is a voluntary organisation providing social care services, primarily in the West of Scotland, for children, families, young people and people with a disability. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Quarriers delivers services, such as supported living, residential and respite care, through 61 projects, some of which are multi-site.

This chapter explores organisational factors including history, organisational strategy, structure and culture, which set the context for developmental managers' activities and may influence their behaviour. In particular, the chapter focuses on Human Resource Development (HRD) exploring HRD strategy and practice, supervision and appraisal policy.

The chapter is based on analysis of: secondary documents; interviews with key informants, managers and staff; and reflection on participant observation, including visits to operational units and HQ, participation in relevant courses, and through the researcher's participation in organisational activities, some arising from her role as a member of the Council of Management.<sup>22</sup> Whilst extensive qualitative data was gathered from respondents, only a small selection of respondents' quotes are provided for illustrative purposes.

### **2. ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1 History**

Quarriers was founded in the 1870s to look after orphans from Glasgow's slums by William Quarrier, whose commitment to Christian values resulted in the creation of a Children's Village in the countryside near Glasgow. The organisation's Head Office

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<sup>22</sup>The voluntary board of non-executive directors

and some projects remain there, however the majority of services are now delivered in service users' communities.

In the 1970s following changes in social care policy Quarriers struggled to adapt, particularly in the field of childcare. By the 1980s Quarriers nearly collapsed due to lack of financial underpinning and professional credibility. However, the 1990s saw considerable improvement in the organisation's fortunes. In 1993 the organisation had 200 employees and a turnover of £5 million, by 2000 the organisation had expanded to over 900 employees and had a turnover of £16.5 million. A key factor in this growth can be attributed to Care in the Community policies shifting social services from the public sector to the voluntary sector, and the performance of a new senior management team appointed in the early 1990s to turn the organisation round.

The organisation's transformation has been recognised by two recent national quality awards, the Barclays Youth Service Award and the National Day Care Award, ongoing recognition by CCETSW<sup>23</sup> as a SVQ assessment centre and for practice teaching, and the achievement of IiP<sup>24</sup>. Quarriers is now the third largest social care charity in Scotland.

Regarding organisational life cycle one key respondent felt, using the analogy of team development, that the organisation was at the performing stage and was still moving 'upwards' (Director of Quality). Whilst another stated:

Phase 1 was the stage of constancy over 100 years. Phase 2 a turbulent time from the 60s to the 90s. Phase 3 is what we've been involved with since 1992 helping to refocus the organisation. I think we're moving to a new phase now where we're trying to embed the work that went on during that 8 years and trying to get a different depth in understanding. That's actually quite a challenging stage to be in because they are probably less tangible things that staff can see, touch, feel and get involved in - the notion of aiming higher still and continuous improvement (HR Director).

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<sup>23</sup> Now TOPSS (Training Organisation for Personal Social Services)

<sup>24</sup> Quarriers was reaccredited in November 2001

Quarriers' growth caused concerns for some respondents and the view was expressed by some that there was a need to consolidate, particularly given the increasing administrative workload for line managers.

I think they're expanding a great deal and I don't know that they don't want to start to think about consolidating...you need to strengthen the things that we're doing. I think sometimes we push ourselves too far...I feel the bureaucratic side of it is increasing. I've got much more stuff to do here...many, many brown envelopes, you're getting so much more admin to do now (ALM5).

However, growth was also recognised positively as it meant the organisation was now:

More outward looking, their umbrella has expanded and they've taken in lots and lots of areas for people who need help who didn't have it before (ASM6).

## **2.2 Environment**

Quarriers' current strategic plan (Strategic Plan, 1999-2000) recognises its complex and dynamic environment.

A major environmental driver was the impending regulation proposed by the Scottish Executive, discussed in Chapter 2, which was going to require Quarriers to get more staff qualified (Staff Development and Learning Strategy, 2000-2003).

Quarriers recognises that 'we live in an increasingly diverse society in which significant levels of poverty and social exclusion exist' (Strategic Plan 1999-2000, p.2), and thus public spending has to be targeted effectively. The current plan, however, envisaged that there would be no significant change in public expenditure on social care. It was therefore crucial that Quarriers remained competitive by providing high quality services offering value for money, and through identifying and researching best practice (ibid.). Currently 88.8% of Quarriers' income comes from grants and fee income from local authorities that purchase its services.

Quarriers recognises that the 'contract culture' has resulted in some charities becoming mainstream providers of certain care services. Whilst acknowledging that charities have always played a key role in service provision, the difference now is that some are now simply replicating services previously provided by the State. Quarriers, however, argues that whilst much of its operation will be provided through contracts with local authorities it will still sustain an agenda for independent action, utilising independent funds, to maintain public confidence in the role of the charitable and voluntary sector, and in Quarriers particularly (ibid.). Quarriers has a fundraising and PR department to promote its external profile and to raise independent funds through legacies, donations, covenants and sponsorship. The organisation has had significant success in obtaining awards from the National Charities Lottery Board, some £446,000 in 1999 for a three-year period (Annual Review,1999).

Quarriers through its development of quality assurance processes, described in more detail below in 3.1, demonstrates that it has taken cognisance of developments in best value and quality which are affecting the voluntary sector, and social care practice.

Finally, Quarriers is a participant in network bodies including SCVO, CCPS, Children in Scotland and Quality Scotland.

### **3. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS**

#### **3.1 Strategy**

Quarriers' mission is to:

Work together to overcome personal and social disadvantage, inspire optimism, create opportunity and offer choice to children, families and others in need of support (Quarriers' Strategic Plan 1999-2002, p.1)

Quarriers has identified four core values, developed in consultation with staff, that underpin its ethics and operations. These are to value:

- i. Each person's individuality and their total well being.

- ii. The development and maintenance of trustworthy relationships.
- iii. The environment and to use resources wisely.
- iv. A just and socially inclusive society.

(Building for Excellence: a guide to quality management in Quarriers, 2000).

Building on the mission and values the organisation's vision for the future is to engage in continuous improvement to ensure that Quarriers' name is 'synonymous with the highest quality social care' (Strategic Plan 1999-2002) by providing 'services that fit the changing needs of service users' (HR Director).

Quarriers has five corporate aims:

- i To deliver, develop and extend services and ensure that quality and 'best value' are central features of operations.
- ii To ensure financial viability.
- iii To develop an agenda for independent action.
- iv To be a learning organisation.
- v To raise Quarriers' profile at local, national and international level.

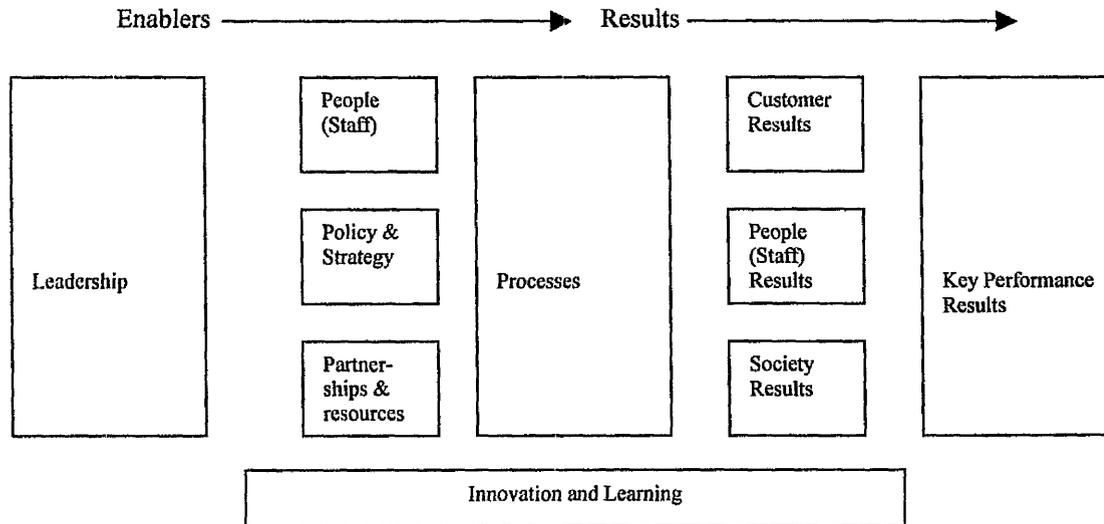
(Strategic Plan 1999-2002).

Managers across the organisation have contributed to the development of the strategic plan, with senior managers developing the strategic framework of the plan, and operational managers in conjunction with staff groups, contributing to the development plans of their own services (IiP Storyboard, 1998).

To achieve its vision and corporate aims Quarriers has developed its corporate strategy around the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), which it has called Service Excellence. The current strategic plan focuses on the enablers i.e. leadership, policy, strategy, people (staff), partnership and resources, and processes.

Given this EFQM underpinning a major element of recent strategic activity in Quarriers has been the development of quality management processes. A key driver for the quality policy was the increasing need to provide evidence of the

organisation's performance as a result of external pressures such as best value, as well as an organisational desire to provide more evidence for public relations activities. The aim of the policy is to promote and maintain service excellence throughout the organisation.



**Figure 7.1 The Service Excellence Model**

As well as benefits for 'customers' it was hoped that staff would benefit from increased job satisfaction, increased job security, learning and developing skills, clear sense of personal and project direction, effective sharing of knowledge and fewer wasted efforts. Whilst the organisation would benefit from the continued development of a learning and results orientated culture, reinforcement of corporate identity, improved teamwork, improved communication, improved business competitiveness and avoidance of quick fixes (Quality Policy, 1999).

A key stage of this quality management strategy has been the ongoing development of quality standards for all activities based on three themes: social care, employee and staff development, and administration. Each standard is developed by a small group of staff, and where appropriate service users. Quarriers has provided training in quality processes and recognises that training generally provides underpinning for quality and improvement.

A relatively new employee who initially found the organisation's policies a 'minefield' exemplified the impact of the quality initiative by arguing that since attending the quality training and reading some of the newly published standards had found this approach:

...much better, it's brilliant [said very positively], it's really motivating, it's really easy to see...it's something I'll be using more within supervision for development of my own staff (ASM19).

Whilst another employee highlighted that quality was stressed consistently.

It is instilled from the minute you start, from the minute that you go for your interview you're started to be told that and that's ongoing all the time. They demand a very high standard of care in all aspects of the job (ASM9).

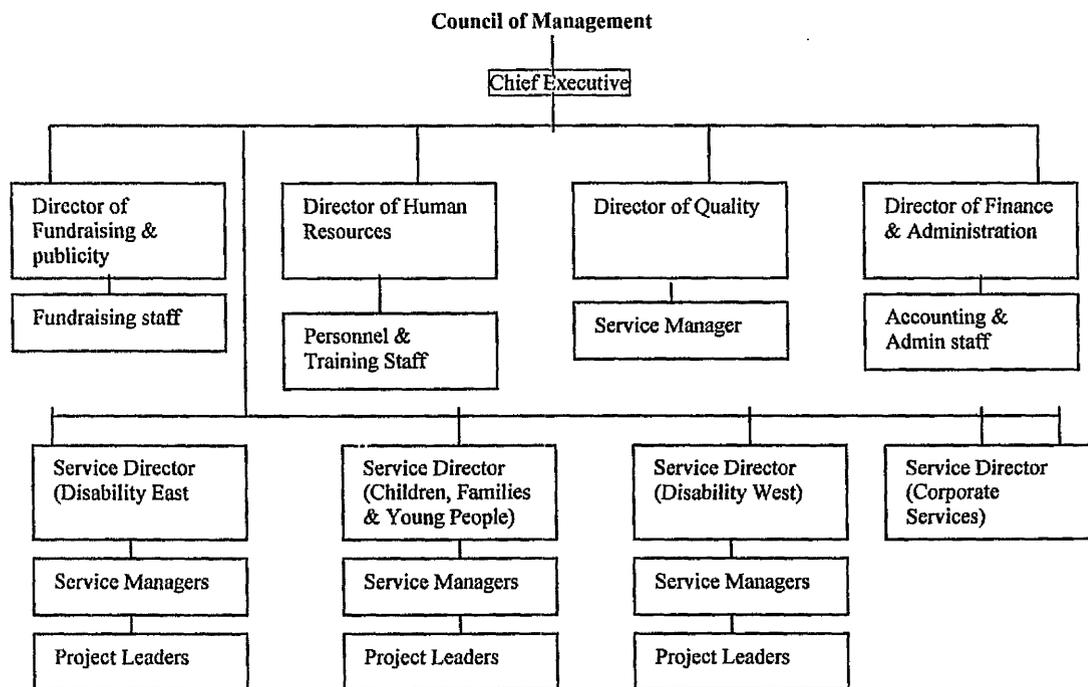
### **3.2 Structure**

The organisation has a traditional hierarchical structure with the Council of Management at the top and individual projects at the bottom (See Figure 7.2). Five support services at HQ (fundraising and publicity, human resources, quality, finance and administration, and corporate services) and three operational services (people with a disability east, people with a disability west and children, families and young people) report to the Chief Executive.

### **3.3 Culture**

Several managers commented that the organisation's long history affected its contemporary culture.

I think the organisation has got such a tradition and history that it brings with it a sense of value if you like but that brings with it a sense of feeling that there is something bigger than just what you are doing here, something much, much greater than that and if you do feel that then it's difficult not to allow that to encroach on the way you go about your work (ASLM6).



**Figure 7.2 Organisational Chart**

There was however recognition that during the turnaround period the culture had perhaps been too centralised, too top down because of the need to push through

...change which had to be implemented fairly rapidly to ensure the stability of the organisation. Then we had to stop and think and change direction and start involving people, be more inclusive and take people with us again for the health of the organisation (ASLM1).

The HR Director described the organisation's values as:

...people-focused values...The values that underpin our mission statement are values about the person-centred approach, about dealing with people in their place of need whatever that is and responding appropriately and therefore giving people a sense of hope for positive change. I would like to think that staff, who work directly with those values with service users, experience the same kind of values in their inter-relationship with staff at whatever level in the organisation.

This person-centred approach focuses on the individual service user's needs, wants, and aspirations, and recognises that the level and nature of support that people require:

## *Developmental Managers*

To live their own lives, in their own ways, will vary on an individual basis and is likely to change over time (Quarriers Services for People with a Disability, 1998).

Senior managers stressed that these values were practised and were not just rhetoric. One felt so strongly about these values that Quarriers was the only one of his employers he felt comfortable about recommending other people to work for.

Quarriers is a very values-based organisation...they are crucial, they are things that are not just a couple of lines in glossy brochures but they are things that are an integral part of every staff member...I don't think it is just my experience. There's so many people I hear saying they have the same feelings about the organisation (ASLM4).

At a more junior level a team leader felt the philosophy of the organisation,

values and focuses on the needs of the individuals, their dreams, aspirations. It gets staff to think about the dreams and aspirations of service users and tries to help them achieve as much as possible.

The physical evidence of these values could be seen in this team leader's project, and others visited by the researcher, with person centred plans and their realisation being presented graphically on walls. The team leader also acknowledged that this philosophy had been beneficial to her personally by making her more self-aware, and opening her mind to new ideas.

Grassroots employees articulated these values in more prosaic, but nevertheless equally meaningful language.

Everybody is entitled to the same opportunities and chances in life...we all have disabilities haven't we...I just think some people need a wee bit of support, maybe need more support to be in the community (ASM15).

Several respondents described how the values of the organisation applied to staff, as well as service users.

They certainly value their staff. The amount of time and certainly the emphasis that's put on to project leaders to ensure they value their staff and the skills that are there. There is

certainly a drive to make sure that people are looking at individuals...I certainly feel as if I've been given quite a lot of scope. I don't feel as if I was restricted...you're allowed to bring your own ideas and you can bring your own personality (ALM2).

It was stressed that the attention to people management ultimately enhanced the service provided to service users.

I know from my personal experience that the Project Leader and team leaders are always trying to get what is best and try to get everybody together and to do the best for every staff member so that it helps our service users who are coming in here at the end of the day (ASM9).

That staff identified with the organisation's values was recognised by the recent liP assessment which concluded that staff had a 'strong sense of identity, pride and genuine belief in Quarriers' (Summary Report from liP Assessors, 1998). This was confirmed by a team leader who stated 'I'm really quite proud to work for Quarriers' (ASM15).

From the mid-1990s Quarriers has experimented with learning organisation ideas to inform its strategic planning processes, regarding these as sympathetic to voluntary sector and social care values (Beattie and Ross, 1997). This included Quarriers' first residential event for all managers in the organisation's history in February 1996. Utilising the learning organisation characteristics' questionnaire (Pedler et al., 1991) managers were able to share their perceptions of the organisation. The characteristics rated most highly were learning climate, enabling structures, learning approach to strategy and internal exchange. The lowest characteristic was informing, reflecting the limited development of ICT at this stage in the organisation's history. Interestingly the scores for self-development revealed sharp divergences with older projects giving low scores compared to new projects, perhaps a reflection that the latter had benefited from the improved financial arrangements negotiated by the new senior management team.

The second stage was Quarriers' first staff conference, 'Learning for the Future', in May 1996. Its purpose, designed by a cross-section of staff, was to develop learning organisation approaches and attitudes. The conference was largely devoted to

participative workshops. The conference also included an exhibition that allowed projects to promote their work to their colleagues. To further foster intra-organisational communication the conference ended with a dinner and ceilidh.

Following the conference a questionnaire was issued for all staff teams to consider the effectiveness of key organisational activities and discuss the contribution made by all staff. The results of this survey were collated and discussed by managers at all levels during a second residential conference in 1997. Ten priorities relating to 'communication' issues were agreed. Managers also confirmed their willingness to maximise the involvement and participation by staff at all levels in the strategic development of the organisation (Quarriers - *The Development of a Learning Organisation*, 1997).

Following the above process a leaflet, attempting to demystify the learning organisation concept, was issued to all staff stressing the contribution all staff could make to the success of the organisation.

Through the focus on the Learning Organisation, Quarriers wants all of its staff to play a part in bringing out the very best for its service users...[by finding] out how they themselves learn best and how the other people around them learn too. If the whole organisation is learning together - then the very best can be possible - for everyone! (What is a Learning Organisation? Quarriers, 1997, p.1).

By developing the learning organisation work further through continuous development and the quality policy the HR Director hoped that:

...managers are understanding that learning is a cultural activity at the heart of service delivery, it's not separate (HR Director).

One senior line manager described how the learning organisation process had impacted positively on communication.

I felt pretty confident about the organisation being a learning organisation and I always felt that it was true that we were able to impart information back up the way to people...[whether] it was line managers or people superior to myself as well as staff at all levels... (ASLM4).

The success of this learning organisation experiment was confirmed by the organisation's recognition as an Investor in People. It should however be acknowledged that some staff struggled with the concept of the Learning Organisation (Summary of the Assessors Report, 1998).

Beattie and Ross (1997) acknowledge that, whilst the learning organisation experiment has generally been a positive experience at Quarriers, it was not without problems. The experiment did generate some feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty, particularly for some managers when staff were asked to contribute their ideas – as equals in the learning organisation. Indeed a few individuals left the organisation as they did not agree with or could not cope with the changes in organisational strategy and practice.

Beattie and Ross also concluded that the external environment and internal scale of the organisation could guide which parts of an organisation can progress. Therefore the view that an organisation can continuously transform itself homogeneously has limitations. Furthermore this view has to be tempered with the reality of operating in an organisation with limited resources and coping with short-term pressures. In Quarriers' case, as with many voluntary organisations, this involved coping with a difficult financial environment arising from local government reorganisation in 1996. One consequence was that the planned opening of a Learning Resource Centre was postponed in 1997, and will only become reality in 2002.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

##### **4.1 HRD Strategy**

Since the organisation's turnaround in 1992 it has been necessary to establish sound professional and fiscal underpinning. Staff development and training activities focused on the creation of appropriate social care and employment policies and procedures, 'an infrastructure previously missing in the organisation' (Quarriers IiP Storyboard 1998, p.3), and to develop programmes to support managers and front-line staff (*ibid.*).

An HRM function was first established in 1994 with the creation of the Human Resources Department. The department has two strands. One focuses on general HR practices i.e. employee resourcing, employee relations and HR policies. Quarriers recognises UNISON for collective bargaining purposes, and also discusses teaching staff issues associated with the EIS. The second strand focuses on staff development with a dedicated training team. The department aims to:

...maximise the contribution and potential of all Quarriers' staff as they work towards the realisation of the organisation's mission and its professional activities (IiP Storyboard 1998, p.5).

And to be seen:

...as a facilitating department where the management of people is very firmly held by the line managers (HR Director).

The HR Director is also expected to make a contribution to strategic planning activities in the organisation, thus ensuring:

...that the development of staff to achieve the objectives of Quarriers can be kept as a significant item on the organisation's strategic agenda (IiP Storyboard 1998, p.2).

HR staff are professionally qualified, holding membership of the CIPD. The department's current targets are:

- To ensure that job descriptions accurately reflect the needs of service users/projects and the role performed.
- To ensure an effective and supportive staff development programme.
- To ensure an effective and supportive staff supervision system.
- To ensure an effective staff development and review system.
- To ensure that staff selection processes meet the needs of the organisation.
- To improve the organisation's equal opportunities policy and practice.
- To improve the disciplinary and grievance policies.
- To establish an effective system of exit interviews for staff.

## *Quarriers*

- To establish an effective absence monitoring system.
- To ensure the staffing structures meet the needs of the organisation.
- To achieve and maintain IiP accreditation.
- To establish a positive health and safety operation and culture.

(Quarriers Strategic Plan 1999-2002 Implementation and Monitoring Schedule).

The co-ordinating responsibility for training is the responsibility of the Training Manager. The aims of the training plan were to:

- i. Support policy implementation.
- ii. Support the continuous improvement of service quality.
- iii. Equip managers and supervisors for their responsibilities in staff development, support, training progression and appraisal.
- iv. Address professional qualification and accreditation needs.
- v. Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own learning.
- vi. Contribute to the improvement of staff skills, knowledge and motivation.
- vii. Contribute to the development of appropriate internal career paths for staff.
- viii. Contribute to the effective use of a workforce with an acceptable level of turnover.

(Staff Development Training Plan 1998-1999).

During the latter stages of the fieldwork Quarriers was revising its HRD strategy to help it: become a learning organisation; meet the Scottish Executive's increasing requirements to have qualified staff; cope with the tight labour market; enhance quality; and build on its successful achievement of IiP recognition. (Draft Staff Development and Learning Strategy 2000-2003).

It was stressed that the HRD strategy was about having:

A total view of what development is about so it's not just about sending people on courses. It's about people's whole experience right through the organisation from recruitment right to when they finish and constantly developing staff all the way through (Training Manager).

The strategy has three aims: to develop and release the potential of staff at an individual, team and organisation level; to co-ordinate and deliver activities to support policy and strategy; and to support the effective operation of processes across Quarriers. Three principles emanating from the Service Excellence Model underpin Quarriers' HRD strategy: customer focus, process improvements and total involvement.

The HRD strategy recognises that the primary customers of Quarriers' social care provision are service users and articulates the intention to actively involve service users in staff learning processes. In addition the local authorities that purchase services are recognised as customers who can inform decisions regarding staff skills and knowledge. However, the primary customers of the HRD strategy are Quarriers' staff.

The rationale for the HRD strategy's emphasis on continuous improvement by staff is 'to ensure that the highest quality processes will lead to service improvements across the organisation', thus demonstrating an explicit link between HRD and quality.

The HRD strategy aims to involve all staff through a range of processes. Firstly, by developing an essential skills programme to provide all new employees with mandatory training to do their job. Secondly, to increase the numbers of staff with appropriate qualifications. In particular there is a need to qualify managers and front line staff, thus over the next 3 years Quarriers is prioritising Levels 3 and 4 in Care. Managers will also be given opportunities to gain appropriate management qualifications to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. Thirdly, the organisation is in the early stages of exploring the use of information technology in learning and a long-held ambition of the HR department has been the development of a Learning Centre.

The HRD strategy recognises that employees already have considerable knowledge and expertise, which could facilitate the learning of others.

There is a wealth of experience, learning and knowledge to be found throughout the organisation and we would like staff to share their skills and knowledge with colleagues. (p.3).

Staff development needs are identified at an organisational level by analysing the development plans for each project, service and department (ibid.). The HRD strategy also focuses on the development needs of teams. It is intended to facilitate team learning through the development of training materials and to create opportunities for teams to be 'twinned' and to collaborate on staff development areas. A key role for line managers is the facilitation of team learning, as well as individual learning.

Six themes have been identified as 'pillars' that support the organisation's learning activities. These are the proposed development of a competence framework, team development, standards, management development, learning for all and appropriate qualifications. It is expected that staff will contribute to the development of these themes (ibid.). Of particular relevance to this research are the emphasis on promoting a culture of learning for all, management development, the development of standards for induction, supervision and appraisal, and the intention to ensure managers are actively involved in the delivery of staff development.

The strategy concludes with 11 commitments to ensure its implementation, which include Quarriers' explicit expectations of the role(s) that line managers will play in staff development ranging from identification of development needs to facilitating learning through supervision and appraisal, these will be discussed further below.

Finally, Quarriers believes that its recent efforts in learning and development have resulted in the organisation becoming known as being:

...committed to the delivery of services to a high level of quality. This has increased the professional credibility of the agency considerably and Quarriers' managers are now approached by other organisations in relation to the possibility of marketing training courses to include non-Quarriers staff (IiP Storyboard 1998, p.35).

#### **4.2 Supervision and Appraisal**

The aim of Quarriers' supervision policy is:

To enhance individual performance in order to improve the quality of services, encourage professional and personal growth, and increase accountability between the individual and the agency (Supervision Policy 1996).

Supervision is defined by the organisation as 'the process of reflecting on your work with the help of another person in order to help you do it better' (Practice Teacher). All staff have the right to receive regular, planned and formalised one-to-one supervision.

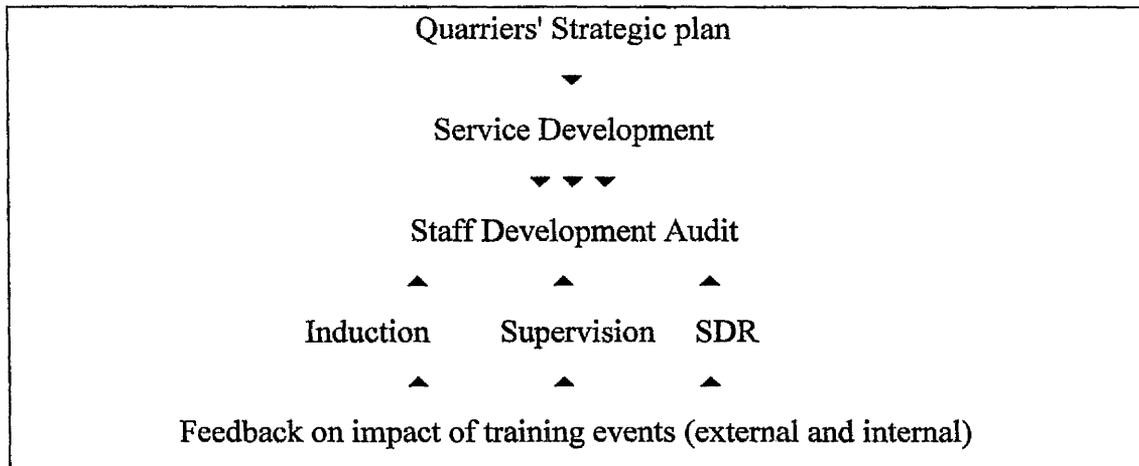
The policy has two sets of objectives, managerial and professional. Managerial aims focus on linking the individual's work to the overall goals of Quarriers by specifying tasks, providing resources and exercising authority to ensure that it is undertaken in accordance with the values, priorities and policies of the organisation. Professional aims focus on the supervisee's own skills, knowledge, values and competence to maximise their contribution. The policy emphasises the need to provide: support and affirmation for staff so they can continue to perform effectively; challenge and change through identifying areas which require new practices, attitudes, skills and knowledge; constructive feedback; consultation, facilitation and dialogue relating to professional activity, and the individual's understanding of the job.

It is stressed that supervision is most effective when its role is considered alongside other contextual inputs, including SDR<sup>25</sup>, as outlined in Figure 7.3 below. External factors influencing supervision include: social work/social care 'ethics', practices, trends and initiatives; social work/social care education and staff development programmes; legislation; and multi-disciplinary and inter-agency practices (ibid.).

Supervision guidelines require supervisors to: ensure sessions take place at agreed frequency, usually every four weeks; prepare agendas; ensure notes are agreed, signed and kept by both parties; and to ensure a quite private room is available. Supervisees' responsibilities include: adding to the supervision agenda; maintaining confidentiality; signing notes if agreed and returning them to supervisor.

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<sup>25</sup> SDR (Staff Development Review) is Quarriers' version of appraisal



**Figure 7.3 The Components of Quarriers' Staff Development Planning Process**

The recent IiP assessment, as well as this research study, confirmed that supervision was frequent and highly valued.

In my previous job I never got any supervision or reviews. I never had an opportunity to air my concerns or say anything at all about my job or about what I was doing or what I thought about anything I was doing. Since I came here it's been very in-depth...'how have you felt about this and are you clear about that?'...I think it is really, really good (ASM3).

The purposes of Quarriers' SDR system are:

- i. To ensure that the job holder has a clear understanding of their role and performance.
- ii. To review performance and to examine the causes of success, or failure (to identify 'development needs').
- iii. To maintain and improve good performance.
- iv. To help the job holder analyse his/her own strengths and weaknesses and to relate them to performance with the intention of building on the strengths and reducing the weak areas.
- v. To strengthen or consolidate the job holder's professional commitment.
- vi. To encourage openness and strengthen professional understanding between the job holder and his/her manager.

- vii. To discuss and resolve any anxiety, uncertainty or misapprehension the job holder may have concerning his/her job.
- viii. To obtain feedback on how effectively the jobholder has been managed.
- ix. To identify future objectives.
- x. To make the job holder aware of the link between present job performance and professional development.

(Staff Development Review 1997).

As SDR builds upon induction and supervision there should be few surprises. An Initial Review is conducted after the employee has been in post for 6 months, in effect a probationary period, and thereafter annually.

The SDR process encourages open discussion by the employee and his/her manager regarding the effectiveness of the individual in fulfilling their role and likewise the effectiveness of the manager in supporting individuals to fulfil that role (IIP Storyboard, 1998, p.9).

The SDR therefore involves both review of performance and forward planning in relation to future work/development objectives. These discussions are recorded and revisited regularly in supervision meetings to progress any development objectives agreed. It should be noted that a few first line managers commented that they found the SDR paperwork either onerous and/or complicated.

In conclusion the contribution of SDR and supervision to learning was effectively summarised as 'key to the individual development of staff' (Training Manager).

### **4.3 HRD Practice**

Quarriers offers a wide range of training courses covering social care, interpersonal skills and management. Such courses were valued, particularly by staff relatively new to the organisation.

The researcher attended, and participated in, the one-day induction course. After a brief introduction to Quarriers' history and a review of current developments by the Chief Executive, the central focus of the day involved analysing what the

organisation's mission statement meant in terms of practice. Participants broke down the mission statement into its component parts and discussed how they contributed to the achievement of the mission statement. The researcher found it a highly effective method of introducing or reinforcing the fundamental values of the organisation, rather than the traditional induction course which recites the terms and conditions of employment to new staff, and it was clearly valued and enjoyed by participants. Project leaders talking about how their projects addressed specific elements of the mission statement reinforced this exercise. The course ended with the HR Director leading a discussion on the way forward with employees, which emphasised learning rather than training *per se*.

Another key HRD activity, given the impending regulation of social care, is the SVQ Assessment Centre. Whilst some respondents commented on the bureaucratic processes associated with SVQs they were recognised as providing access to qualifications to staff previously denied.

The first person that I assessed it made a big difference to because she was somebody who was very good and had a lots of experience but didn't have any qualifications at all and she hadn't studied since school. So it was a big, big thing to take on...[But] she did it. She was promoted recently so it made a difference in terms of her confidence and she's now a team leader. That's one of the reasons to do SVQs is to give them confidence, it's trying to get it across to people that they do it [*the work*] anyway (ASLM3).

Whilst the organisation's progress with SVQs had initially been slow, partly due to people's difficulties in understanding what was required to achieve them, Quarriers had recently seen more rapid achievement of SVQs by reaching:

A critical point in which you get enough people through it, which actually isn't very many and then you can use their familiarity to facilitate other people (ASLM1).

In addition it was acknowledged that staff increasingly recognised the need to get qualified as 'they see an environment where you need qualifications' (Training Manager).

Employees are encouraged to record and reflect on their own learning by maintaining an Individual Learning Portfolio, although the IiP assessors found a mixed response to this process. Employees also have access to learning materials, library books, and videos at Quarriers' Head Office.

A number of staff have been supported to undertake external qualifications e.g. Certificate in Social Work Management, Diploma in Human Resource Management. Quarriers also demonstrates its commitment to the education of future social workers (and other professions) by providing student placements. TOPPS recently increased its funding for practice teachers in recognition of the quality of practice teaching provided in the organisation.

An objective assessment of Quarriers' HRD practice is provided by the recent IiP assessment. Positive elements included: induction processes; training plans flowing from the strategic plan; no 'training for training's sake' mentality; training needs reviewed against goals at individual, project and organisational level; staff understood who had responsibility for staff development and training activities; all courses had objectives; and achievement of national standards through support for SVQs and other qualifications. Areas for development included clearer links between development activities and practice of Head Office support staff, and the need to evaluate the impact of informal learning given that many of the discussions with staff demonstrated significant evidence of informal development within projects (the focus of this research). Finally, the assessors commended Quarriers for using training and development to turn the organisation round to a stage where it is regarded as a leading player in its field (Summary Report from IiP Assessors, 1998).

## **5. LINE MANAGERS AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.1 Role of line managers**

To explore the specific role of line managers as developers key informants and senior line managers were asked to describe how they viewed the developmental role of line managers. Relevant documentation was also examined.

Whilst Quarriers believes that the employee development process is a shared responsibility, between managers, front-line staff and the training department, it stresses that day-to-day of development of employees, within the context of a learning organisation culture, is the responsibility of line managers and includes:

- i. Involvement in the recruitment of new staff and initial assessment of their training and development needs.
  - ii. Induction.
  - iii. Support and supervision.
  - iv. Providing clear information and responding constructively to questions.
  - v. On-the-job instruction, coaching, counselling, training.
  - vi. Co-ordination of, participation in, and review of appropriate staff development programmes.
  - vii. Follow-up of employees regarding integration of their learning into the workplace.
  - viii. SDR.
  - ix. When required, undertaking corrective action when staff need to be made aware of poor performance.
  - x. Undertaking the role of SVQ workplace assessor or internal verifier where agreed.
  - xi. Fulfilling the role of mentor as appropriate.
  - xii. Offering positive role models to colleagues.
- (IIP Storyboard 1998).

A key informant argued that:

If an organisation is going to develop your project leaders, your service managers, your service directors have to be developers (Director of Quality)

It is these 3 groups of managers whose behaviours are explored further in Chapters 8 and 9.

The HR Director believed that the role of line manager as developer is critical in:

...setting the tone of what is expected, modelling and encouraging learning attitudes in the workplace...The role of a line manager as developer is actually very complex and multi-faceted...They've got to be both managing the performance of an individual ensuring that the outputs of that performance are correct and appropriate, and at the same time they've got to be running development objectives alongside and seeing the work as a means of developing people. I'm conscious there is quite a debate there. First and foremost people are there to provide a service, I would argue that the way they provide that service is itself a learning activity for people.

Hard evidence that managers were absorbing the above message could be seen in the dramatic increase in the number of staff achieving SVQs.

We've trebled the number of people going through Level 3 in 12 months. One impact of that must mean that workplace learning is going on at a huge rate of knots...understanding of their role, the understanding of standards and an understanding of continuous development, an awareness of that is filtering through...So I think that managers are engaging in their role as developers of people (HR Director).

Senior line managers also recognised that line managers had a critical role as developers of staff.

I increasingly think that project leaders have the key role in the organisation and will have so in the next period given the size we are now and I think it is absolutely crucial that they give priority to staff development (ASLM1).

Managers are expected, through the SDR and formal and informal supervision, to help individuals identify development activities (IiP Storyboard, 1998). In addition managers are expected to undertake pre- and post-course briefings with staff to maximise the transfer of learning to the workplace. Managers are also expected to develop training plans for their team within the context of organisational and project strategic plans. Team training often takes place off-site through 'Away Days', which all team members are expected to attend.

With regards to workplace learning managers are expected to act as coaches (Director of Quality). It was, however recognised, that whilst managers may engage in

activities such as coaching, mentoring and role modelling they may not be wholly aware of these or be able to apply such labels to these activities.

[Managers are] using elements of coaching and mentoring, which people might not formally identify as that but they are helping people through particular situations or new tasks or roles that they have got to take on. And role modelling for folk I think is very important. Again I'm not exactly sure how conscious individuals are of that. Probably the best folk do it and are conscious of it, but there are lots of folk do it and maybe aren't conscious of it (Training Manager).

There was however some recognition that not all managers in the organisation could be described as effective developers and it was suggested that they were likely to have other managerial limitations.

It's not just they're not great developers of people, they've got other weaknesses as well and how do you crack that with folk, how do you begin to get them to think differently about their role as managers? The folk that are committed, who achieve in other areas, also achieve in staff development (Training Manager).

Nevertheless the recent IiP assessment was very positive about the overall developmental performance of line managers in Quarriers.

Considering the demands of the services provided by the organisation this is an impressive undertaking. All interviewees spoke positively about their line managers and felt that they could approach these individuals at any time with any problems. Evidence was given that demonstrated managers being involved in planning individuals' development activities, discussing and setting objectives and evaluating the outcomes...All managers were seen to be involved in the day to day activities of their department and offered support as necessary (IiP Assessors Report, 1998).

As well as supporting the learning of their own staff within the workplace a number of managers undertook wider organisational training roles. These included delivering training courses within and outwith the organisation, acting as workplace assessors or internal verifiers for SVQs.

## **5.2 Support for line managers**

Several managers commented that the organisation's culture had influenced them in their role as developers of others.

I think just Quarriers generally, its commitment to learning, the Learning Organisation stuff, the SVQs and now the Quality Standards...having come from the health board...I just saw there was a totally different environment, totally different commitment to staff development right from the word go and I think that in itself gives you the drive to see that happen with other people (ALM1).

A particular aspect of the organisation's culture that was highlighted was the value and emphasis the organisation places on person-centred planning and its impact on staff development.

Putting the people we work with at the centre of our work is really important and that comes across through person-centred planning and also in terms of staff development. So I think there is always a link; you can't separate out how we work with staff from how we work with service users (Training Manager).

Several managers believed that their professional or management education experiences had helped them in undertaking their developmental roles and responsibilities.

Within Quarriers training in staff development is provided on managing induction, supervision, SDR, training for trainers (designed primarily for classroom/workshop/team training) and planning staff development. The latter two courses emphasise the need for managers/trainers to understand key principles of adult learning theory e.g. learning cycle, learning styles by 'trying to help people see that people may be approaching things in a different way because of their learning style' (Practice Teacher). In addition managers are also issued with supporting material 'that they can use within their own setting' (Director of Quality). A learning organisation publication encouraged managers to think beyond courses for staff learning and to consider approaches such as job enrichment, job swapping, job shadowing, specific one-off tasks, peer group learning, use of team meetings for

learning and self-directed reading (A Learning Organisation: Moving Forward, 1996). As well as learning from the content of such programmes managers welcomed the opportunity to meet their peers and to discuss how processes, such as supervision and SDR, work in practice in different work settings.

The Managing the Induction of Staff is a half-day course designed to help managers implement their responsibilities for induction. Learning outcomes include: ways of introducing the induction policy to staff; how to address the values underpinning good practice; a frame of reference for identifying training needs; identification of learning styles; assessment of previous learning; and preparation for the 6 month probationary review. The recently developed quality standard for staff induction also clearly outlines the responsibilities of individuals, managers and the organisation for induction of new staff, and advises managers and employees of available resources to support workplace induction e.g. the one day induction course for new staff at head office and induction workbooks.

Introductory training in supervision is provided to managers through a two-day course. This covers subjects such as what is involved in being a supervisor, explores difficulties with supervision, organisational context of supervision, drawing up an agreement, assessing personal strengths and skills, and recording. Between day one and day two the participants are required to conduct a supervision session(s). On day two they reflect on issues that have emerged during the actual supervision process. A course is also provided on supervision for experienced supervisors.

The researcher attended, and participated in, the 2-day course for managing the staff development and review process. The objectives<sup>26</sup> of the course were to enable managers to:

- Prepare themselves to be reviewers of staff.
- Plan and prepare individual members of staff for the SDR process.
- Review the performance of staff against agreed standards.
- Negotiate future development objectives for individual employees.

- Coach, develop and build the team through the SDR process.
- Give and receive feedback.
- Lead, motivate and make decisions.
- Take personal responsibility and manage the overall processes of SDR and staff development.

(SDR Course handout).

This highly participative course used group exercises to explore e.g. perceptions of appraisal, and understanding of the values underpinning SDR. The second day undertaken two months later, after the participants had been able to use this new knowledge, provided an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their experiences and to share outcomes including any problems encountered. In this second day participants also explore giving feedback, coaching and dealing with poor performance. It appeared to the researcher that participants found the course a valuable support in their roles as managers and developers of staff.

The new one-day Planning Staff Development course's objectives are to ensure that participants will have considered: what is meant by staff development, Quarriers' guidelines on auditing, planning and evaluating staff development, and the broad role of the manager as a developer (Course handout).

The HR Director, Training Manager and SVQ team also provide one-to-one specialist support to managers, and staff. Several managers commented on this support. One highlighted how the training manager had encouraged her to undertake a specific developmental role by telling her, 'you've got the skills to do that' (ASLM5). Whilst another felt she had benefited from working alongside staff in the training department.

There was acknowledgement from the training department that its very existence as a specialist function might detract from the critical development role that line managers have and that the ideal position was that training specialists should:

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<sup>26</sup> These objectives are linked to two SVQ Level 4 standards namely C10 (Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance) and C13 (Managing the Performance of teams and individuals).

...help develop and promote learning but you want as much of it as possible to be owned by the line management structure (Training Manager).

There was some evidence, although decreasing, that some managers still

...don't see themselves at the forefront of training and development and see that as a function of the training department...I think some people lack the confidence to do those things (Practice Teacher).

Overall, however, it was felt that there was a good relationship between the training function and the line because of the:

...recent traditions where the senior management, like the Directorate, led on things like the Learning Organisation, and setting up the SVQ centre. It was very much owned by everyone at that level. It wasn't just generated by the training department or HR. I think there are good indicators of that around like directors are also trainers. They've all been involved in the SVQ system, they know what they are talking about when they talk about the national standard...I think there is real ownership of training and development all the way through the organisation. People use you more appropriately rather than just saying that the training department will sort that out, or I'll ask them to run a course on it. There's a bit more understanding about using you as a resource to develop appropriate learning opportunities or advising people about things or going out to meet teams or individual managers to help them think about how their teams are developing (Training Manager).

In addition to the internal provision described above Quarriers has also supported managers in their developmental responsibilities by sponsoring a number for externally accredited awards. Twenty managers have recently undertaken the Certificate in Social Work Management as Quarriers believes that:

A manager who feels competent in carrying out the range of duties given is more likely to be aware of the needs of those in the team (iP Storyboard, 1998, p.24).

In addition managers who are involved in assessing or verifying SVQs have the opportunity to undertake D32, 33 or 34 units, thus getting formal recognition of what they are doing, and which some have achieved.

As well as the training programmes described above managers, at all levels, are supported in their role as developers through the application of the supervision and SDR process to themselves.

I think it is quite crucial that project leaders have the space to reflect themselves on what they are doing as a project leader. It is crucial that they get their own supervision (Practice Teacher).

Their own managers review their effectiveness as developers of staff and are able:

...to pick up specific issues for people, specific perhaps about knowledge, specific about their relationships, specifically about their plans (Director of Quality).

The SDR process also enables their own development needs to be identified. One manager (ASLM5), for example, described how her manager (ASLM6) encouraged her to take on developmental responsibilities during her SDR.

These organisational systems and resources - supervision, SDR, internal courses and the development of standards e.g. induction - were also recognised as providing a framework in which managers could conduct their developmental responsibilities, making some feel more comfortable with their development roles.

Supervision is a process that is naturally there where I am expected to perform in a certain way, supervisees are expected to perform in a certain way. So the systems are there to support the developmental role (ALM3).

Several managers identified their own managers as playing a crucial role in helping them as developers of others.

I have a good relationship with my line manager (ASLM5) who is obviously well experienced and has helped me at times even when you just need someone to speak to (ALM6).

Several managers admitted that they had modelled some aspects of their managerial behaviour on senior managers that they respected.

I've had 3 line managers since I came to Quarriers...they're all very different managers it's all about taking different bits and pieces, just watching how they do things (ASLM3).

Senior staff meetings are seen as a source of support for managers where they can get together in groups and share experiences and problems. Larger-scale initiatives such as the Learning Organisation experiment and preparation for IiP accreditation were also seen as means of helping managers to think about learning in the workplace.

There was also recognition that managers had informal support mechanisms through their own informal networks where individuals would phone peers and ask 'what do I do about this' (Director of Quality).

Several managers identified that their staff provided support for their developmental roles through their willingness to learn.

They need to be willing to learn and I have really good people who work in the team, they're flexible, they're open-minded and motivated (ALM6).

The IiP assessors recognised that managers were given 'support to develop in their role, and they in turn actively support the staff they manage to develop'. In particular they commended not only the time and effort devoted to developing managers but in the time given to manage. It was concluded that a culture of support and progression had been cultivated at all levels (Summary of IiP Assessors Report, 1998).

Finally, all managers recognised that they required further development for their development roles, although some were unclear what format such development would take. Specific development needs identified were the need to acquire management qualifications and D units, practice teaching, SDR and advanced supervision training.

A development need articulated by one manager was her desire to have a greater understanding of motivation theory.

I still feel they're [*courses*] not giving me the answer to do with how to motivate people. It's very much a case of what the person wants and I just can't find the button...the bit that I need help with is if people don't perform how do you deal with that. If they've been trained,

maybe been given instructions, maybe you've changed their job description so it's no lack of knowledge or understanding but you can't get them motivated enough...you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink...but I'm not giving up yet [*laughter*] (ASLM2).

One manager, who had recently completed the Certificate in Social Work Management, summed up the commonly held belief that continuous learning was expected by the organisation.

I don't believe that my training is over. There's no way that Quarriers themselves would allow that; you constantly have to develop (ALM2).

### **5.3 Barriers to development role**

There was some recognition by key informants and senior line managers that managers were expected to undertake developmental roles alongside a raft of other responsibilities.

I think one of the tensions...one of the struggles that line managers have in their developmental role are the other pressures that are around, so sometimes they are overwhelmed by just reacting to the situations, I think what sometimes happens is that instead of seeing it as an opportunity for development there is almost not the time and they're rushing on to the next thing or you're rushing to answer the phone or the time for reflection is actually quite difficult to build in (Director of Quality).

Limited financial and staffing resources were also recognised as constraints.

Some of our services aren't as well resourced as they should be. I think we have often struggled just with the process of resourcing learning (ASLM1).

Several managers felt that the organisation's increasing bureaucracy, including HRD systems, could also act as a barrier to workplace learning.

You've got pressure coming from HRD...you've got development reviews to do, you've got this to do and you've got that to do...and it's very, very hard to feel that you're being a developer and that sometimes it feels just like a paper exercise (ALM5).

Further barriers include time, diary organisation, physical distance between staff and senior managers, and limited private accommodation for supervision sessions.

In a few projects there were specific difficulties such as temporary crises with service users which limited the opportunity for staff to access development activities, particularly off-the-job.

#### **5.4 Motivation for line managers**

To explore what motivated managers to develop staff they were asked how they felt about having *some* responsibility for developing their staff.

All managers acknowledged that employee development was a central part of their role as a manager.

I would say that is an essential part of all managers' jobs be it service director, service manager or project leader...I just see that as an essential part of the job (ASLM5).

Most managers appeared to welcome the responsibility.

I love it. I'd love to be a teacher...I like enabling people. That's the social work side...I like helping people to learn...and the buzz they get at the end of having done that and knowing they did it successfully (ALM5).

This latter line manager was known to put her staff's learning ahead of her own, for example covering their shifts to enable them to attend training courses at HQ. She also relished showing her staff that she learned from them too.

I really only feel I've achieved something when I see somebody improving their practice or feeling that I've helped them to recognise that they've improved my practice I love that. I love it when they show me and they realise they're having to teach me – 'you're the expert I haven't a clue' (ALM5).

One senior line manager identified two important reasons for taking some responsibility for development.

One to ensure that you're developing people's skills to the extent that they can undertake the role and second to ensure that you're getting that degree of motivation and career development to avoid staleness (ASLM6).

Another crucial reason for accepting developmental responsibilities was that it enabled managers to ensure that standards of performance in the workplace were appropriate.

It is important for me that the reputation of the organisation is good and that's not just what I do but obviously is also what the people that I am responsible for do as well. So it's important that I'm developing people (ASLM5).

Whilst managers recognised they had an important role to play in staff development they were also aware that individual members of staff also had to be willing to learn.

I think I have got the responsibility of trying to give them opportunities to do that [*learn*] but for actual learning they need to take that on board themselves and want to do it (ALM5).

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

The preceding discussion of environmental and organisational influences - strategy and culture, and HRD strategy and practice - demonstrates that they provide a range of drivers for developing and reinforcing the role of line managers as developers in Quarriers.

Motivated by the painful experiences of the 1970s and the 1980s, and to cope with its dynamic environment Quarriers is engaging in organisational learning and experimenting with learning organisation ideas. This is demonstrated by documents including the Strategic Plan using the language of organisational learning and the learning organisation. The HRD strategy also recognises that much of the organisation's knowledge is embedded in employees and encourages the sharing of this tacit knowledge. The use of processes such as staff conferences and working parties demonstrate an element of participative policy making. That learning organisation language had penetrated into everyday use could be seen by employees talking about the learning organisation to the researcher and by the general use of

'learning' rather than 'training'. Such commitment to learning organisation ideals and practices heightens the role of line managers as developers. Indeed learning organisation processes and publications stressed the role of line managers as facilitators of learning in the workplace. There has however been some recognition of the challenges faced in attempting to turn learning organisation ideals into reality at Quarriers. The influence of this learning organisation experiment is discussed further in Chapter 10.

Clear linkages between organisational strategy and operations with learning can be seen in a range of activities. The interaction between professional values and practices are demonstrated in the strategic plan, for example, by the explicit link between the needs of service users and staff. This link is also evident in the mirroring of the PCP process in the SDR process for staff. Clear links between learning and quality processes were also demonstrated by both HRD and quality documents stressing their interdependence. Respondents also stressed the relationship between quality and learning. Managers and employees welcomed the ongoing development of quality standards as they helped people to understand the tasks they were expected to undertake.

Line managers were recognised by key informants as having a crucial role to play in the organisation's future development and success, one senior line manager argued that they had 'the key role'. The role of line managers as developers is explicitly outlined by Quarriers and includes activities such as induction, supervision and appraisal, and supporting workplace learning. Line managers also contributed to formal learning activities such as central training courses.

Quarriers' HRD strategy, supervision and appraisal policies, and quality standards were recognised as providing, a welcome, framework for managers to carry out their development roles and responsibilities. Such a framework provided clear guidance for managers regarding their developmental responsibilities. The linkages between organisational policies and practices and developmental behaviours will be explored further in Chapter 11.

Further support for line managers in their developmental responsibilities emerged from a range of sources. Several identified that the organisation's culture, in particular its long history and its emphasis on person-centred planning, had influenced them in their positive commitment to developing others. Extensive training and support material was available covering a range of staff development responsibilities ranging from induction to SDR. These were increasingly incorporating information on adult learning theory and alternatives to training courses. One-to-one support was also available to managers from specialist training staff, and their own managers. The former were keen to be seen as working in partnership with line managers, rather than taking the central role in employee development. Whilst the latter were identified as developmental role models. Managers also had the opportunity to acquire externally accredited qualifications such as the Certificate in Social Work Management and D Units. Finally, it should be noted that this package of support was commended in Quarriers' recent IiP assessment.

Notwithstanding this support managers recognised that they still required continuing development for their developmental responsibilities. Whilst some were unclear about the specifics of those needs others identified the need to acquire qualifications, improve their understanding of organisational development process and improve their understanding of motivation theory.

All managers interviewed clearly accepted that they had some responsibility for employee development, most appeared to welcome it and many clearly gained major satisfaction from helping others learn. A further motivator was their belief that by directly supporting the development of staff they could maintain or improve the standards of performance in their areas of responsibility, and for the organisation as a whole.

There was some recognition that a range of barriers could impact on managers' abilities to carry out development activities effectively. These included the tension between operational and developmental responsibilities, pressure of work which could result in managers behaving reactively, lack of time, limited staffing and logistical problems. A few expressed concern that the organisation's increasing bureaucracy inhibited their capacity to develop staff.

The following 2 chapters will discuss the behaviours demonstrated by managers, in both RFS and Quarriers, that facilitate or inhibit workplace learning.

## **CHAPTER 8 - FACILITATIVE BEHAVIOURS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the behaviours that managers used to facilitate learning in the workplace. Respondents were asked to identify critical incidents where their manager had facilitated their learning. They were asked to describe: the situation; what their manager did and said; how they felt about what had happened and what was the outcome. Managers were also asked to identify such critical incidents. Prior to discussing the behaviours that were demonstrated the managers' biographical and occupational backgrounds will be described.

These findings have been presented in an integrated manner as this study was not primarily concerned with comparing the two organisations, and indeed there were no significant variations in the behaviours demonstrated by the managers in the two organisations following analysis of the themes emerging from interview data.

### **2. THE MANAGERS**

First line managers are those managers who have line management responsibilities for junior staff. Senior line managers are managers who have line management responsibilities for managers. In Quarriers two groups of senior line managers have been identified, service directors and service managers. The former have line management responsibility for the latter but also in some instances directly manage project leaders. Service Managers in Quarriers are the equivalent of Area Managers in RFS. Project Leaders in Quarriers are the equivalent of Service Managers in RFS.

The key duties and specific developmental responsibilities<sup>27</sup>, age ranges, length of service ranges and gender of managerial respondents are outlined in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 below.

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<sup>27</sup> These have been identified through analysis of managers' job descriptions.

The managers possessed a wide range of qualifications<sup>28</sup>. Six out of 22 managers were graduates. All but one of the 19 social care managers had professional qualifications, either the CQSW or a registered nursing qualification. The other social care manager had a SVQ3 Social Care. Two administrative managers had appropriate administrative qualifications. The third was unqualified, however had recently returned to study. Four managers had obtained SVQ D units. Three managers had obtained management qualifications. At the time of fieldwork four managers were undergoing management qualifications, such as the Certificate in Social Work Management (CSWM) or HND Management, whilst three others hoped to shortly start management qualifications, such as the MBA, CSWM or SVQ4 in Social Care and Management.

RFS	Key Duties	Developmental Responsibilities	Age Range	Length of Service Range	Gender
Area Managers (BSLM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide overall strategic &amp; operational management of services within an area</li> <li>Continually evolve services to ensure that they continue to meet the changing needs &amp; wishes of service users</li> <li>Manage &amp; provide supervision to staff within the area</li> <li>To act as the RFS representative within the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To recruit, appoint and induct Service Managers</li> <li>To provide effective management to staff</li> <li>To implement RFS policies &amp; procedures to ensure effective management, support and supervision of all staff</li> <li>To contribute to learning and development activities</li> <li>To engage in their own personal and professional development to keep up-to-date</li> </ul>	34-45	3-8 years	M = 3 F = 1
Service Managers (BLM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To manage all aspects of the Project's operation</li> <li>To provide regular support and supervision to Project staff</li> <li>To maintain effective financial management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be responsible for leading, managing &amp; working alongside the staff team &amp; ensuring staff receive effective support &amp; encouragement at all times</li> <li>Co-operate with the T &amp; QM to define and deliver training appropriate to organisational needs</li> </ul>	31-49	15mths – 7 years	M = 2 F = 4

**Table 8.1 RFS Managerial Responsibilities and Biodata**

The junior staff who were managed mainly by first line managers possessed a range of qualifications including degrees, professional nursing and social care qualifications, HNCs, NNEB, and SVQs, including D units. Several of the qualified staff were currently undertaking further qualifications such as D units, SVQ3 Social

<sup>28</sup> Some managers possessed more than one qualification.

## Developmental Managers

Care and OU degrees. Nine of the staff had no post-school qualifications, although two of these were undertaking an HNC or a SVQ3.

Quarriers	Key duties	Developmental Responsibilities	Age range	Length of service range	Gender
Service Directors (ASLM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To contribute to the corporate development and management of the organisation</li> <li>• Line manage relevant staff</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Ensure legislation, operational standards, policies and procedures are adhered to</li> <li>• Liaison within and outwith the organisation</li> <li>• To establish effective internal and external communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To appoint, supervise, appraise and if necessary discipline or dismiss staff</li> <li>• To keep well informed about service, professional and legislative development</li> </ul>	35-52	8 years	M = 2
Service Managers (ASLM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To lead &amp; develop a portfolio of services which will conform to the highest standards</li> <li>• Line management responsibility for a range of projects &amp; services</li> <li>• Development of positive practices</li> <li>• Contributing to the sector's overall development</li> <li>• Representing the best interests of the agency externally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To appoint, supervise, appraise, and if necessary discipline or dismiss, all directly accountable staff</li> </ul>	33-42	4-6 years	M = 1 F = 3
Project Leaders (ALM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To manage and develop the project to ensure the highest standards of service are achieved for each service user</li> <li>• To be involved in the assessment, selection &amp; preparation of service users for admission &amp; discharge</li> <li>• To ensure effective communication at all levels</li> <li>• To ensure the equitable &amp; appropriate distribution/delegation of duties among staff</li> <li>• To prepare reports &amp; maintain records as required</li> <li>• To ensure requirements of HASAW are implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be responsible for the support, guidance and supervision of staff</li> <li>• To promote the professional development of staff in consultation with the Training Officer</li> <li>• To assess staff development needs at least annually</li> <li>• To assist in the provision of 'in-house' training and to encourage the use of appropriate 'in-service' &amp; external training</li> </ul>	35-51	2-20 years	M = 1 F = 5

**Table 8.2 Quarriers Managerial Responsibilities and Biodata**

The recruitment practices of the two organisations varied slightly. In RFS, although open adverts were used, the recruitment of service managers was predominantly internal as they are recruited from team leaders, the grade below. In Quarriers the

recruitment of project leaders tended to be more evenly split between internal and external appointments. A problem for team leaders was that although they may have considerable experience they also need to be professionally qualified to make the transition to project leader. In RFS the more senior levels of managers from Area Manager upwards tend to be recruited externally, although there were examples of individuals working their way up from support worker to Area Manager. In Quarriers the next level of manager (Service Managers) tend to be recruited internally, with a minority recruited externally. Internal recruitment at Service Director level is rare but there is a feeling that the organisation needs to engage in more management development activities with its Service Managers to enable them to make the jump into these more strategic management positions.

### **3. THE FACILITATIVE BEHAVIOURS**

Prior to individual critical incidents being explored respondents were asked how supportive their line manager was. All managers were described as being supportive with responses including 'very supportive', 'supportive', 'quite supportive' and 'helpful'. Analysis of critical incidents revealed nine categories of facilitative behaviours: caring; informing; being professional; advising; assessing; thinking; empowering; developing developers; and challenging (see Table 8.3). Illustrative examples of these behaviours are presented and discussed below. A number of incidents are presented from the perspective of more than one respondent. Such corroboration enhances the reliability of these findings. An example of all incidents demonstrating a behaviour can be found in Appendix 8.

#### **3.1 Caring**

Critical incidents demonstrated that all managers cared about the development of their staff. The following inter-related behaviours were identified: support; encouragement; approachability; reassurance; commitment and involvement; and empathy.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Behaviours</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Caring</b>	Supporting Encouraging  Being approachable Reassuring Being committed/involved Empathising	To give aid or courage to Inspiring or instilling confidence Easy to approach To relieve anxiety Gives time Showing understanding of another's situation
<b>Informing</b>	Sharing knowledge	Transmission of information
<b>Being professional</b>	Role Modelling  Standard-setting  Planning & preparing	Behaving in a manner that people respect & wish to emulate Outlining or encouraging an acceptable level of performance or quality Organising and structuring learning
<b>Advising</b>	Instructing  Coaching Guiding Counselling	Directing an individual in a specific task Discussion & guided activity Providing advice Helping others take control of their own behaviour and solve problems
<b>Assessing</b>	Providing feedback and recognition  Identifying development needs	Letting someone know how they are performing and acknowledging their achievements Assessing what is required to enhance current performance or career development
<b>Thinking</b>	Reflective or Prospective Thinking  Clarifying	Process of taking time to consider what has happened in the past or may happen in the future Process of making something clearer or easier to understand
<b>Empowering</b>	Delegating  Trusting	To give duties, responsibilities to another Having confidence in someone
<b>Developing developers</b>	Developing developers	Stimulating the acquisition of skills & knowledge by employees to develop others
<b>Challenging</b>	Challenging	Stimulating people to stretch themselves

**Table 8.3 – Facilitative Behaviours**

3.1 Supporting

Critical incidents demonstrated managers providing support across a range of situations. The application and outcomes of such support are summarised in Table 8.4 below. More detailed discussion of some of these situations is provided below.

Behaviour	Applications	Outcomes
Supporting	Service user problems Work practices Accessing training and qualifications Role adjustment Service user bereavement Personal problems	Confidence Motivation Job satisfaction Coping

**Table 8.4 – Summary of Support**

One senior line manager described how she had supported an inexperienced line manager (ALM3) deal with a service user complaint about a member of staff by,

...going back and conducting interviews and taking notes, helping him to think of questions and supporting both the staff member and the service user...Then the ongoing support after that because something like that has a big effect on everybody concerned and I'd do that just by popping in and out regularly...sometimes it is just basically popping in for a cup of tea; it's a very informal 'how's things?' and with ALM3's supervision asking him 'how are things going?' And acting quickly if ALM3 phoned me and making sure I got back to him quickly...and I did visit regularly to make sure that ALM3 felt comfortable in dealing with it (ASLM 3).

Several staff described how their managers had supported them during a period of adjustment to new job roles. One described how his line manager helped him cope with a changed role.

The working relationship that we have is very positive in terms of BLM5 supporting me...Certainly on a personal support level I've needed a lot of that recently and I've found that I've had it when I've needed it (BSM10).

Several staff described how their managers had supported them in their quest for work-based qualifications e.g. SVQs. One described how she had felt good because her manager (ALM5) had provided support when undertaking her SVQ

...because I had somebody supporting me...I wasn't frightened if I made a mistake...it wasn't like being back at school...I think there is probably a confidence in her that I knew she would make it OK (ASM15).

There were examples of managers providing support that went beyond the routine examples of support described above. A particularly harrowing example of providing support was helping staff to cope with service user bereavement. One manager described such support:

...as a kind of emotional support...I was here for the person on the day and the day after I spoke to him. I then followed up a week later...and I made sure that the person supervising him discussed it at supervision again just in case there were any other issues around (BLM1).

Another example involved a line manager (ALM2) supporting an individual during a period of significant personal problems, including absence, and then providing a re-induction programme to enable her to return to work and quickly regain her confidence.

The support throughout this I thought was tremendous because it shows how much you are valued. I was able to get myself back together (ASM5).

Not only did the individual regain her confidence and find that her job satisfaction increased; the organisation was also able to retain an experienced and valued member of staff. The manager's behaviour was noted by her senior manager (ASLM1), and also appreciated by other team members who felt it showed that the organisation cared about its staff.

### *3.2 Encouraging*

Encouraging behaviours motivated staff and gave them confidence to pursue goals, such as returning to education, going for promotion or trying to develop new work practices.

A senior line manager (ASLM5) was described by a team leader as motivational because:

...when I've been with her I've always felt really valued...fit for going on because sometimes you're tired and you're stressed and...you walk out of her office and you're shoulders back and walking on air and you're just thinking 'I'm back to work tomorrow and I'll sort all this out'. You're re-energised [*said with great enthusiasm*] (ASM19).

Managers and staff provided examples of the former encouraging employees to undertake qualifications, often involving staff returning to study after a significant break from education. An example provided by a line manager describes how she encouraged two mature employees to undertake an HNC, although 'they'd been away from school for years...and they really felt alienated from the whole learning process' (ALM5). She explained to them what would happen in the classroom setting and stressed that their work and life experience would enhance the learning process. Both subsequently completed their HNC. The line manager summed up what she had done as:

You're just trying to point them, trying to get them to get a taste for things. Sometimes when people start the learning process they get really bitten and they want to get on with it (ALM5).

A staff member described how her manager (BLM2) had encouraged her to consider other approaches when she felt she was making no progress with a service user.

I suppose the language that she uses with you, her tone, how she is sitting, the questions she is asking – she's very encouraging. It's not the heavy hand of your line manager coming down...She looks very comfortable and very at ease, which makes me feel at ease. So I think right I'm here to get help...This is about how we can move forward. She is also careful in the words she uses, there's no what I call negative words. There's no 'you're doing this wrong'. It's 'what about this? Why don't we try this way? How would you feel about that?' So it's very much about me and how I feel (BSM3).

### *3.3 Being approachable*

First line managers appeared to be regarded as more approachable than senior line managers. This may be due to first line managers being generally in closer geographical proximity to their staff.

Staff valued being able to approach their managers, particularly if they wanted to ask about something they were unsure of. Two examples of approachability are presented below.

The first demonstrates approachability in physical terms with the manager described as being accessible.

Just being there, being approachable, being able to talk to her. If there's anything I want to know I know I can come and discuss it with her and she'll bring me back an answer (ASM17).

The second demonstrates approachability in psychological terms with staff indicating that they could raise any issue with their manager and be comfortable that there would be no negative consequence.

ALM5 is the kind of person you can say anything to her and she's not going to take offence at what you're going to say...there's not a fear (ASM15).

### *3.4 Reassuring*

Managers providing reassurance to staff relieved anxiety or gave confidence to staff particularly in difficult or challenging circumstances. There were two levels of reassurance provided. The first involved reassuring staff who felt uncertain for a number of reasons such as facing unexpected situations, through loss of confidence or inexperience. The second involved providing reassurance to staff who were seeking confirmation from their manager that they had acted correctly.

A first line manager reported that she had been upset by some unexpected issues emerging from a disciplinary situation but had found her senior line manager

(ASLM5) 'a tower of strength', who had helped by putting 'it into perspective', and by providing 'reassurance' (ALM6).

An individual, who suffered a major crisis of confidence, after working with a negative manager, described how her current manager rebuilt her confidence.

I think by the time that manager left I felt I'm useless, I'm hopeless because I had been constantly told that and that everything was my fault. ALM5 took time out and even in her own time and my time to reassure me (ASM15).

This example also demonstrates the debilitating effect that poor managers can have on individuals.

Some staff adjusting to new roles, would use their manager to check out what they were doing was right.

It's coming to ALM6 and saying 'this is what is happening, this is what I've done and is it OK?' 'Or this is what I think I need to do is that OK?' (ASM19).

A new support worker reported that she had been concerned about going on a training course, given that her relative inexperience.

BLM1 really does boost your confidence as well and I asked 'do you really think I'm up for it?' She said 'yes you'll be fine, just go and do the course'. She has confidence in you which makes you feel good about yourself (BSM2).

This line manager subsequently helped the individual transfer the learning from the course into her everyday work practice, thus reinforcing the learning gained.

### *3.5 Being committed and involved*

Within this category managers appeared to go beyond what was expected of them, particularly with the amount of time that they were prepared to devote to support employee learning.

There were several examples of managers helping staff with studies in their own time.

I really felt I had a commitment to ASM15 to get her through it so it didn't really bother me that we were doing it [HNC] in our own time...we did most of the stuff in my place, sitting in cafes, up at the library...we'd do things like she would come in an hour early...and I would stay an hour late across sleepovers (ALM5).

This behaviour was confirmed by ASM15 in her interview.

A senior line manager observed a first line manager demonstrating involvement by his approach to helping an individual starting a SVQ.

He [ALM3] was involved in the SVQ course. He and the candidate came up and did the course. He provided back up to the candidate and spent some time discussing options with one of the SVQ staff and reading things in the library. So I thought that was a really good example of practice. It showed the candidate a) that he's interested and b) he was involved right from the beginning with a candidate that he is going to assess (ASLM3).

There were also several examples where employees commented on how much time managers gave them in supervision.

He's [BSLM2] very, very committed ...he was very passionate about what he did and he would spend five hours with you doing supervision, which some people found terrible and really stress-invoking but after a while you began to realise he's spending that time for you. He's not there for himself, he's there to help you and he did (BLM3).

The manager who described the above behaviour was in turn described by a member of his staff as being very committed to her development when she was undertaking a new task for the first time.

He's taken quite a lot of time out to do that [*provide feedback*]...as well as it being a priority for the project and the organisation I can see that he also thinks along the lines of my development...that makes me feel valued...and... inspires enthusiasm (BSM4).

### **3.6 Empathising**

Whilst managers were found to be generally caring a few were highlighted as taking that support to a deeper level by behaving empathetically towards staff in dealing with both work and personal issues.

One manager empathised with an employee dealing with a distressing situation because she had had a similar experience that enabled her to say,

‘Look I know how I felt and this is the way I felt. I felt what could I have done? What should I have done? Why didn’t I do? And I asked myself a lot of questions, of what ifs?’ And I put that to the person and then he was like ‘I do think that and I do wonder what should I have done?’ (BLM1).

Another individual was impressed by how her line manager (BLM4) helped her adjust to a change of career by ‘trying to understand how you feel personally’ (BSM6).

Whilst a third manager (ALM2) was described as being ‘understanding’ with staff trying to balance work and life responsibilities, even though she had no family responsibilities herself.

### **3.2 Informing**

The importance of this behaviour was summed up by an employee who described her manager (BLM5) as a ‘pool of information’ (BSM9). The developmental interactions in this category provided examples of managers sharing knowledge and ideas with their staff.

Several managers stressed that they enjoyed sharing their knowledge, in areas where they felt confident, to develop others.

I think because I have substantial experience with this client group I feel confident in sharing that experience and knowledge (ALM1).

However, there was recognition that managers needed to feel safe to behave in this way. A first line manager compared two managers that she had worked for. Their approaches had led to different learning outcomes for her.

I felt I developed a lot more with BSLM1 than I had with my previous line manager because I felt the previous manager felt a wee bit threatened by me. BSLM1 didn't at all [feel threatened] and he was happy to impart information and knowledge and happy to have someone learning from him without thinking there was maybe a threat attached (BLM4).

Whilst this research is primarily about the role of managers developing individual employees there were instances of managers taking more formal developmental roles to impart their knowledge to wider groups of staff and others. Managers in both organisations contributed to training courses offered by their central training function and/or for external organisations. One such manager had welcomed this opportunity to share his experiential learning with junior staff.

I enjoyed it...I was more focused on the stuff I am familiar with, the operational side of it, more dealing with the 'real' part of the work as opposed to the more academic and theoretical side of the work...stuff that I still believe quite strongly in (BLM5).

He was also able to adopt an 'evangelical' developmental role by taking such training to a sister charity, without mental health expertise, to help overcome the stigma associated with mental health problems.

A relatively inexperienced member of staff who had just started an HNC described how her line manager (ALM2) had provided knowledge that met both educational and work-based learning needs when she had to write an essay about how people were referred to the project.

She explained that the child and their parents come here to visit first. Then she goes to see the child at school to get a background report about them at school because they can be quite different at school from how they are at home, which I wasn't really aware of and I felt quite ignorant that I didn't. So the fact that we went over it gave me greater insight (ASM10).

Finally, a relatively new first line manager who had faced some difficulties in taking over a project, with a problematic history, felt that her manager (BSLM4) had assisted in her understanding what was happening at a stressful time for her,

...because they are very open about the organisation's history and the project...It's helped me put things into context, to separate things out – what's me and what's the organisation (BLM2).

### **3.3 Being Professional**

Managers within this category were seen as competent, 'being on the ball', 'professional' and 'knowing their stuff'. Three behaviours were identified within this category: role modelling; standard setting; and planning and preparing for developmental interactions.

#### *3.1 Role Modelling*

This behaviour was identified predominantly by staff.

If you think somebody is a good manager then you try to model yourself on how would they maybe handle this (BSM5)?

It would be useful in further research to explore whether developmental managers explicitly set out to act as role models, where employees would respect their behaviour and attempt to emulate some of their practice. However, several critical incidents demonstrated that a few managers consciously acted as role models.

The first critical incident demonstrates a senior manager's awareness of the need for positive role models. He had been concerned about how a line manager handled complaints and deliberately dealt with the next one himself with her observing as,

She has not always had the best role modelling from managers with whom she has worked with in the past. So I think there's an aspect of her unlearning before she can learn...So in a particular instance I was able to take ALM2 with me in dealing with a complaint...we both met with social workers, carers and I was able to help her see that by being completely open

in dealing with it...that we could learn from them. I think that was a real watershed for ALM2 in that aspect of her work (ASLM1).

He reported that she now dealt with complaints more constructively.

A manager described how he modelled his senior manager (ASLM6) to improve his communication skills.

ASLM6 is quite thorough, he's 'this, this, this'. So I try and model that aspect because I find that effective for me. So if ASLM6 and I are doing supervision and ASLM6 is saying 'could you do this, can you ring whoever...make sure they know a, b, c...'. Those types of things I try and remember when I've been with people...So I think that's something I learned from ASLM6...being very thorough about what I've been saying (ASLM4).

He in turn recognised his own potential to be a role model as:

Who I am is also modelled by the people who I work alongside (ASLM4).

As discussed above most examples of role modelling came from critical incidents provided by staff. These examples tended to focus on three issues: learning how to manage by watching respected managers; learning how to supervise by observing their manager's behaviour towards them in supervision sessions; and learning how to take a different approach to work activities.

An example of learning about management is provided by a team leader describing how she learned from watching the practice of a senior line manager, whom she respected, handling meetings with other agencies. Her description also demonstrates the manager enhancing the learning provided by observation through discussion prior to and after an event.

I see lots of things with ASLM5...it's all work practice...but just seeing how she is in these kinds of meetings, you think you'll never be like that – God how does she do that? How can she behave like that? [*whispered*]...and thinking you'll never be like that [*laughter*] but she's two rungs above you and she's got all the experience in the world at doing those things but she's awful good at them and I just love the way she does it. She's got a very supportive style, she talks to you all the time. So before you go to a meeting she'll tell you what's she hoping

to achieve from it or she'll say 'what are you hoping to achieve from it?'...It's watching her be strong, watching her be flexible, watching her be all of those things all in the one meeting...It's about realising that nothing is ever straightforward and she always shows you that. So just watching her in action is great and I always ask her afterwards 'how do you do that?' (ASM19).

In this next example the employee describes himself as someone who learns by observing others, and in this incident in particular learning about supervision, a role new to him, by observing his supervisor's style in supervision sessions.

It is very professional...It leaves an awful lot of room for thought during the actual process and also it's good because there is a sense of I'm providing supervision and you're the supervisee...It's been a really worthwhile and helpful learning experience for me actually being part of that process...It's just something that I felt I could do with a bit of learning on and...once I had seen it done I thought what was so difficult in the first place (BSM1)?

A senior manager felt that one of his line managers acted as an appropriate role model for his staff.

BLM5 is very good at modelling. BLM5 does a lot of direct work with service users so staff see him working with service users, related professionals and carers. I think he's a good role model (BSLM3).

A member of his team, who felt that by working with him he was learning to be more flexible regarding supporting service users and involving staff in difficult decisions, confirmed him as a role model. He described how the line manager had convinced the staff to support a service user who based on policy would normally have been transferred to another setting. He felt this also demonstrated the line manager's 'professional' commitment to the service user.

I think that has been a valuable thing to learn. It's a difficult thing to learn because once you've come out of the restrictions of a policy you're on your own and you really have to justify what you're saying. I don't know that I would have bothered to take that risk in the past. But now I think I would be more inclined to do that...It's not a standard or a particular way of filling in a form or completing a unit. It's different from that. It's more looking at your overall ethics and management (BSM10).

Whilst the research has provided clear evidence of staff valuing managers as role models they did not view their managers uncritically nor did they emulate everything their managers did. Several staff commented that they were selective in what behaviours they copied – ‘the good bits definitely’ (BSM1) - and didn’t necessarily agree with everything their manager did or said. One recently appointed senior manager commented that she regarded a number of experienced senior line managers as role models but that:

They are all very different managers. It’s all about taking different bits and pieces, just watching how they do things (ASLM3).

### *3.2 Standard Setting*

From the managers’ perspectives they appeared to see clear links between staff development, the observation of organisational values and the achievement of standards. Within this behaviour managers established and articulated acceptable standards of performance. They also felt that sharing their knowledge would help to assure that the standard of work in their services and/or attitudes towards service users would be appropriate. Several said they enjoyed developing staff because they felt ‘I’m doing something worthwhile to improve the standards of other people in their role’ (ASLM2) and ‘because I have an idea of how I like things to be, the shape of things, and the standard of things’ (ALM1). This relationship was most clearly seen in the critical incident below where a senior line manager facilitated a team building day with a team viewed not to be following current care practice.

There was concern...that the team [didn’t] acknowledge person centred approaches as a valued part of their work; it wasn’t second nature to them. The intention was to have everyone at the end of the day singing off the same song sheet...[We] had discussions prior to the away day and they had focused around people bringing practices from their former place of work. We had tried subtly to say that’s not appropriate, we don’t it that way anymore. But there was a collective of people who had come from the same environment and so it was to break down that collective way of thinking or not break it but to try and influence that collective pool of thought. I tended to take the lead...because there was almost then an air of authority attached to that...this is important and...this isn’t just what we say this is what the organisation says (ASLM4).

The same senior line manager described how he worked with a highly experienced line manager, who tended to rely on her undoubted interpersonal skills, energy and good relationships with her long-established staff to manage her project, to introduce key organisational systems into her project.

...recently we have looked at a number of systems within ALM5's project that either weren't in place or weren't adhered to, as I would otherwise expect as a manager in this organisation (ASLM4).

In particular he found that decisions and other information weren't always recorded and he had to explain to her the potential problems that she might face if she had a different staff team.

Things like written supervisions being recorded wasn't done very often. Now I know why because the staff team is great, there is no problem but similarly I said to her 'you can't guarantee that will always be the case and there will be one day you have a need to draw upon information you shared at supervision and we'll not have it. It will seem like your incompetence rather than someone's argumentative nature' (ASLM4).

He felt that she had responded positively to what might have been regarded as criticism of her as a manager. Indeed she acknowledged to the researcher that he had helped her introduce a more systematic approach to work in the project.

A first line manager emphasised that she liked to develop *all* her staff to at least a minimum level of competence for the harmony and benefit of the project, and ultimately the service users.

There should be a basic level that I am looking for within all of the staff and there's an expectation to get that within about 6 months...I just don't like the idea that there's difference. I think it causes barriers – 'I can do that and you can't'. Getting them all able to administer particular types of medicines/procedures...all of these things are part of service users' care plans and if you have staff who can't do it basically what you are saying is that you can't work with that service user. So it's really good for the project that your staff are skilled to that level but I also think it's good for them and for morale (ALM2).

An experienced member of staff, who outlined how ALM2 trained people with no previous care experience, confirmed her focus on standards in developmental interactions.

She doesn't skimp on anything, nothing is missed out, even how to fold sheets on a bed and all these sorts of things – from the bottom right up to the top of working in here as a care assistant or whatever. She can train these people from nothing [so] that they can eventually be left in the living room with all these [service users] and they know exactly how to handle [it] if somebody takes a seizure or takes ill... (ASM6).

### *3.3 Planning and preparing*

A few critical incidents demonstrated managers taking a structured approach to supporting staff development by planning and preparing for developmental interactions or creating systems, in addition to those developed by their organisation, to support employee learning. The critical incidents reported here focused primarily on induction.

A senior line manager and a first line manager both described how the former had supported the induction of the latter into the organisation.

When she started here we went through a huge induction process...we talked through her department...going back to basics about the whole job...we made lots of meetings, short meetings so it wasn't too overwhelming and we went through checklists of all the things that we wanted to cover...she practised the different things and then we did a second check to make sure she was OK and had no questions (ASLM2).

She had arranged things with different people, different projects, and HQ. So she had a whole series of meetings arranged...so that was very valuable and it was interesting to find out what other people do and [it] helped for contact with them in the future (ALM4).

She also confirmed that after each day of her induction programme her manager held a review session with her.

As well as induction several managers had also developed or used systems that helped them record the ongoing development of their staff.

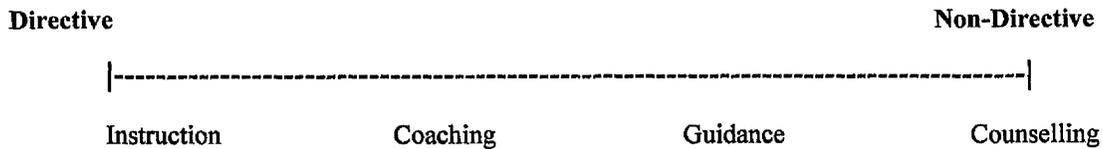
A senior manager (BSLM3) stated that several of his line managers adopted a systematic approach to employee learning. One (BLM5) ensured 'that there are good systems in place to support staff like induction, supervision (and) appraisal'. Whilst another (BLM3) was 'good at setting agendas and parameters'. This second line manager described how he developed a learning and development portfolio with staff. For one individual in particular who had been struggling 'that helped give a lot more structure' and was in effect 'a contract about how she wants to be treated' (BLM3). The learning and development portfolio could then be used to record progress. That the employee valued this process could be seen by the fact that she showed her portfolio to the researcher.

Another manager (ALM1) reported that she had developed a Personal Development Portfolio primarily for induction purposes, acknowledging that she was quite 'renowned for my emphasis on recording so it is clear, not just to one person, but to everyone' when individuals were competent at specific tasks. She had also involved an outside agency in developing a training package with some of her staff working with a specific client group. In addition this external body would also monitor service delivery to this client group.

### **3.4 Advising**

Four sets of related behaviours were identified within this category. Firstly instruction involving clear and detailed direction for specific tasks. Secondly, coaching involving discussion and guided activity. Thirdly, guidance which saw managers influencing individuals' actions. Finally, counselling where managers helped individuals learn how to take control over their own behaviour.

These advisory behaviours can be plotted on a directive-non-directive continuum ranging from direct instruction to counselling (see Figure 8.1).



**Figure 8.1: Advisory Continuum**

Four themes dominated these developmental interactions: improving operational performance; helping ‘supervisors’ with people management issues; personal and professional development; and, stress management.

### *3.4.1 Improving operational performance*

Behaviours here tended more towards the directive end of the continuum ranging mainly between instruction and coaching, although there was also some evidence of guidance.

A first line manager described how she had instructed a member of staff to improve the way they were feeding a seriously ill service user.

Doing things like saying ‘you might find it easier if you sit down next to him and save your back and it also lets you be on a level with X’. Not in a way that would chastise the individual but from the angle of ‘this might be easier for you if you look at this and this might also be easier for the service user if you look at this’ (ALM5).

A first line manager recognised that he perhaps needed to be more aware of the need to provide more direction, particularly to inexperienced staff. He reported an incident where an inexperienced support worker dealing inappropriately with a service user issue had surprised him. The manager then had to engage in remedial tuition with the employee.

So that was a learning experience in that sometimes you forget that people are at that very early learning stage, when they are not so far down as you think and things surprise you. So you have to go back and address that and come at things from a different angle, not in a

chastising way but in a learning process and saying 'think about it' [*said with emphasis*]...she just didn't realise (BLM5).

Coaching interactions tended to focus on administrative tasks. For example, a first line manager and basic grade worker described how the former had coached the latter in a specific administrative task to ensure the organisation would have adequate cover should either be absent. The process was also recorded in a manual that could be accessed by other employees, thus embedding the learning for the organisation. This involved:

Showing her the forms, actually going through the steps. After I explained all the procedures to her I asked her to write a section on them for the manual...so this could be used if both of us were absent and a temp could come in and could just follow the procedure in the manual. So I thought this was quite a good way to see if she was understanding it and yes she does (ALM6).

She went through the procedures and I watched her do it and she let me write down the procedure while she's telling me how to do it so that I know where I am going. I then read them back to her to make sure that I had understood what she's said and she understands how I've written it. I'm just about to put it into practice now (ASM3).

Not only does this developmental interaction provide an example of coaching it also demonstrates Kolb's learning cycle being applied. With the coaching of the procedures providing a concrete experience, the recording providing an opportunity for reflective observation, the reading back an opportunity for abstract conceptualisation and the opportunity to put the learning into practice through active experimentation.

A first line manager described how her manager (BSLMI) had coached her in the complex administrative task of the staff roster.

He coached me through it rather than told me 'you need to do that, you need to do this'. He said 'what do you need to be thinking about? If you send so and so on training how is that going to leave your staff team (BLM4)?'

Not only could she now do this task herself she had, as described by one of her staff, mirrored her manager's behaviour by in turn providing coaching in rostering. This interaction also provides an example of Kolb's learning cycle in action.

She coached me in how she does it and then I would do it and then she would check it over with me and now I'm doing them myself. She sat down with me and said 'what is the first thing we look at? We look at who is on annual leave [etc]...And just showed me exactly and doing it while she's telling me. I'm watching her write it in. Getting the chance to do a practice one or two myself and once I had done that she checked it over pointing out any things that I might have missed out. I find it helpful. With something like that you need someone to sit down and show you, you can't really just say take that away and fill it in and remember to put the holidays in. You've got to really see it and have the bits pointed out 'what do you think is wrong with that bit?' (BSM5).

A young basic grade worker described how he had approached his line manager (ALM5) for advice about dealing with a service user who could present challenging behaviour.

I was a wee bit wary of doing it and that I wasn't going to deal with it properly. So instead of me going in and making a horse of it I'd better figure out the best way of dealing with this so I discussed it with ALM5. She gave me some pointers to think about when I was dealing with the situation and she obviously made sure I felt comfortable about dealing with the situation (ASM 16).

This advice he reported gave him the confidence to deal with the situation successfully as it had given him:

...the self-assurance that I was capable of dealing with that sort of situation (ASM16).

### *3.4.2. People Management tasks*

Many developmental interactions within this category focused on managers helping staff with supervisory responsibilities deal with people management issues, predominantly through guidance.

The first example, however, shows a manager during a supervision session providing coaching to a team leader reluctant to confront a member of staff whose performance was not currently meeting the project's standards.

First they asked 'would you deal with this?' and I said 'no this is what I think...I think it is best that you should go back and address this, not to blow it out of proportion. How do you feel about that?' We sat down and I said 'do you feel comfortable about saying this and doing that'... 'you're going to have to meet them soon, you're going to have to ask them a, b, c and d' and we talked about the best way to put that (ALM6).

The outcome was that the team leader dealt with the situation and recognised that it was appropriate that she dealt with the problem. The line manager summed up her role as:

It wasn't a case of me shirking my responsibility, it was a case of me showing them how to do it (ALM6).

A first line manager and a newly promoted team leader both described how the former's guidance, during supervision, had helped the latter deal with conflict between two staff.

I think partly due to her inexperience and wanting to smooth things she felt it was her responsibility to sort it. I personally didn't feel that and explained to her why I felt it would be the wrong thing for her to try and pour oil on troubled waters and we spoke about people's personal responsibilities to themselves and their colleagues. I had really been advising her that when people come to her with issues like this they are adults. If they are able to come to her they should be able to sort it out. I was advising her in different ways that each member of staff could approach the other member of staff to sort it out. Whereas if she was trying to sort it out she would be perceived to be taking someone's side (BLM4).

From the team leader's perspective she felt that her manager had given her:

...guidelines and pointers about how she would address it, also in line with policies and procedures as well (BSM5).

The outcome for both was that the team leader now felt more confident about dealing with the situation as she was now clear about what was expected of her and that 'a weight had been lifted off her shoulders because she hadn't known where to go' (BLM4).

### *3.4.3 Personal and Professional Development*

Within this category several developmental interactions focused on the personal and professional development of individuals. These ranged from first line managers providing guidance to basic grade staff undertaking qualifications to senior line managers facilitating the development of professional and managerial skills in first line managers.

A first line manager reported that she acted as a 'mentor' to one of her staff undertaking an HNC which required her to provide guidance to the individual when she started doing assignments after a lengthy time out of formal education. She admitted that she had to resist the temptation of taking over and re-writing the individual's work.

[I was] trying to get her to look at structuring her essay and saying that's the beginning, there's the meat in the middle and that's the tailing of it at the end and getting her to be more constructive about her work. Really what I would say the role of the mentor is just getting her the information that she's looking for or making sure she's in the right direction. But not about actually putting your hands on her work, which was hard at the beginning (ALM2).

Another line manager reported that he was involved in guiding a member of staff who lacked confidence undertaking a qualification, in this case a SVQ.

It's like being a signpost and saying go there, do that...she appeared to feel more confident in that she seemed to know where she was going. She seemed to understand what I was saying about the concept that the SVQ is gigantic but it's just made up of very small components. 'All you need to think about is that component, to knock it down and then think about the next component and knock it down as it emerges. You will then see that the whole thing is beginning to be chopped away' (ALM3).

A team leader who had worked with her current manager (BLM3) over a range of projects described how he had guided her, even when she wasn't working directly with him. In effect he appears to have adopted a mentoring role as,

...basically throughout my whole time here he has pointed me in the right direction...He was always giving me information and ideas about things, advising me to go on and take the training...he's been very supportive in giving me his advice (BSM12).

#### *3.4.4 Stress management*

Managers helping employees cope with stress demonstrated counselling behaviours. In this next developmental interaction a senior line manager describes counselling a manager who was having difficulty functioning because he had not taken time to reflect on a very difficult situation,

[and] hadn't really dealt with in terms of his own understanding and learning. Saying to him quite strongly that you've got to go away and 'think about this, you're using all your energy not thinking about it'. It almost became a counselling situation, but a counselling situation where we were shouting at the tops of our voices [*gentle laughter*]. He has responded and probably what I said to him may have just been a trigger, he knew himself he was in bad shape (ALM1).

ALM1 acknowledged that he had learned from this interaction not only the need to deal quickly with problems, but also to be flexible and to some extent non-judgemental.

I really learned that you always have to confront issues, never avoid them or bury them or leave them lying. At the same time you have always got to be ready to adapt what you think about them as you go along. In other words if you're not happy with someone's work you have to deal with it straight away and confront it, but if you start off feeling angry and thinking that they've let you down you have to be ready to change that view. Nine out of ten times there's a reason for their behaviour and you have to take that on board and accept it (ALM1).

A first line manager described how she had counselled an individual after the manager had observed her snapping at a service user who had provoked her.

I asked 'what's been happening?'...and we literally just talked it through. I got her to just sit and go back over what had been happening by just asking her simple questions...I was just helping her explore ways. I wasn't actually giving her the answers she was giving them

herself, I was just helping her to think about it and to go back over it and reflect on what she was doing (ALM5).

The final outcome of this incident was that the individual apologised voluntarily to the service user.

Finally, a basic grade worker described how she was inclined to lose her temper in stressful situations and how her line manager (ALM2) had helped her both through counselling and by sending her on an assertiveness course.

ALM2 tried to help me think, to calm down before I exploded...she also sent me on the assertiveness course saying 'that would help you when someone says something to you and you blow, that would possibly help'. I went on it and it's been the best thing that she's done because I did learn a lot. I learned from that where I was going wrong and how to handle it (ASM6).

Given that this was a fairly sensitive issue focusing on her personal behaviour the respondent was asked how she felt when her manager was counselling her.

I felt all right. I felt it was an avenue to go down. That I was going to benefit and the people that I work with were going to benefit. I felt that this is the road that I will go down (ASM6).

### **3.5 Assessing**

Two sets of behaviours were identified in this category: the provision of feedback and recognition and identification of development needs.

#### *3.5.1 Providing feedback and recognition*

Feedback and recognition were seen as important by employees because it let them know how they were doing. They appreciated receiving praise and got a boost from being told they had done well, which increased their confidence. Several managers provided examples of how they were aware of the importance of recognising the achievements of individuals to enhance their confidence. Both staff and managers recognised the important role of constructive criticism in improving job performance.

A senior line manager described how a first line manager had coped moving into a promoted position and went on to describe how he had praised her for her achievements in this challenging role by giving her,

...positive feedback... I said 'you are doing very well you know'. I think it was self-evident to everyone else but she needed to hear it for her confidence. The most difficult person to praise is yourself (ASLM1).

The first line manager concerned confirmed that his feedback had given her confidence.

I think the feedback I got was crucial because I took on the role with great trepidation...I just think the feedback that I have had in supervision from ASLM1 has been very, very good and it's given me a lot of confidence...I think because I was getting some feedback he must believe that I can do this and I won't let him down (ALM1).

The line manager then demonstrated how she had mirrored her manager's behaviour towards her.

I've always tried as a line manager to do that as well and to feedback to staff when I feel that they've made really good progress or done something particularly well. A couple of times I've done a wee certificate for a member of staff that's done a good piece of work or just little things in a team meeting recognising somebody's success in front of everybody. I think that it is helpful and it's all to do with confidence and people will take on so much if they have the recognition and the confidence (ALM1).

Line managers highlighted the need for specifics in feedback. One manager supervising an employee, who had had difficulty previously understanding the parameters of her role, took a very structured approach to providing feedback. He also acknowledged that by having a framework for supervision he ensured he did not avoid handling difficult issues. He showed the researcher the individual's learning and development portfolio, with her permission, highlighting their attempts to link her college course with what was actually happening at work through 'feedback each session on their development' (BLM3).

One of his staff confirmed and valued his specific feedback.

He's very honest, which is great because you don't have any worries that 'oh maybe I'm not doing that as well as I should be? He tells you straight away, straight down the line. You're not going home at night worrying... You know exactly where you're going, what you need to do. He always gives you feedback and he always lets you know when you've done something well. He's really good at giving you confidence in what you do. The way he even tells you about something you've done that's not so great doesn't totally annihilate you. He does it in a constructive way, which is the best way I would say because you can obviously work from that (BSM12).

Individual members of staff indicated that they valued constructive criticism when it was handled well. A basic grade worker reported how her line manager (ALM2) observed her practice and then gave her feedback.

She's good when you've been approaching a situation and she didn't think you had done it right she would say 'I saw the way you did that, try this way it might have worked better. Why don't you try it next time?' She doesn't say 'that's wrong'. She puts it across as 'try this' (ASM8).

When asked how she felt when her manager behaved in this way she responded that she valued prompt feedback.

I would rather know if I had maybe handled a situation wrongly rather than maybe 6 months later do it again and somebody say 'well that's not right'. I'd rather somebody would say to you at the time 'why don't you try this the next time?' (ASM8).

### *3.5.2 Identifying Development Needs*

This behaviour involved managers assessing short-term needs to develop skills to enhance current job performance and assessing long term needs to enhance career development.

A senior line manager described how he had been working with another senior manager, who reported to him, to explore her career options to ensure she didn't become stale.

I've been placing responsibility on both of us to look at learning opportunities that might help longer term career development but also try to avoid her feeling frustrated, stuck and bored...you know disillusioned with her work environment...I feel that ASLM5 is a very positive manager and has certainly got career opportunities in the future that could lead to promoted posts...even if she doesn't aspire to it at the moment she may in the future and [*we need to ensure she*] hasn't missed the boat in whatever circumstances (ASLM6).

A first line manager described how he and his manager (BSLM3) had been exploring his career options.

We've discussed my development needs and we've both agreed that staying here would be detrimental to me. I thoroughly enjoy working here but it's not stretching me, it's not developing me...So I'm looking for him to give me some advice on if there are any other development opportunities within the organisation (BLM5).

The above line manager mirrored his manager's behaviour by considering the long-term potential of one of his team, an unqualified worker who,

I felt she was capable of more if she committed to and involved herself and got a qualification because she didn't have any. So we looked at where we could go for her so that we could improve on that (BLM5).

A line manager described how she used a structured approach by developing a Personal Development profile to identify training needs of new staff within her project. She was particularly concerned to ensure she picked up on the needs of peripheral staff whom she didn't see on a regular basis during their induction period.

It was almost an induction workbook that I gave to all staff when they start...each section had a recording sheet so that through supervision with staff...you could record what new staff were learning...when it came to practical tasks we did some sort of assessment of competency of their ability to carry out the tasks. It was a way of monitoring that people didn't miss anything, particularly part-time and relief staff, where it was difficult to check things out particularly by myself...So it was a way of being able to make it more clear what everyone's learning needs were at any particular time (ALM1).

One of this line manager's staff confirmed that they had discussed her development needs during her appraisal.

We discussed what and where I saw myself in the future and what I'd like to do and where I'd like to be (ASM17).

As a consequence of this discussion she started a SVQ, and has also recently been promoted.

There was also recognition in some areas that training needs were changing, reflecting the changing needs of service users. This was underlined by a team leader who felt that her line manager (ALM5) recognised that:

...the needs of the people in here are changing and it's not the way it was a couple of years ago. Apart from their physical needs people are ageing and there's maybe things we need to know because of senile dementia (ASM15).

Once these needs have been identified she reported that her line manager then accessed internal and external training to meet these needs. This team leader also demonstrated the cascading of development responsibilities evident in both organisations as she in the manager's absence would undertake induction and would look at the development needs of the staff she was responsible for supervising.

I would be looking at people when I'm working with them and seeing if there is anything that could be added on a bit...we've all got different strengths and weaknesses (ASM15).

### **3.6 Thinking**

This behavioural category involved managers stimulating the thinking processes of individuals. Firstly, by getting individuals to take time out to consider what had happened in the past and to learn from that reflection. Secondly, to consider future situations they may face, the options open to them and the possible consequences of their actions. Within this category there was also significant evidence of managers clarifying issues for staff through explanation or helping staff clarify things for themselves through discussion and/or questioning. Some incidents involved a combination of reflective/prospective thinking and clarification. It is perhaps not surprising that many of these incidents took place within the boundaries of supervision, given its emphasis on reflective and developmental practices.

### *3.6.1 Reflective and Prospective Thinking*

A senior manager provided a clear example of how he engages in reflective practice with his 'junior' manager (ASLM5) to inform future practice.

Through supervision we look for opportunities in learning from one situation to the next. We would deliberately take time after situations and think about how we can make it better the next time (ASLM6).

The 'junior' manager referred to above also engaged in reflective practice with her 'junior' managers reporting that she intended to help a first line manager to reflect on a problem situation, which he had handled well, during their next supervision session.

We've got supervision next week so it's on the agenda for that and that will give us an opportunity to review what happened (ASLM5).

A first line manager described how she got a team leader to improve her delegation skills through getting her to reflect, during supervision, on a specific day at work where she had observed the team leader being harassed whilst her team were working at a slower pace.

I asked her 'what did you do that morning and what did you direct the care staff to do?' It turned out she had not actually directed them to do very much but they just got on with their job but there were extra things she was doing that she should have pushed to them. Getting her to realise there are things that she's doing that don't have to be her (ALM2).

As part of the process of helping this individual to delegate the manager also got her to undertake a time management exercise enabling her to reflect on how she was spending her time. The manager reported that her time management had since improved and that she was starting to leave on time and was a lot calmer. Interestingly, this manager had herself been helped to delegate by another manager, another example of mirroring behaviour.

There was some evidence that reflection is not always a comfortable process for individuals, particularly for those who perhaps have more active learning and management styles. The next two examples provide contrasting experiences, demonstrating the potential tension or complementarity between different learning styles. The first example involves a senior manager encouraging a first line manager to be more reflective.

From my own personal feeling she has moved to reflect because she [BLM1 – activist] was one of the managers who felt that she had to come back and say to me ‘I feel that you’re saying to me that I’m not actually doing my job’. She did use the words ‘I feel’. That was OK and we talked that through. There was an element of thinking through and reflecting and she was able to articulate some of the things that she was feeling. ‘This is the part I can’t do’ and it was painful. So I think that the pain was associated with that and that’s where she got the expression of feeling (BSLM2 - reflector).

From the line manager’s perspective she reported how she found this process.

He’s very much a theory type person whereas I’m much more of a doer and I find it quite difficult. But he does take the time and he goes into a lot of depth when he explains things so that’s the way he teaches (BLM1).

The second example involves a senior line manager (reflector/theorist) making a line manager (pragmatist) take time to think things through during supervision.

The main issue is trying to say ‘whoa, stop’ [*said with emphasis*]. ‘Are you sure you that’s the way you want to deal with that? Just talk me through why you’re going down that road?...Once you’ve got his attention and get him verbalising - talk it through, tell me why you’re going down that road? What do you think were the issues? And where are you trying to get to?’ He will then start to develop that very rapidly and sometimes say ‘...right OK...thanks...I’m going to go this way’. And it’s not because you told him to ‘go that way’; it’s because he’s had some time to think about it, held to think about it (BSLM3).

The above example demonstrates the use of questioning to facilitate reflection and also the benefit of giving people time to think. The senior line manager then went on to describe how he had got the line manager to reflect on his management style, and

acknowledges that during this process he had to restrain himself from expressing his own opinion.

What he felt would help was a two-fold process. If he could write it down for himself, to kind of externalise it for himself that would help him get it in some sort of order and distance himself a bit from it. Then if he could bring that to a debate. So we spent two or three afternoons doing that...Mostly I think my role with that has been to ask questions rather than to try and make statements and sometimes that's quite difficult...try and avoid giving too clearly what my own views were...But just asking him to explore things. I think inevitably when you are doing that you are actually giving inferences as well...I genuinely do endeavour more to be a mirror and reflect back at him (BSLM3).

The line manager acknowledged that he found this process helpful.

It makes me think [*because*] I don't theorise things in my head I do them because I know they'll work...It's probably about maturity as a manager as well (BLM3).

The next example demonstrates the line manager previously discussed above, who had found the process of reflection painful for herself, facilitating the reflective processes of one of her staff following a service user complaint, thus fulfilling the desire of her manager to encourage her staff to engage in more reflection.

[I] was getting one staff member to reflect more about their practices and think about what they were doing on a day to day basis and on how their approach was not necessarily the best approach... 'What do you feel about it?' I got the person to feedback exactly what happened and asked them to think about 'how did you actually approach it? What did you say to the person?' Not even just the verbal communication but also 'what was your body language like? Do you see why somebody else might perhaps see that as threatening?' And getting the person to sit and think 'oh wait a wee minute uh-huh', although initially that wasn't the response that I got. The initial response that I got was a very defensive one and 'I was acting in that person's best interests at that time?' 'Hands up I don't take that away from you but you have to consider the way you go through things' (BLM1).

The outcome was that the staff member realised they had behaved inappropriately and apologised to the service user, which the service user accepted and they now have a comfortable working relationship.

A team leader reported that she and her line manager (BLM4) would discuss staff management issues at supervision and that she would be encouraged to think about how she would handle possible future issues.

We would discuss and we would think ‘well how do you think would be best to handle that?’ and ...[*we would*] think of options (BSM5).

Finally, a team leader described how her line manager (BLM3) stimulated prospective thinking to develop her management skills such as decision-making by giving ‘me scenarios to think about. ‘What would I do if...’ (BSM12) ?

### *3.6.2. Clarifying*

Staff valued clarity in their work, as it enabled them to direct their efforts appropriately. The need for clarity was also recognised by managers and indeed this was stressed by one manager who stated ‘the main thing that I have learned over the last year is clarity: it's being clear, open and honest’ (BLM3). Developmental interactions involving clarification tended to focus on three themes: understanding the organisation and roles within it, improving staff and resource management, and work practice.

One senior line manager described how he helped a manager (ASLM5), during her induction period with the organisation to:

Understand the different culture and perhaps less rigid regime that she might have been familiar with and that’s not about the organisation...that’s about her mindset (ASLM6).

He went on to highlight how clarity was important to this individual:

She might want you to explain exactly why you want to pursue a particular area. You have to be very specific and clear with her (ASLM6).

Another senior line manager described how one of his line managers (BLM1) was helping a member of staff, who had been unhappy with his position in the organisation and was feeling a bit lost by,

...trying to help the person understand unless you develop some of the other aspects [*weaknesses*] you can't expect that because you get on well with people that necessarily makes you equipped to be a senior person within the organisation... (BSLM2).

He reported that the individual concerned had found this valuable and that 'he feels that she is helping him to see some of the areas that he's not been so well equipped with in the past' (BSLM2).

A first line manager reported how a senior line manager (ASLM4) had clarified the need for her to keep better written records.

We clarified exactly what we would use and what we could discard and what we would incorporate. So I came away from that clear in my own mind what I was doing and there was very clear instruction and that was wonderful...It was good to have him there to help, just bounce it off him and 'say what do you think?' and he would say 'well I really think you could lose that' or 'I agree with you about that'. So he's clarified things for me and he's let me bounce things off, ideas I was making and feeding back (ALM5).

A member of her team then described how he had gone to her for clarification regarding how he had handled a particular situation to help if he faced a similar situation in the future. He had asked a service user to stop hovering, because it might be disturbing an ill service user, and his request was complied with reluctantly.

I said to ALM5 this is what happened and I don't think I could have handled that better [*but*] I'm not really sure. I had an idea but I wanted sort of clarification...it came out in discussing it with her that maybe if I had brought him in and maybe sat down and explained the situation to him that a person wasn't well and give him the opportunity to take a decision himself, instead of taking it for him, which could have alleviated the situation. So when I left I felt the next time I would handle it better (ASM16).

A senior line manager described how he had worked with one of his line managers (BLM4) regarding a staff performance issue.

We sat down together and discussed what the concerns were and tried to be as clear as we could be about what the issues were and tried to come down to specifics and that was again probably again about detailing that. We then had a discussion about what our options were...I think a lot about that is sitting down together and trying to achieve clarity about what we are

actually saying and where we are going...my main role was probably questioning what BLM4 was saying and getting her to a point where she was actually crystal clear (BSLM1).

A senior line manager described how she had helped a line manager (BLM2) clarify her understanding of the boundaries of the human and financial resources of her project. This line manager, she reported, had described the outcome as:

...like curtains being pulled back. I actually understand something that I haven't understood for a year and a half. I feel that we've all been running flat out but I've never been able to understand why (BSLM4).

To get her to this level of understanding the senior manager had used questioning and explanation to show where the misunderstanding was.

I asked deeper questions and then what I did was I reflected back to her 'so what you're saying is your understanding of this situation is X. Well actually I don't have the same understanding...So we talked about [it]...I asked her lots of questions about where she was at...She told me, I reflected back, told her what mine was...(BSLM4).

The line manager concerned confirmed that this senior line manager had made things clearer for her, in particular her staff development responsibilities.

I have now got a clearer sense of that and she has certainly talked to me in supervision much more specifically about that and has given me clear guidance and hints on how to do that (BLM2).

The same line manager described how she in turn had helped a basic grade worker clarify her understanding of her role with a particular service user.

...for me the process has been about trying to help BSM3 see more clearly. 'What is it you're doing? What is the service we are offering?' BSM3 said to me 'that has been helpful' and...she feels a lot clearer in her own mind and then she is able to be clearer with the service users and that in turn helps service users. I think I was trying to help BSM3 think more clearly. 'What is that I am doing? What is it the service offers in terms of support?' (BLM2).

The basic grade worker corroborated the perception held by her line manager and described how through questioning about current practice and future options her manager had helped her gain clearer understanding of her role.

She helped me in how I was planning how I was working with the service user. What my practice was? What my skills were? Was I utilising them enough? Talking about how I was feeling about the whole thing, it was all in a guddle and how we best work through this... Yeah she helped me look at my practice. We looked at the support plans. We looked at the questions we're asking the service user. What information did we need from the service user to work out what support was going to be needed? We looked at rather than putting all the onus on me or on the service what else was there around for the service user to access? What else was available for them to try and build their skills as well, social skills, conversational skills, mixing with new people to help try and make them feel more valued as a person (BSM3).

When asked how she felt during this developmental interaction the staff member reported that she had found it a positive experience contrasting this work based learning experience with formal education where she felt you were more likely to be told 'that's wrong [*said in a posh voice*], that's not how you do it' (BSM3).

The outcome from the staff member's perspective was that it had made her:

...more assertive, more confident in using my skills and also in what I'm talking about to people about what my role is, and my responsibility but also where that stops [*and*]...I think it's made me critically evaluate my practice more (BSM3).

Finally, this example also provides evidence of staff considering the development needs of service users.

### **3.7 Empowering**

Empowering behaviours involved delegation and developing trust between managers and staff.

### 3.7.1 *Delegating*

There was evidence that some managers had difficulties with delegation, particularly those managers who had recently been promoted to first line management positions and were still adjusting to their new role and responsibilities. Several managers had recently moved from first line roles to more senior managerial positions and now had responsibility for managing managers. During this transitional phase they had to learn to move from the 'controlling' role they had when managing a single project to more of an 'empowering' role. This proved to be a challenging exercise for some managers and is vividly described by one manager below, who felt she had previously been too controlling.

When I got this new post I sat down and thought a lot about it and just what did it mean and how did I feel as a [*line*] manager? I had a variety of [*senior*] managers how did I feel? What did I want from my [*senior*] managers? What kind of role did I want them to take with me? Had I felt they were squashing me or had I felt they let me grow (BSLM4)?

Following this period of self-reflection the manager started to put her new ideas into practice. Whilst initially difficult she felt the outcome had been successful given that a staff member had written in feedback for her appraisal,

...that I give people their place and I allow them to have their responsibilities. That's one of the biggest things to me that anyone could I have said because I didn't do it [*in the past*] (BSLM4).

During her interview she reflected on what she had learned from going through this transitional experience.

Now I'm conscious of letting people [*go*]. I know it's not always going to be right but it's how they learn from it...It's about where I was as a [*line*] manager and where I was in relation to my [*senior*] managers. But also how I was managing people and my level of control that I needed, which wasn't helpful to situations, wasn't helpful to relationships and wasn't helpful to people's growth and development...I have helped people develop but it could have been much more if I had felt safe. The more unsafe I felt the more controlling I got (BSLM4).

The feelings experienced by this manager demonstrates the need for managers to have confidence before they are able to relax their control over staff.

A senior line manager described one of his line managers (BLM4) as an effective delegator which helped her staff develop. He cited the example of the line manager working with a new team leader

BLM4 has been able to say to her 'here you are, here's who you will be working with. I'll introduce you to the staff, I'll introduce you to the service users. This is what you need' and gave her a list of things that she needed and 'then on you go'. Then it is about checking in with her from time to time to see how she is doing. She is always available if the team leader has some difficulties and needs some support. She can pick up the phone and BLM4 will be there and deal with it. She's quite capable of saying 'that's your area, tell me what you need, come back to me if things aren't working or if there is something else that you need to know but I'll let you get on with it'. I think that's about being able to once you've given someone a task or a role or whatever to be able to step back and not crowd and let them find their own way through it (BSLM1).

A first line manager (ALM4) described how she had delegated a task to a junior member of staff by firstly exploring 'if she would be willing to take responsibility' and then giving her that responsibility (ASM2).

This idea of giving people responsibility is linked to the second empowering behaviour - trust.

### *3.7.2 Trusting*

Discussions of trust can be interpreted at two levels. Firstly, trusting people to carry out tasks without constant monitoring. Secondly, and perhaps more deeply, both parties in the learning relationship being able to trust each other thus enabling open and honest dialogue necessary for learning.

A senior line manager described how he had helped develop the skills of a newly promoted manager whom he trusted (ALM1) by:

Just letting her get along with it because she is a very conscientious sort of person...you can trust her to do things 100% of the time (ASLM1).

One of his other managers commented that he always behaved like a 'visitor' when he came into the project and that he only visited occasionally, which initially she found difficult but on gaining more experience had grown to appreciate the feeling of empowerment.

He has the attitude that this is your project and he's visiting. In the beginning I found that quite hard because I was used to my boss being in the office and I could always get him. In hindsight I appreciate that now but I didn't at the time but I certainly appreciate it now and he obviously trusted me enough that he felt he could stay away... (ALM2).

A senior line manager and line manager talked about their relationship with each other, which demonstrates the former's trust.

ALM4 is very, very competent and I know that she will ask me anything she doesn't know. So I'm quite happy not to sit on her shoulders. I like to give her the freedom to do whatever she is responsible for but just to know that somebody's here should she need me (ASLM2).

...she just leaves me to my own devices [*said positively*] and I know I can go to her if there's a problem and I will go to her if there's a problem (ALM4).

Several first line managers described how they were developing a degree of trust with their senior line manager. One described how this enabled him to engage in open dialogue and to raise issues that he could not discuss with anyone else in the organisation.

We've hopefully been very honest with each other...I've shown over the years that I can manage, let me manage, let me do my job and more or less he's done that...I'll also go to him at times when I think I need the support or just to get things off my chest and I don't want to do it to my staff because the last thing they want to see is me being negative. I see that as his role if I want to mouth off I should be able phone him up and say 'I need to get something off my chest' (BLM5).

Finally, a first line manager concluded that trust was crucial for learning.

Getting them to trust you, trust is the big thing (ALM5).

### **3.8 Developing Developers**

Some managers took action to develop members of their team as developers of others. They developed staff to undertake a range of developmental roles including: formal training, supervision, and supporting work-based learning. These experiences had enhanced their understanding of how people learned.

Within this behavioural category the cascading of developmental roles can be seen in one management stream, within one of the case study organisations, from the most senior manager to a team leader. Firstly, the senior line manager at the head of the line described how he'd worked with another senior manager, his junior (ASLM5) to look:

...for ways in which to try to develop...her skills in developing herself as someone who can teach and help others learn (ASLM6).

Not only had she delivered in-house training courses but she had also been involved in providing training to external agencies, which had been well received and thus enhanced the reputation of the organisation. She in turn involved some of her line managers in delivering formal training to provide a wider pool of people to deliver training. One of them had taken a team leader to talk to students at a local university, as part of a process of building up his skills as a developer.

I said 'you are as able as me to do this'. So we went along together and possibly the next time we'll go together and maybe that's a skill he's building up in training people. That is one of the areas that he would like to develop in...since then he's been part of the internal PCP<sup>29</sup> training course session we did for new staff...and he felt quite confident about doing that...hopefully that's been developmental for him (ALM6).

Other managers highlighted that they were developing staff to support work-based learning and to learn about supervision. For example one line manager made sure that 'the team leaders can teach everybody everything they need to know' (ALM2).

Whilst others had given responsibility to staff to help staff and students undertaking work-based qualifications. One line manager explained that he felt it was 'good experience for the other staff to invest time in assisting someone else in their development' and gave junior staff 'an opportunity for them to know what supervision is about and to offer someone else support, advice and encouragement' (BLM5). Finally, a team leader acknowledged that her line manager (BLM3) was helping her develop her supervision and developmental skills by giving her:

...tips on how supervision should be. It's tips like obviously you can't supervise everybody in the same way; people don't learn the same way nor need the same support as the next person (BSM12).

### **3.9 Challenging<sup>30</sup>**

Only a few managers engaged in challenging their staff, stretching them to meet their potential, perhaps not surprising given that challenging is typically associated with mentors rather than line managers.

Two senior managers described how they had challenged staff to move out of their comfort zones for developmental purposes. One challenged a line manager (BLM5) to consider the future shape of his service by asking him 'are there other things which we ought to be doing (BSLM3)?' Whilst another had promoted a staff member and wanted her to undertake tasks that were new to her.

Initially I think she found that quite hard as she was stepping outside what she knew in a very exposed position as the...manager. I had to show her the knowledge was there and was transferable (ASLM1).

The employee confirmed that she found this a challenge.

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<sup>29</sup> Person-centred planning

<sup>30</sup> There was some discussion during validity testing processes with key informants over the use of challenging. Challenging behaviour in social work terminology means service users demonstrating behavioural problems, however in this instance 'challenging' was used by respondents to mean stretching by their managers and therefore the researcher has chosen to retain the respondents' language.

## *Facilitative Behaviours*

It came a bit like a bolt out of the blue...He gave me tasks that he knew would be challenging...He was prepared to challenge me (ALM1)

She herself also believed that challenging staff was part of her role as a developer.

I think as a staff developer it isn't all about praising and patting on the back and sending them on training courses but there is a great deal of it about challenging and helping staff to see that they can do better even in the smallest of ways (ALM1).

A first line manager described one of his previous managers (BSLM2) as challenging and that he 'was really, really tough on me and a hard taskmaster'. He didn't give solutions but challenged the manager to work out answers for himself, which ultimately he found highly developmental.

He never told you. He always made you work it out for yourself...Asking you questions, kept asking you more...Probably I developed more in that 8 month period than I did in the previous 4 years (BLM3).

Indeed he found this manager's developmental approach so effective he had recently asked him to become his mentor

He would be very good for me because he is a very, very theoretical person and I'm very practical. So he would pull all the theory out of me or rather make me learn the theory which would help me (BLM3).

The same individual also found his current line manager (BSLM3) challenging which he put down to,

skills in supervision...Again it is 'why are you doing that?' You know putting me on the spot. You're like a rabbit trapped in the headlights [*said with good humour*]...justifying, explaining your decisions (BLM2).

This line manager was in turn described as presenting challenges by members of his staff team. One described how he had got her to undertake a new task that she had found a 'fundamental learning experience'.

He knows that I have never done it before, but he doesn't want to put it on a plate and say this is how it is done. He's let me have a stab at it (BSM4).

There were several examples of managers challenging staff to go for new jobs, usually promotion, to further their career development. One said that he had been:

...proactive [in] encouraging people to go for promoted posts, secondment opportunities...ensuring that people move on and challenge themselves. Sitting at supervision and saying 'What do you want to do? What do you need?' People have to be honest and not just go through the motions because if you work in one place too long that can happen. If you're not getting challenged yourself you're not going to challenge service users in the work you do (BLM5).

#### **4. KEY INFORMANTS' PERSPECTIVES<sup>31</sup>**

Key informants were asked to describe the 'ideal' developmental manager. Their description was to be based on a manager or amalgam of managers within their respective organisations. Their descriptions can be compared to the behaviours identified in the analysis above.

Key informants stated that caring behaviours were critical for developmental processes.

They would be an encourager. They would be somebody who would value what other people were bringing and were able to encourage and maybe bring out things that weren't always obvious to the person concerned...they'd be a thinker, enthusiastic, recognising individual differences (Director of Quality).

They should be approachable; they have a concern about people. Is there a difference between men and women managing? Are women more appreciative of other people, are women better at making small gestures or sending a card [*for a job well done*]?...People have to feel that they are concerned about them as a person and recognising the stress that they're under...they are visible...they respond when they say they will and they're accessible.....and respect people's professional capacity (Practice Teacher).

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<sup>31</sup> NB: key informant transcripts were not analysed until after the analysis of managers' and employees' transcripts had been completed, thus ensuring that key informants' views did not contaminate the researcher's interpretation of critical incidents.

Key informant descriptions, as with the analysis above, highlighted professional and informative behaviours.

*She [said with emphasis]* would be well-prepared and planned...she would have a well thought out induction programme which would be continually judged against how the individual was learning, pace of learning, and preferred style of learning. She would early on be introducing a spectrum of information, explaining it and making it available and facilitating the learning whatever that took. My ideal manager has got a way of breaking that down into the size of chunks that make sense...I do know of some managers who pick a policy and have discussions one to one and I think that's really important because that's a way of the manager ensuring that the individual understands what they are supposed to be doing (HR Director).

Advisory behaviours, within the context of organisational processes, were also recognised as contributing to the facilitation of learning.

My ideal manager would regularly meet with their employee...through supervision and through on-the-job learning as it happens day in, day out as required - coaching, instructing (HR Director).

Management style was also identified as important, in particular providing constructive feedback to staff.

It's about a style of management which is the other end of authoritarian and directive [*laughter*] but which is facilitative. People get good feedback to help them develop. Information is shared with folk; knowledge isn't used as a power tool. Difficulties between people are resolved and dealt with to a successful outcome. People have got managing people skills, a range of those (Training Manager).

They're even good at even turning something that hasn't worked into a learning curve for you. They don't make you feel that the world has collapsed...it leaves the individual feeling that was OK...I think they're very good at getting you to explore how to fix things rather than them coming in with the answers. People that are not good at developing people are just good at telling you that you can't do it but they don't show you how to do it and they're quite precious about it. Good developers are not precious (ALC).

There was also some recognition that developmental managers are challenging. A key informant, borrowing from her expertise in pre-5 education, called them 'warm

demanders' who would stimulate staff to learn by being both warm and supportive, whilst making demands on people to take risks and do and think about new things.

Key informants also described developmental managers as people who were engaged with learning, both for themselves – 'somebody who is a learner themselves, I think that would be my bottom line' (Director of Quality) - and for their staff. They were more likely to have moved beyond traditional training courses, which could be seen through examination of the content of individual learning/development plans. On courses they were recognised as engaging in discussions which show 'they're thinking of their own learning, are focused and have a grasp of how other people learn' (T & QM).

Finally, key informants believed their organisations had managers who fulfilled many of the above 'ideal' qualities.

I think it is inspirational that managers have concocted their own material and undertaken their own methods which are just wee gems. You stumble across them. I would like a better way of sharing that, without embarrassing individuals (HR Director).

The analysis in section 3 above corroborates their views.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

It should be noted that many of the critical incidents described above occurred during supervision meetings, protected time when individuals and their supervisors can discuss work and development issues. Within these two organisations such meetings took place every 3-4 weeks. Such regular contact helps develop learning relationships where people are prepared to discuss issues and concerns in an open and constructive manner.

This chapter has not only described a range of behaviours demonstrated by managers but has also demonstrated these behaviours being applied across a range of situations and being used to different degrees of depth. For example support could be seen as

simply supporting an individual with a day to day task or could be seen as providing emotional support to staff coping with distressing situations or personal problems.

The caring behaviours described above, such as support and approachability, played an important part in creating an environment where people could learn and were willing to approach managers for help and support. Such an environment creates the conditions necessary for the development of the learning partnerships required for both individual and organisational learning. The encouragement provided by line managers motivated staff both for work and study. Particularly noteworthy here were the examples of 'mature' staff being encouraged to return to study. Reassurance was recognised as helping staff when they were anxious or lacking confidence, particularly when faced with difficult circumstances. Managers were identified as being particularly involved and committed to staff development through the amount of time devoted, including their own, to supporting learning. A few demonstrated the deeper caring behaviour of empathy, however this is a behaviour more associated with therapeutic rather than developmental practice.

Discussion of informing behaviours suggested that managers enjoyed sharing their knowledge to help others develop. There was, however, recognition that managers need to feel confident to fully engage in this activity.

There was clear evidence of the need for professionalism to stimulate appropriate learning. Staff clearly respected some managers as role models and aspired to follow their example. What was less clear was how many managers were aware of the potential influence their 'professional' behaviour could have on employee development. Future research could explore more fully the extent of conscious and unconscious role modelling. Clearly, any future training for developmental managers should highlight the potential impact of role modelling on learning in the workplace. Managers recognised the linkage between development and the achievement of organisational standards and values. The possible link with this behaviour and the organisations' quality management strategies is explored further in Chapter 11. A few managers had developed structures and systems within their spheres of operation building on the extensive organisational learning systems such as supervision and

appraisal. Such local systems tended to focus on induction of new staff and perhaps suggest that socialisation processes are best addressed at the local level.

Advising behaviours ranged across a spectrum from directive instruction to non-directive counselling. Less experienced managers were more likely to act directly, with more experienced managers more likely to engage in counselling. These behaviours contributed to improving work performance and people management, supported CPD and helped staff deal with stress. Within this category developmental interactions demonstrating coaching behaviours provided the clearest examples of the learning cycle being completed and will be discussed further in Chapter 12. There were also several examples of line managers adopting mentoring roles.

With regard to assessing behaviours staff and managers stressed the importance of prompt, specific and constructive feedback. There was also acknowledgement of the motivational impact of providing recognition and praise for work well done. Within this category there was also awareness of the need to identify development needs, both for short-term job needs and long-term career needs.

Discussion of thinking behaviours highlighted the importance of making time available for staff to engage in reflective and/or prospective thinking, given the demanding and hands-on nature of much of the work. There was however some recognition that this process did not come easily to all individuals, particularly those who tended to have more active learning styles. Clear evidence emerged of the importance of clarity in the workplace as this helped individuals understand their role within the organisation and gave them clear direction about what they were trying to achieve.

There was less evidence of empowering behaviours being demonstrated, particularly amongst less experienced managers. This relatively low incidence may also arise from the nature of work involved as staff have to work within strict policy guidelines, reflecting the increasing regulation of social care. Several managers were in transition from first line management to more senior levels. They had to learn to delegate and relinquish control, which they had found challenging. There was some evidence that managers need to feel confident and safe to 'let go'. Trust was

demonstrated at two levels. The first related to delegation, allowing staff to get on with their work without intrusive monitoring. The second involved having sufficient trust to discuss issues openly and honestly.

Managers saw their developmental responsibilities as not only directly developing their subordinates in operational tasks, but also recognised the need to expand the developmental capacity within their project or organisation. There were several examples of managers developing staff as developers for formal training and development roles or informal roles to support work-based learning.

Few managers engaged in challenging their staff, behaviour more commonly associated with mentoring, to stretch them and push them out of their comfort zone. The principal motivation for this behaviour was to stimulate staff, broaden horizons, prevent staff becoming stale and to encourage staff to go for promotion.

Key informants identified a wide range of attributes that could be possessed by the 'ideal' developmental manager. Interestingly two key informants suggested that women might be more natural developers than men. This is discussed further in Chapters 11 and 12. Attributes included being a learner themselves, strategic thinker, motivator and an enthusiast. Good developers were also described as being organised, good communicators, accessible and approachable. Importantly they were willing to share knowledge, and not use it as a source of power, and were willing to trust their staff. Finally, key informants argued 'developmental managers' would recognise and respect diversity, understand adult learning theory and be able to use processes such as supervision, instruction, coaching and team development appropriately.

The above discussion of critical incidents, and key informants' perspectives, has demonstrated the range and complexity of behaviours involved in developing staff, and has addressed the first research question. It should be noted that as these behaviours emerged they were 'tested' for validity by the researcher with key informants in both organisations and through voluntary sector practitioner

conferences, such as SCVO's Lifelong Learning Conference in Spring 2001<sup>32</sup>. The identification of these behaviours not only provides insight into developmental interactions within the workplace but also provides increased knowledge of the development needs of managers who are required to support work-based learning. The results presented in this chapter therefore informed the recommended training and development required for developmental managers which is outlined in Chapter 12.

A key conclusion that has emerged from the above discussion is the recurring evidence that individuals were mirroring the positive behaviours of their managers. This further heightens the need for managers to be aware of how influential their behaviour in the workplace is on both the learning of individuals but also the overall learning environment, which will be discussed further in Chapters 10 and 12.

The range of positive outcomes reported from these developmental interactions such as: successful induction; learning new work practices; improving services for service users; coping with stressful situations; and confidence-building, confirms the valuable role managers can play in facilitating work-based learning, and supports the researcher's case for investigating this subject.

Finally, throughout this chapter there have been many examples of good practice demonstrated by managers. These will be discussed further in Chapters 11, and particularly, in Chapter 12 where suggestions will be made to help develop these practices and behaviours in managers across organisations and sectors.

The next chapter explores the inhibitory behaviours identified in interactions between managers and their staff.

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<sup>32</sup> Emergent findings have also been exposed to academic audiences e.g. British Academy of Management Annual Conference, 2000 and the ESRC HRD Research Seminar Series, 2001.

## **CHAPTER 9 – INHIBITORY BEHAVIOURS**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the behaviours demonstrated by managers which inhibited learning in the workplace. There was significantly less data gathered on inhibitory behaviours compared to the positive behaviours described in Chapter 8. It should of course be remembered that the sample population was composed of managers recognised as 'good' or 'competent' developers by their respective organisations. There were no 'poor' developers selected, as the focus of the research was primarily to identify the behaviours demonstrated by managers that facilitated learning. In addition the research did not adopt an experimental approach and therefore there was no control group selected.

Most employee respondents did not identify inhibitory behaviours. This may be because they were reluctant to expose their concerns about their managers. However, it appeared to the researcher that most employees genuinely felt that their managers had not inhibited their learning and many of them said 'no' quite emphatically when asked if their manager had inhibited their learning in any way. Of those who did identify inhibiting behaviours it was often within an overall context of the manager being supportive of their learning. The managers themselves identified the majority of inhibitory incidents, and some were identified by the manager's manager. Several managers acknowledged that at times they might inhibit their staff unconsciously. Some managers became upset when they realised the impact that their behaviour may have had on individual members of staff. All but two managers demonstrated at least one inhibitory behaviour.

### **2. INHIBITORY BEHAVIOURS**

Analysis of incidents and descriptions of behaviours revealed eight types of inhibitory behaviours: being unassertive, not giving time, being task-orientated, withholding information, being dogmatic, not assessing, not thinking and controlling<sup>33</sup> (see Table

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<sup>33</sup> Two behaviours were discarded, lack of planning and trust, as there was only one incidence of each identified.

9.1). Several incidents revealed managers recognising that they had behaved in an inhibitory way and resolving to improve their behaviour. Others involved managers recognising that they had behaved in an inhibitory way in the past, particularly when they were still relatively inexperienced in their first managerial post, and believing that they no longer behaved in that way.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Behaviours</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Not giving time</b>		Spending insufficient time on development
<b>Being dogmatic</b>		Prescribing way or pace to carry out tasks
<b>Controlling</b>		Not letting go through: not delegating, taking over tasks, interfering in tasks or intrusive monitoring
<b>Not thinking</b>	Not clarifying	Not making things clear
	Being overly directive	Not allowing staff to think for themselves
<b>Being task-orientated</b>		Focusing on operational tasks rather than people development
<b>Being unassertive</b>	Not listening Not encouraging Being aggressive	Not fully respecting the needs of others
<b>Withholding information</b>	Transmitting incomplete information	Not giving full information
	Limiting exposure to new experiences	Not giving staff opportunities to be involved or fully involved in experiential learning
<b>Not assessing</b>	Failing to recognise needs	Not identifying or recognising development needs
	Failing to provide feedback	Not providing feedback or recognising achievement

**Table 9.1 - Inhibitory Behaviours**

## **2.1 Not giving time**

Just under half the managers were identified as, on occasions, not spending sufficient time on development activities. Most of this behaviour was identified by the managers themselves. The predominant cause of this behaviour was managerial workloads and in some instances was due to the manager's personal circumstances. The consequences of not having sufficient time resulted in some managers feeling that

they rushed development activities and ended up being directive (discussed further below in 2.4) rather than giving staff time to think things through, because

...there are times I've thought I should have taken the extra half hour, created a half hour from somewhere and just asked questions and then just gone and left him (BLM3) with it (BSLM3).

Another consequence was that managers felt it might suggest to staff that they did not consider their development important. One senior line manager who realised that at times when she should be focusing on developing a particular line manager she could be diverted by a phone call or the need to attend a meeting elsewhere, something which had frustrated her when she was a first line manager.

It made me think that they were not taking things seriously...now I'm in that position as well and it's about getting things done...It's just about balancing time (ASLM3).

Several staff identified that time constraints on their managers had limited their development. For example, one described how during her supervision sessions with a senior line manager (ASLM5) there could be 'more time for me to be trained and supported' (ALM6). She in turn recognised that because of demands on her time, when establishing a project, she had limited the development of her staff. She now thought 'if I had only had the time back two years ago' (ALM6) the team might have been at a more developed stage. Another line manager had become recently aware that she was:

...mentally trying to rush people because I'm aware that we've got a huge agenda here. Certainly this week I've noticed that there have been at least 3 members of staff I have had to arrange another time to finish off supervision because we haven't got through everything (BLM2).

One line manager acknowledged that she was not giving as much time to a member of staff undertaking an SVQ compared to a previous member of staff. However this had a lot to do with difficult situations the project was facing and her own personal circumstances which 'now are different...so I don't have a lot of free time'. Although she had attempted at times to 'make the time, which was difficult at times...to say

right X whatever's happening we're doing this' (ALM5). In recognition of this she was planning to share the support of the next member of staff undertaking a qualification with a team leader

## **2.2 Being Dogmatic**

Managers behaving dogmatically could be seen at two levels. Firstly, managers dictating how things should be done within their parameters of authority. Secondly, managers expecting staff to work at the same pace as them. This behaviour was demonstrated predominantly by first line managers.

Two first line managers acknowledged that during their early times as a first line manager they were inclined to want things done their way.

I did not allow staff as much expression as they might have had. I was very keen to see things done the way I envisaged them (ALM1).

Right this is the way we do it and this the way we want to do it (ALM6).

One of the latter line manager's team leader whilst finding her generally a supportive manager did give an example of where she felt she had been inhibited by the line manager. The team leader had been adjusting systems within her project but found that the manager felt she was doing this too quickly. The employee disagreed and said that the staff within the project had been consulted and felt that she hadn't been going too fast however her manager had responded,

I'm your manager and you're going too fast for *me* [*long emphasis on 'me' and gentle laughter*] (ASM19).

Two members of one manager's (BLM4) team felt that she was inclined to expect staff to do things her way, indeed one found it:

...really difficult to put something across that might differ from her opinion (BSM6).

A senior manager described how as a first line manager 'if they [*staff*] couldn't do it the way that I wanted it done I would keep my nose in there until it was done' (BSLM4). Now in a more senior position she realised that she could not continue in this way.

A senior line manager (BSLM2) described a situation with a number of his line managers, and one in particular, where there appeared to be a difference in opinions about the standards required for report writing. This had led to one line manager (BLM1) submitting reports with a somewhat negative attitude - 'well tell me what's wrong with it'.

With regards to pace a first line manager (ALM3) felt that whilst he didn't deliberately inhibit learning he was aware that at team meeting that he tended go through things very quickly, which might stifle questions, to get to the items that were of interest to him, thus limiting employees' ability to explore issues they were unsure of.

In addition, several first line managers admitted that they had a tendency to expect their staff to work as quickly as they did and that they needed to change this.

I work at a very different pace from everybody else...[*and have recognised that*] I [*need*] to help people work at their own pace (BLM1).

I had been driving them too hard. My expectations of how they do their job are still the same I want them to do their best, but my expectations of how they do that and when they do have had to change. I've had to just fall back a wee bit from that and to support them in taking breathers at times (ALM5).

The latter manager recognised that she had also been:

...dogmatic about 'I know best' and it's not really coming from 'me' the project leader; it's really coming from 'me' the person (ALM5)

The consequence of this was that she felt she might have:

...driven them to go and do something that they're not at the stage of being comfortable doing it and they therefore do it badly. That then gives them the cycle of 'I'm not good at that', and therefore they do it badly (ALM5).

She felt responsible for creating such negative feelings, which had emerged from her insistence on how particular tasks with service users should be done instead of leaving staff to do it their own way which would probably have resulted in them making:

...a better job of it and that would have given them confidence...and that would have made them feel a lot more confident about it and do it better the next time (ALM5).

In conclusion, this manager recognised that

I hash and bash...I want it all done yesterday...it's about realising that people have got different times...different ways of doing things and also different speed of doing things (ALM5)

### **2.3 Controlling**

Within this category managers tended to have difficulty letting tasks go or to delegate. In addition there was evidence that managers at times interfered in or took over the work of their subordinates.

As in 2.2 a number of first line managers had difficulty letting go in the early stages of their first managerial appointment. One first line manager admitted that in her early months as a manager she had 'probably held the reins much too tightly until I gained confidence' (ALM1). Whilst another acknowledged that she held on to tasks which could be delegated because 'I feel it is my responsibility that I do it' (BLM1). This latter manager admitted wryly that her staff told her 'you need to let go a wee bit more' and she acknowledged that this had inhibited their development, although she felt she was improving in this area and was beginning to recognise the capability of her staff. A senior line manager had some sympathy with one of her first line managers who was 'suspicious about letting things go' because:

## *Developmental Managers*

As a manager I would probably feel the same as a project leader because you are the responsible manager (ASLM6).

She did however feel that now that the manager was into the second year of her job that she was getting to the stage of letting some things go.

I think her development is mainly about letting go and feeling confident enough in others...I think that's coming but I think that's a common theme of any project leader particularly when it's a first project leader post. I think it's very difficult to go for a week's holiday and be in the house and not phone in. I see that she is now doing that. She's happy now that people can phone me and they don't have to come through her and she's now been able to switch off...a year and a half down the line (ASLM6).

The first line manager concerned acknowledged that she had behaved in this way in the early stages of her managerial career and in the project's history.

I think you come into the job thinking I need to know this and I need to be ready to answer this and they [*staff*] were very unsure of what was being asked of them...I carried an awful lot here on my shoulders and it was a case of I'll deal with it, I'll cope with it. I possibly inhibited some of their learning (ALM6).

She also recognised that she had 'inhibited learning by thinking I'd better do it because they'll make a mess of it anyway' rather than delegating tasks. Now she felt she was more likely to respond to queries by saying 'no you do it, you deal with it'. She reported that her senior line manager (ASLM5) had helped her recognise that this behaviour was not only limiting her staff's development but also her own by telling her that:

You need to learn the skill to stop trying to do everything and to take some time out because your staff will put it on you quite willing and you're really inhibiting your development by that...sometimes if you take a phone call and they say this has happened, say 'well get back to me if you can't sort it out'. That's learning because they've got to think on their feet (ALM6).

Another first line manager described how she had previously, when working with staff dealing with service users' problems, had tended to,

solve it all and I don't let the person work through it and I solve it my way. I don't let them do it (BLM1).

This was corroborated by one of her staff who reported that

In the nicest possible way on occasion BLM1 will take over and maybe it is a discussion or something like that working with a service user. It's probably something I've never discussed with her but I think sometimes it is important to let people sink or swim (BSM1).

Even experienced first line managers found it difficult to let go because 'I know at the bottom line the responsibility is mine' particularly during crisis situations (BLM5), and also acknowledged that:

Occasionally they've [*staff*] come to me looking for advice and support to deal with a situation I know that I've probably dealt with it. What I've probably not done is take a step back and said 'well you go and deal with it, I'm here as support'. It probably just comes with the management hat and sometimes I want to get things achieved very quickly and to a satisfactory conclusion. But the down side of that is that by doing it you're not giving the staff the opportunity to deal with it from A to Z. They've maybe gone from A to B and then they've kind of struggled, they've come to me and I've taken it to the end result (BLM5).

In this manager's defence he did engage in debriefing with his staff after such occurrences. However he accepted that he did have a development need here and that he needed:

...to take a step back sometimes and...give them the opportunity to go away and deal with things. I'm maybe still too quick to jump in and deal with things or too quick to ask the right questions (BLM5).

Another experienced line manager gave a specific example of not letting go of a task through an incident where she intrusively monitored staff. Instead of letting a member of staff use a new piece of equipment, which the employee had been trained to use, with a service user on her own, she had made the individual:

...do it with me there rather than letting them go ahead and do it without me there but with me there they fumbled it, they made mistakes. Where if I had been clever I would have let them

do it...I definitely made it worse by my presence and then saying 'no you do this'. Even though I was trying to make the comments and not do it in too harsh a way I was still definitely making them feel they were not good at this and they weren't doing it very well and that was the signal I was giving them (ALM5).

However she had welcomed the fact that the individual concerned had been confident enough to tell her how they had felt:

'...you make me nervous when you're doing that because you're watching me to see if I'm doing it right'.

She then reported that employees had asked her to explain what she expected them to do but:

...to be given the space to do it...almost like I'm an invisible driving test instructor when you're doing it...'we don't mind you checking that it's done right but it's when you kind of hover over us that we're really nervous' (ALM5).

One manager (BLM4), who provided corroborated evidence in Chapter 8 of delegating, didn't always delegate effectively according to two of her staff.

She does delegate but she takes on a lot herself. When I think about inhibiting learning she likes to have a lot of control herself therefore she doesn't really delegate totally to everybody...She'll jump in and by the time you got around to do it it had already been done (BSM7).

Maybe once or twice I've seen her say 'you get on with that' and maybe it's been my day off and I haven't done the thing yet and she has maybe ended up doing the thing or telling other staff 'you need to do that'...not leaving me to get on with that. Sort of feeling that she had to follow it through (BSM5).

When one was asked how she felt when her manager took over a task like this she responded:

...if she had already done it I haven't learned how to do it (BSM5).

A senior line manager admitted ruefully that she had unconsciously undermined a first line manager who had taken over a project that she had previously managed and not surprisingly had felt 'quite precious' about.

I was attending team meetings early on and the staff were debating an issue. Some of the staff thought one thing and some of the staff thought another. ALM3 said something and one of them asked me what did I think about it and I answered it and it disagreed with what ALM3 had said. I just answered from my gut 'this is what I think' and afterwards I thought 'that wasn't fair' (ASLM3).

She realised later that she should have said something vague and spoken after the meeting to the first line manager, to whom she apologised for undermining his authority. She reported that:

I really took it to heart and now I don't answer questions like that and I just step back (ASLM3).

## **2.4 Not thinking**

Two types of behaviours which did not facilitate the cognitive processes of staff were identified. The first of these was a lack of clarity on the part of managers, which impacted on staff understanding creating uncertainty or confusion. The second behaviour was managers being over-directive which discouraged staff from thinking things through themselves, which in the long run inhibited their learning.

### *2.4.1 Not clarifying*

The first two examples show managers not making it clear what their expectations or intentions were. The first concerns a first line manager at the time new to a post and working with a senior line manager she hadn't worked with before. For the first six months she experienced:

...uncertainty...never having done the job before and I hadn't worked with ASLM1 before and I didn't know his expectations (ALM2).

This uncertainty had been compounded by a lack of feedback which is discussed further in 2.8 below.

The second incident involved a first line manager using a creative learning exercise at a team meeting which he later realised that some people hadn't felt:

...wholly comfortable with because I hadn't explained what the intention was...the process was a kind of emerging process that kind of left it up to you what you took from it or not. Rather than being prescriptive and saying this is exactly what is happening. So I think that inhibited some people. There were maybe one or two people who seemed a bit confused about what I was getting at (ALM5).

A senior line manager (BSLM4) recognised that a first line manager's (BLM2) misunderstanding of what were the initial priorities for her project had inhibited the learning of staff who may have become uncertain about where their roles were going.

Lack of understanding was also revealed in interactions between a first line manager and a senior line manager who have contrasting learning styles, the former is an activist whilst the latter is a theorist. The senior line manager described how the first line manager possibly didn't 'understand what I'm actually talking about' (BSLM2) with regard to the purposes of specific written work. The first line manager confirmed that at times he inhibited her learning when 'he rambles on too much about theories because he just loses me' (BLM1). However due to them having a good overall relationship she was able to tell him you know you're wasting my brain you'll need to stop [*laughter*]!

Another senior line manager realised during the course of his interview that he had amended a first line manager's (BLM5) work without explaining why.

I've never explicitly discussed this with him and I'll need to do that (BSLM3).

He also recognised that he had not taken the time go back over such work and to get the manager to do it again, an omission which might have left the manager feeling less comfortable and competent with this activity than he might otherwise have been.

One of his other first line managers whilst generally finding him supportive did feel at times he didn't communicate 'as clearly as probably he would want' (BLM3). However, the first line manager was quite comfortable in letting him know this.

#### *2.4.2 Being overly directive*

Some senior line managers recognised that they inhibited learning through a tendency to give answers rather than give staff time to work out things for themselves, particularly when time was tight.

I think sometimes giving people advice when they're in a management role can be quite inhibiting when they're learning. A much more effective way long term is to let them reach their own conclusions and guide, facilitate them in that process. I'm not always the best at that especially under pressure when you want the right thing done now. I think there have been occasions where I've given her [ALM2] quite specific advice rather than help her out (ASLM1).

...giving her [BLM4] answers rather than making her seek them herself...It's tempting sometimes just to cut to the chase and sort something rather than 'saying you go and deal with that' (BSLM1).

One of the above senior managers had observed one of his first line managers (ALM1) moving gradually from a directive style of management to a more facilitative style, unlike previously where:

...she had been used to getting people together, tell them what the roster is, tell them what's on today, which parts of the building different people are going to be patrolling, what service users have specific difficulties and things like please remember that dirty laundry *must* be placed in the bin (ASLM1).

Whereas now she was:

...moving on to a culture where she's actually working *with* people on their actual skills, strengths and weaknesses and helping them to learn (ASLM1).

His assessment could be confirmed by the researcher. During the researcher's visit to this project she observed a professional but relaxed atmosphere. Staff identified numerous examples of positive developmental behaviours and no inhibitory examples. The researcher also found that the manager had grown in confidence since previous meetings with her.

## **2.5 Being unassertive**

Few managers were identified as not being assertive at times. This ranged from being aggressive through speaking sharply or brusquely to staff, not listening to staff or not providing encouragement that staff might have deserved.

Managers talking sharply, brusquely or forthrightly may make staff feel reluctant to approach their manager or feel that their needs are not being recognised. This following example demonstrates a first line manager emphasising this to her senior line manager (ASLM5) following a telephone call on the day of her interview with the researcher.

‘...you were quite sharp and I appreciate you've got x y and z projects but here is important to me...when I phone you up asking for advice or informing you of something I'm doing it for a reason I'm not just doing it’ (ALM6).

A senior line manager acknowledged that she was a powerful character and that in the past there were times she hadn't given people ‘their place to speak’ (BSLM4).

Not listening to staff was acknowledged by one first line manager who admitted at times that she had:

...not been listening to the person and clearly not picking up the signals about they're uncomfortable with something or they're unsure (ALM5).

This was corroborated by one of her staff who, whilst acknowledging the overall support from the manager, felt that the manager:

...has a tendency to talk maybe a bit too much and maybe not just listening to what my real fear would be sometimes. That's very rare but sometimes when she's harassed and stressed she's a tendency to think 'that this is the problem' and she gives an answer and I've not got anything out of it. That's not the problem I've given...sometimes I feel a bit rushed (ASM16).

The tension in this particular interaction may also reflect the two individuals' contrasting learning styles. The manager is an activist/pragmatist whilst the employee is a reflector/theorist. The latter requires time to think things through, whilst the former is wanting to get on with things, and this has clearly been exacerbated by the pressures the manager was under at the time of the interaction.

A first line manager admitted that early in her managerial career she had lost her temper when reprimanding a member of staff and that she had undertaken, inappropriately, supervision with him when she was angry.

I went on a bit of a tirade, left the guy feeling wrecked probably but not very clear about how he was going to approach and sort these issues out...I gave him a great big row (BLM4).

Following this incident she felt very badly about how she had behaved and several days later apologised to the member of staff concerned. She confirmed that they had managed to resolve it by reconvening the supervision session a couple of days later, after she had reflected on her behaviour and considered how she could rebuild their relationship. Since then the individual's performance had improved immensely and indeed he has gained promotion. However she acknowledged had she left it after the first meeting 'he would have learned nothing'.

A subtler example of inhibiting staff was provided by a first line manager who recognised that she hadn't encouraged a member of staff to go for promotion. Partly because she herself didn't seem too interested in management activities but also because her work was somewhat untidy to the extent the manager would joke 'don't dare put your pen to that ledger'. She acknowledged that:

I probably didn't push it...but possibly I should have bit the bullet and never minded if the ledger looked a bit scraggy and encouraged her (ALM1).

She now wondered if the staff member's disinterest in management had been generated by her not encouraging the individual in the way she should have, which she now felt bad about. A consequence of this was that when a vacancy came up the individual had not gained the experience to enable her to apply.

## **2.6 Being task-orientated**

There was evidence that some managers found it challenging to balance operational and developmental duties, or task and people activities. A senior line manager vividly described the need for this balancing act.

I think we are having to become much more diligent in our management of resources and the responsibilities of a manager as a developer and maybe have to compromise. I think you need to be careful about how much attention you pay to both these sides. It may be right where the resource side takes precedence...and I say that inhibits you (ASLM6).

An outcome of this tension was articulated by a first line manager (ALM6) who felt that in supervision sessions with her senior line manager (ASLM5), whom she found generally supportive, she had to keep bringing her development needs up because the sessions were dominated by discussion about the service users and the project.

Another first line manager felt that her supervision with her manager (BSLM4):

...has been so task-orientated I don't really feel there's been space to look at what I need to do in terms of my own personal learning and development (BLM2).

She in turn had been described by her senior manager as focusing more on task than people issues within her project during her early days with the project. The first line manager herself acknowledged her task focus.

I am very task orientated I know I am but for people who aren't like that then I think that's hard because they may feel 'I'm not being given the space and time to learn' (BLM2).

A particular challenge for first line managers was trying to balance needs of staff with the needs of service users. One recognised that during a period of stressful circumstances with service users that she was:

...almost seeing the needs of service users more than I was seeing the needs of the whole group [*staff*] (ALM5).

She became aware of this when staff sickness levels began to rise so she had to 'refocus'.

It should be noted that the line manager above was recognised by senior management and her staff as being committed to staff development. She was clearly frustrated that at times the situation within her project, due to changes in service users' health, had limited her ability to support staff development at times. Given her level of commitment this inability may well have been stressful for her.

Finally, a staff member believed that his manager felt that:

...service users are priority, which is right, but often the right of workers can be neglected (BSM7).

## **2.7 Withholding Information**

Within this category managers and staff provided evidence of behaviours that inhibited the acquisition of knowledge due to limited sharing of information or restricted access to experiential opportunities.

The first two examples demonstrate managers recognising that they had provided limited opportunities for learning for staff at times when they themselves were still learning aspects of their jobs which they did not feel fully confident in.

In the first example a first line manager acknowledged that she had not instructed a junior member of staff in a complex administrative task because she herself found it challenging and was 'just getting the hang of it' (ALM4).

In the second example a senior line manager acknowledged that when establishing himself in his current role, particularly with the external agencies in his region, he did not give his line managers the same opportunities 'because I was more concerned that I knew the people and how things worked' (BSLM1). He recognised that this would have been a period that would have been:

...quite inhibiting, they would feel they never really had the chance to come along and sit in some of these meetings where they would have reasonably had something to contribute to it (BSLM1).

He did however state that he was now addressing this issue and was working with first line managers to give them:

...that level of exposure and letting them have a chance to get the broader picture as well.

Another senior line manager also acknowledged that limited involvement in such activities could inhibit the development of first line managers. She was aware, due to reasons of commercial sensitivity, that she had not fully involved a first line manager in negotiations with a purchaser, nor had she been able to give them as much information as she would have liked. She recognised that this:

...must have been really frustrating for them because they've not been really involved and therefore have no sense of responsibility and have no sense of control of the situation because it was taken completely out of their control (BSLM4).

The difficulties caused by incomplete transfer of information were highlighted by a member of staff given a sudden temporary promotion. Whilst welcoming the fact that her manager had written down a lot of key information as a basis for assuming this managerial responsibility she had found there were gaps in the information provided.

It was all the bits in between that she [ALM1] knows in her head that hadn't been put down. Maybe if I had observed her doing a few things it might have been different. That would have shown me better how to tie things up (ASM13).

## **2.8 Not assessing**

### *2.8.1 Failing to recognise needs*

Few managers were described as not recognising, to some extent the development needs of their staff. This is not surprising given firstly, the generally positive assessment of these managers, and secondly, the developmental systems integral to people management in these organisations, particularly supervision and appraisal/SDR.

Two of the examples identified were not only concerned with the content of development needs, i.e. the skills gaps of staff, but were also concerned with managers lacking knowledge of the ways their staff preferred to learn.

Learning about people's different strengths and people's different learning styles as well is another thing I need to look at actually because obviously there are things that come up and I discuss it with people and things don't happen out of the discussion. I think well I sat down and I was quite plain about that this is not happening and this is what needs to happen, why is it not happening? I've tried to explore it but maybe that's not the best way for that person to learn (BLM1).

A senior line manager who felt that a first line manager, who had a tendency to focus on the task rather than people, had not recognised that:

...to develop the service, you have to develop the individuals as well (BSLM4).

A consequence of this was that staff were 'a bit frightened' that they might not have the skills to move with the project. She had however recently sat down with the first line manager and they had discussed the:

...need to think about the staff and how we take them along with us and how we develop their abilities (BSLM4).

The first line manager acknowledged her limitations in this area.

I haven't fully looked into what are peoples' different learning styles and I haven't really taken account of what it means if you haven't got a qualification because it means you haven't had that chance to step back (BLM2).

Interestingly she was one of a number of respondents who asked the researcher for a copy of Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire. She intended to use it as a developmental tool during a team development day, which was part of her strategy for addressing her previous shortcomings regarding staff development. Her senior line manager felt that this team development event would help the staff group as a whole work as a team, as up until this point the first line manager had tended to focus, very successfully, on the development of a particular individual within her team. However, she now needed to consider the development of the wider team.

Finally, one first line manager felt that her senior line manager (BSLM1) could be more proactive in helping to identify her development needs. She thought he maybe found it difficult to do this and that he may not be 'skilled in identifying development needs' (BLM4).

### *2.8.2 Failing to provide feedback*

In the previous chapter there was clear evidence that both managers and staff recognised the contribution of clear feedback and constructive criticism to learning. Only two of the sample population were described as not always delivering appropriate feedback. However, staff gave examples of other managers who had not provided sufficient or appropriate feedback and emphasised the importance of clear and constructive feedback for effective work-based learning.

A first line manager described how during her probationary period in her first appointment as a manager she had received little feedback from her senior line manager (ASLM1).

The first couple of months I was thinking 'am I doing OK?' and I wasn't really getting any feedback 'that yes you're fine'. I had to wait until my first SDR to come up at the end of my 6 month probation and I'm thinking 'how is this going to go?' because I just didn't have a clue about what was going to come through that (ALM2).

Clearly in this situation the manager was looking for reassurance through feedback that she was performing effectively in this promoted role. Interestingly with regard to the senior line manager he was described in Chapter 8 by another newly promoted manager as providing her with reassuring feedback. This perhaps demonstrates that managers do not behave consistently with all staff or at all times.

A senior line manager recognised that one of the development needs of one of her first line managers was to learn how to give constructive criticism as she found it difficult to give negative feedback.

She [ALM4] doesn't like the negative side of developing staff...if she's got problems which she needs to address which are negative...she will either leave them out or not address them. She's unsure at the moment about how to turn them into positives. She needs to learn how to turn the negatives into positives. I think she's struggling with that at the moment...She recognises ASM3's good points and not so good points but I think she needs to work on the less good points (ASLM4).

The importance of giving effective feedback was highlighted by several respondents who described previous unsatisfactory experiences, with managers not included in the sample population, which had inhibited their learning.

Two described how they didn't get specific enough feedback or constructive feedback from previous supervisors, in sharp contrast to the highly effective feedback they now got from their current manager.

The support I got in my supervision wasn't direct enough, it wasn't specific enough...it was very general and it didn't help. You would go away wondering 'I didn't really get a lot out of that. I didn't get specific things that I need to go away and think about' (BSM12).

I've worked in places where I've just been very much just left to get along with what I'm doing and have had very little feedback and I've assumed that I'm doing alright because I haven't had any negative feedback...I remember an instance where that was happening. I was just tootling along thinking 'well I guess I'm doing alright because nobody has said 'no that's wrong'. Then after a few months something did come up, it wasn't a major issue, but the manager said to me 'maybe you shouldn't have done that, you should have done this'. That was a bolt out of the blue because I felt that all of the good work up until that point had been

disregarded and that it was only the negative thing that was picked on. I don't mind negative criticism if it's constructive obviously but for it only to be negative I think is really damaging for me anyway (BSM4).

These examples demonstrate the confusion, uncertainty and even hurt felt by staff caused by inadequate feedback.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter has addressed the research question exploring what managers do to inhibit learning.

A feature that has emerged from the analysis is the inter-relationship between behaviours. In particular, there were links seen between being short of time and being directive with staff and there was clear evidence that inexperienced managers were more likely to demonstrate controlling and dogmatic behaviours. Insufficient allocation of time to development activities was also often compounded by managers trying to balance operational and developmental responsibilities. These behaviours either singly or combined could leave staff feeling that their development needs were being neglected.

As already suggested above inexperienced managers, particularly at the first line level, were more likely to behave in controlling or dogmatic ways. A number of consequences emerged from such behaviours. A possible consequence of such behaviours could be the potential stifling of creativity and innovation in grassroots staff. Dogmatic behaviour could lead to staff feeling reluctant to approach managers with alternative perspectives or feeling pressurised into working in ways or at a pace which was uncomfortable for them, which in turn could lead to staff making mistakes contributing to a lack of confidence on their part. Thus a vicious cycle could be created with managers acting in a more dogmatic or controlling way because they did not feel staff were competent. The tendency of some managers to take over or to interfere in work activities denied staff the opportunities to work through problems themselves which meant they were unable to maximise learning opportunities.

In terms of thinking inhibitors two behaviours were exhibited. Lack of clarity demonstrated by managers led to staff feeling confused and uncertain, thus impacting on their confidence. Several managers acknowledged that at times they were over-directive. This second behaviour was linked to the controlling and temporal behaviours described above. The former reflected the managers' desire to have things done their way. The latter reflected managers giving quick answers or advice because they were under time pressures rather than allowing staff time to think.

The lack of assertiveness demonstrated at times by a few managers contributed to staff feeling that they could not always approach their manager, or that their needs were not being recognised. Other outcomes from such behaviour were that problems may not have been picked up and thus resolved, and that through lack of encouragement opportunities for development may have been missed.

There was clearly a tension between the demands for operational and developmental activities, which was described as 'a balancing act'. Where there was an apparent over-emphasis on operational activities staff could feel, as with lack of time, that their development needs were being neglected. This was clearly a cause of tension for some managers who felt guilty about their neglect of staff development. There is clearly a need for organisations to get this balance right because if staff development needs are not dealt with effectively then ultimately service users' needs will not be met as effectively as possible and thus operational capabilities will be compromised.

There was limited evidence that staff were not getting full access to information or experiences that prevented them seeing the full context of particular situations. This could contribute to a lack of understanding or feelings of lack of involvement on the part of staff. Such behaviour was caused by a number of factors: managers needing to gain confidence themselves before transmitting or sharing information; lack of full recognition of the need to make tacit knowledge explicit; and commercial sensitivities.

There were few examples of staff development needs not being identified. The examples discussed not only concerned the content of development needs but were also concerned with managers needing to understand how their staff learned. This

would suggest that a possible development need for managers as developers is training in how people learn. As described in Chapters 6 and 7 both case study organisations have begun to recognise this need and have recently introduced training courses for managers which explore elements of adult learning. Interestingly a number of managers requested Honey and Mumford's Learning Style questionnaire to use with their staff teams (and in some instances with their partners!).

As noted in Chapter 8 staff and managers stressed the need for feedback, constructive criticism and recognition of good performance. Only two examples of insufficient feedback were provided by respondents, which respectively created uncertainty for the staff member concerned and failed to address problem performance areas. However, several respondents reiterated, through discussion of experiences with previous managers, the limiting or damaging effects of unspecific feedback or feedback that only focuses on negative aspects of performance.

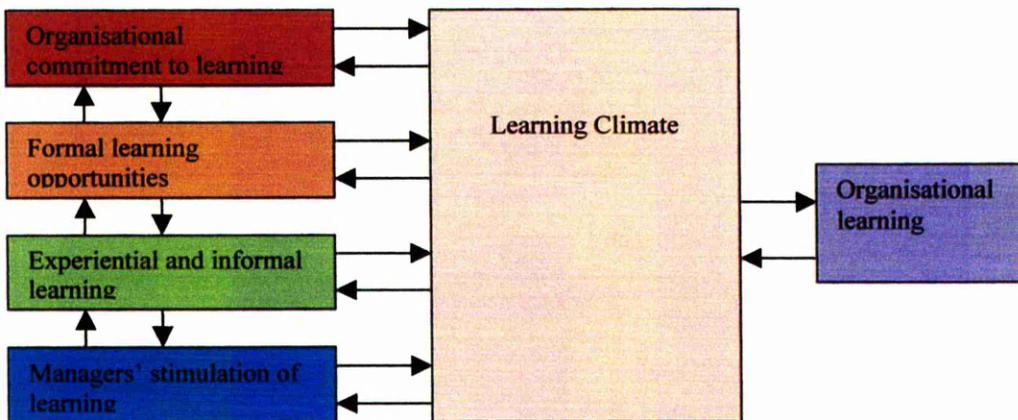
Some positive aspects did emerge from the analysis of inhibitory behaviours. Firstly, there was evidence that managers recognised their faults and were trying to remedy them. Indeed there was evidence that it was possible for managers to change their behaviour. Managers provided examples of shifts in their behaviours through their self-analysis and in some instances these behavioural changes were noted in senior managers' observations of junior managers as they gained confidence in their management role. Secondly, the willingness of some staff to tell their managers that they were inhibiting their learning demonstrated the generally positive nature of their developmental relationships.

Finally, there is a clear need to make managers aware of the nature of inhibitory behaviours and the impact such behaviours may have on staff development. In particular there was clear evidence that inexperienced first line managers needed support with staff development responsibilities. How these development needs may be met will be discussed in Chapters 11 and 12.

**CHAPTER 10 LEARNING CLIMATE AND OUTCOMES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The question being addressed in this chapter is the influence of different learning variables on each other. The chapter therefore examines the possible interaction between learning climate, organisational practices and the actions of managers to assess whether they are influenced by or have an influence on each other. The potential interaction is presented below in Figure 10.1.



**Figure 10.1 – Potential interaction of learning variables**

The learning climate was explored by asking key informants, managers and staff to describe the culture of their organisations. Managers and staff were also asked questions regarding their attitude to self-development, and to describe their most recent learning experience in the workplace to discern attitudes to learning. Relevant documentation was also examined. As with previous chapters examples of responses are provided for illustrative purposes.

Five themes emerged from this analysis: organisational commitment to learning; role of formal learning opportunities and processes; the impact of experiential and informal learning; the role of managers in stimulating a positive learning culture; and finally, the status of organisational learning in both organisations.

## **2. ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO LEARNING**

Quarriers' commitment to staff development was articulated by their Chief Executive in the Staff Development and Training Handbook (1997).

The organisation has sought to keep its staff development priorities and commitments alive, despite financially tough circumstances, because we believe this will reward us richly by producing a professional staff group, committed to continuous improvement and quality services.

Their IiP assessment (1998) indicated that staff believed the organisation had a long-term commitment to developing individuals, which was corroborated by respondents in this research study.

It's an organisation that attempts to have a learning culture, recognising that it's important that staff have training (ASM13).

An ALC described RFS as having 'a very developmental culture' and that the organisation had 'made a commitment from the top with IiP'. Many respondents supported this. For example, one described the organisation's commitment to HRD as positive and suggested that the shift from training to learning was having an impact in the workplace.

I think at one time everybody thought that meant going on a training day but now we're into recognising different ways of learning such as reading, getting a video or just having small coaching sessions (BSM5).

Another respondent highlighted that there was external recognition of the organisation's commitment to learning.

I think the culture of the organisation is very much geared towards learning and development...In all the inspection reports that come in from the different areas all over the country the inspectors are delighted at the amount of support we offer our staff...Staff when asked by the inspectors say they are being very much supported to improve themselves and develop. I think RFS is recognised as being very supportive in that way to staff (BLM6).

The two organisations' commitment to learning is further illustrated by the range of learning activities available to staff, some of which are described below.

### **3. FORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Formal learning activities such as attendance at internal and external courses, conferences and seminars were popular with both staff and managers. A few staff, who preferred on-the-job learning, didn't value some courses. However, overall these opportunities were valued as exemplified by a relatively new member staff who had changed career direction.

I really feel the organisation has been really good in having all this [*central training programme*] for me to go to. And you talk it over in supervision with your supervisor, what you would like to be developing in (BSM6).

Respondents were able to provide examples of putting learning from such formal training into practice.

The whole time I was doing the course I was thinking about somebody in here (ASM15).

For example, SCIP<sup>34</sup> training, delivered by line managers at Quarriers, was cited by several respondents as giving them confidence in dealing with challenging behaviour.

[It] made you put yourself in the position of the service users...we were talking about non-verbal communication and actually doing role-play, which made you really, really think (ASM14).

Several managers and employees were engaged in academic or vocational study e.g. the Certificate in Social Work Management, HNC Social care or SVQs. Some employees were studying in their own time or contributing to the funding of their studies.

Another valued outcome of these formal learning activities was the opportunity to network with others, either within or outwith the organisation. Several managers, for

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<sup>34</sup> Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention

example, played key roles in special interest groups such as the British Institute of Learning Disability and the Scottish Inclusion network. The latter has now:

...evolved into a learning group of the organisations that participate and for the individuals that participate in the group. So there is a lot of shared learning through organisational exchange, through current practice trends exchange (ASLM6).

Some respondents argued that such networks of voluntary sector organisations demonstrate a cultural difference towards learning between the voluntary and statutory sectors, and that there was greater encouragement to learn in the voluntary sector due to less inhibiting bureaucracy.

There was, however, some evidence that particular groups of staff had less access to such formal learning opportunities. For example, a few Quarriers' staff, from outwith its Headquarters area, commented that they found it difficult to access central training courses due to travel problems.

There was also recognition that the development of non-care and peripheral staff had been relatively neglected in comparison to core social care staff.

I think we have to remember admin staff, domestic staff...they tend to get overlooked. I think we've got to think about sessional staff. They're not just people who come in to fill in for us; they've got exactly the same rights as other staff. We need to think about volunteers who play a quasi-staff role... We always have to remember that staff in other departments who are not in direct care roles also have exactly the same need for learning and development (ASLM1).

It should, however, be noted that both organisations were in the process of introducing an SVQ3 in administration for junior administrative staff at the time of the research study. The researcher also found that first line managers tried to include peripheral staff in workplace learning activities.

Notwithstanding the organisational commitment described in Section 2 above staff were expected to take responsibility for their own learning. This was emphasised by managers through 2-way discussion at supervision and appraisal/SDRs and by

empowering staff to develop their own professional development plans in discussion with their line manager.

I would like to think that the development that people have, the influences that people have is a two-way process. It's not a done-to thing; it's not a mushroom management situation. It's a lot of negotiations at all levels with people, which I think is a great thing (ASLM4).

These organisational processes were recognised as providing opportunities for learning. Appraisal/SDR, for example, provides a process for staff similar to the person-centred planning and review process for service users.

When I was doing the work for my 6 months review, filling out the review sheet I suppose that made me think about the things that I have learned since I came here and what I need to learn (ASM20).

#### **4. EXPERIENTIAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

Considerable learning took place outwith the formal setting of the organisations' training rooms.

A lot of the learning actually goes on informally and sometimes formally within team meetings and away days (Director of Quality).

Many respondents indicated that they learnt all the time through experience and practice. Experiential learning emerged from new tasks, dealing with difficult situations, temporary promotions and secondments. For employees such learning tended to revolve round their dealings with service users. For managers such experiential learning typically revolved learning about managing staff.

I think as a manager you're always learning because you have to always be able to react to different people within the organisation in different ways because people are different, their circumstances are different as well (ASLM5).

Reflective processes were not only perceived in supervisory practices but also through individuals engaging in reflection on their own. For example, a first line manager

(BLM5) described how he reflected on his discussions with service users to improve his practice. Whilst several managers and staff described how they reflected on their day at work on their journey home.

Learning from experience also included learning from things that went wrong. For example a team leader reflected on a team day which did not go as well as hoped.

I suppose the learning that I came away with was thinking 'what did we do wrong? How could we have maybe made that better?' (ASM19).

A second example illustrates an employee reflecting on a mistake through the process of completing a learning log for her college course.

I had a bad night a couple of weeks ago and when I went home I couldn't switch off. So what I did was I wrote out a reflection and it was a learning exercise because then I realised a mistake that I had made. It was a big mistake and I could have avoided it. It made me more aware of situations that I could be in that I shouldn't really be in the first place (ASM10).

Several managers described how they had learned from dealing with disciplinary investigations.

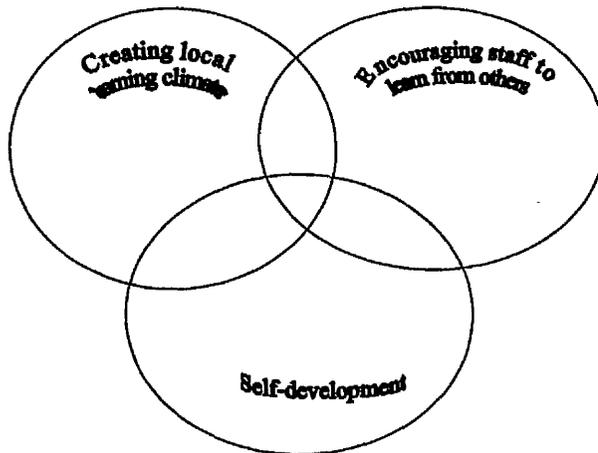
It makes you review what you are doing and I find that a huge learning experience because you stop and think about it and you do start to piece things together and see how things could go wrong (ASLM5).

More informal learning came through such activities such as reading journals e.g. *Community Care*, books and organisational policies. Several staff used sleepovers to catch up with reading. Other media such as TV documentaries and the Internet were also mentioned.

## **5. MANAGERS' CONTRIBUTION TO STIMULATING LEARNING**

With regards to managers' contributions to stimulating learning three aspects have emerged from the case study analyses: the role of managers in creating local learning climates; their encouragement of staff to learn from others; and their demonstration of

the worth of learning through their own self-development practices. Their interaction is presented in Figure 10.2 below.



**Figure 10.2 Managers stimulating learning**

### **5.1. Creating a learning climate**

It was acknowledged that line managers played an important role in influencing the local learning climate within their services.

I think it is about having the culture right, that people know you're not perfect. That mistakes are all right and most are actually remedied quite quickly. I feel that if you get the atmosphere right people can be quite creative but you need to actually have the atmosphere right for people. I think if it becomes closed-in people become fearful about their jobs etc...I think it is about people wanting to help (ALC).

One manager described the type of climate he tried to create where:

...people could have a laugh and not feel worried about making mistakes, making mistakes seem funny like 'oh here she comes with the petty cash'...you make it fun...you make mistakes allowable, obviously not the big ones, but wee mistakes because everyone makes them, let's have a laugh about it (BLM3).

The same manager used football as a metaphor to describe how he was trying to create a culture where his staff saw themselves as the best 'team' in the organisation.

It's about promoting a culture that we're the best. I think that's quite important because people feel good about going to their work and they're working for a joint cause. I always relate management to football management...You're leading a team and it's like leading a football team but you've got different positions and you're always going to have a star in every team but the rest of them have to work just as hard and everybody should be appreciated for the things they do. You get the ones that aren't great in some skills but maybe they are good in other areas, so it's kind of balancing it all out and making people feel special when they go to work and making them feel part of something special...They go into [central] training a lot more confident talking about their work and what they're doing. They feel as if they're working in a really good project. That filters through...the service users feel that as well. Fortunately we've got the evidence to prove it like inspection reports. The recent one has no recommendations so that proved it...It's given them feedback and the credit for it as well (BLM3).

Another example was provided by an employee who stressed that her line manager had helped turn round the atmosphere and performance of a previously poorly performing part of the organisation.

There is respect between project leader, team leaders and support workers...there's times when we laugh [*the researcher heard plenty of evidence the day she spent in the project*], there's times when you're there to support colleagues no matter if it's something personal at home or something that is happening in the workplace. There's always a shoulder to cry on or somebody to laugh with. Years ago [*the project*] was isolated from the rest of [the organisation] and we kind of acquired the reputation that the staff were all dowdy and miserable. Now I think that our reputation has improved...and I think that's down to ALM2 (ASM5).

As seen previously in Chapter 8 caring behaviours, such as support and approachability, played an important part in creating a learning culture. The encouragement from managers motivated staff both for work and study. A team leader described how her line manager (ALM6) had encouraged her to develop a training programme for service users that she had thought of herself, providing a good example of grassroots staff influencing the development of practice within the organisation. Her manager helped her prioritise work to progress this project and had offered further help if required. This had made her feel enthused about the task.

## *Developmental Managers*

I felt that I wanted to go and start it tomorrow [*said with great enthusiasm*]... You know you feel quite motivated when you know there is an acknowledgement from your manager that what you are wanting to do is important (ASM19).

Several senior managers demonstrated their active engagement with staff development by working alongside first line managers in training their staff on a range of practice issues including one (ASLM4) who had:

...come in on a Saturday morning a couple of times because he wanted to be involved in the...training with staff...he just came in casually and sat with staff and we can't get him out when he comes in [*said with a smile*] (ALM5).

Managers facilitated learning, not only by supporting staff access to the formal learning opportunities described in Section 2 above, but also by identifying resources people could access or enabling individuals to engage in new experiences.

The view was expressed that most people were happy to learn as long as you focused on their way of learning.

There's no point telling the activist to sit there and do that theory first because you have lost them. It was really helpful for me to think about the different learning styles and how people learn and then try and tailor things to that person (ALC).

A first line manager (BLM3) described how he used learning and development portfolios and learning style questionnaires to identify individuals' learning needs and their preferred way(s) of learning. Several other managers had also used or were intending to use learning style questionnaires with their staff. However, it should be noted that one respondent, a Psychology graduate, expressed reservations about learning style theory believing it could lead to individuals being pigeon-holed.

Another, despite being a strong activist, recognised the importance of reading and stressed the importance of this to her staff team.

I point them to a book or there's lots of stuff on SVQs that I'll make available to other people...and I'll say 'have a read at that, that's really good, it's an enjoyable read, it's not heavy' (ALM5).

She also described how she encouraged staff to read a particular novel to help them empathise with service users coming to terms with their condition.

Several staff in one project described how their manager (ALM2) supported their HNC studies by creating a file for them containing information on policies, legislation etc. The same manager also recognised that a night shift worker doing an HNC was not getting the full range of experience necessary to complete college assessments.

She took me to a review the other week and she also took me to a new referral for a service user. That was new for me because that side I've never ever seen before...but now I can relate to the stuff that will come up at college...So I think its about giving you the fuller picture, because I think sometimes that night shift can be quite isolating (ASM10).

A support worker reported that she had recently been asked to take responsibility for organising a planning meeting for a service user. Whilst welcoming this learning opportunity she was concerned about a possible gap in her practical skills, however her worry had been eased by her manager providing her with the resources to develop this new skill.

At a planning meeting we want to involve the service user as much as possible so we use graphics as well and I'm terrible at graphics and I was really worried about doing them especially in front of an audience and trying to speak. But ALM3 had got a book from HQ and had actually photocopied the universal graphics that everyone understands like drawing a man (ASM14).

The researcher was able to observe the outcome of this work as all the service users' plans are given pride of place within the project, enabling the service users to communicate with staff and others what their personal priorities are.

## **5.2 Learning from others**

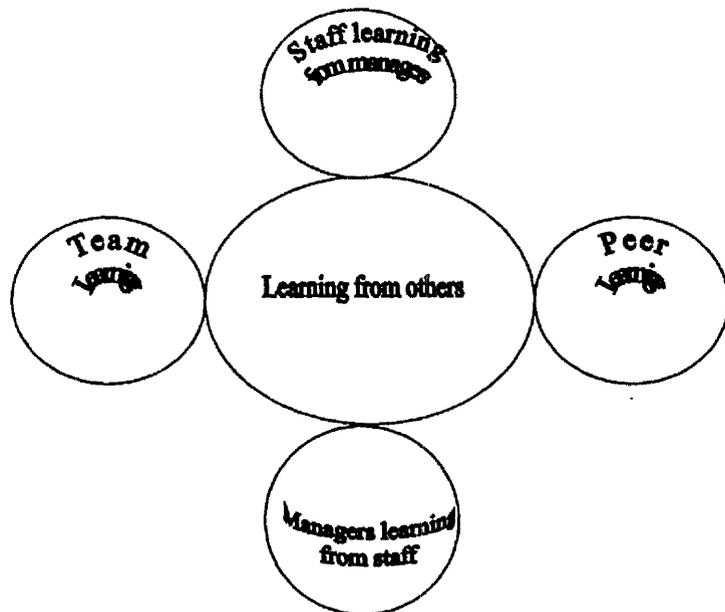
A key indicator that both organisations generally had an encouraging learning climate could be seen by the considerable evidence that people engaged significantly in learning from others at all levels. Much of this learning had been stimulated by line managers who encouraged sharing of knowledge within teams, within the organisation and outwith the organisation.

For example a very experienced first line manager reported how she had not only found the guidance from her senior line manager (ASLM4) invaluable, but also welcomed his encouragement to network with other managers in the organisation.

He'll say... 'why don't you go and speak to so and so about that'. So he uses his network for all the other projects, he says 'speak to ALM6 about that, because I know she does something about that so you can link in with her'. So he's great at helping me link up with the right people at the right time (ALM5).

This example provides evidence of a manager, as did others, recognising that employees across the organisation have expertise to offer by advising their direct reports to access their help. This view was also articulated in HRD strategy documents.

That managers can be viewed as playing a pivotal role in encouraging learning from others could be seen in a range of interactions, as demonstrated by Figure 10.3 and the following discussion below. Learning from others included: staff learning from managers; learning from peers; team learning; and managers learning from staff.



**Figure 10.3 – Managers’ Pivotal Role in Encouraging Learning from others**

### 5.2.1 *Staff Learning from Managers*

Clearly, Chapter 8 has explored this in considerable detail, however a few examples are provided here for illustrative purposes. Firstly, staff acknowledged learning from the experience of managers.

I like learning from people who have got more experience than myself. I like listening to what they’ve seen happening and how they’ve seen things evolve and the way things are now (ASM16).

Secondly, managers sharing experience was recognised as helping staff learn how to work with service users and deal with day to day tasks. For example an inexperienced member of staff identified how her line manager (ALM2) by sharing her experience made her think differently about how to deal with a specific service user.

There’s been times when I’ve been in the sitting room and because she used to be on the shopfloor she’s said ‘oh does he like it this way because he didn’t before?’ and I’ll say ‘what did he do before’ and then she’ll tell you (ASM9).

Another relatively new junior member of staff (BSM11) had been worried about undertaking a task of which she had had no prior experience. She had raised her concerns in a supervision session with her supervisor (BLM6) who had responded by 'giving me a few practical hints' to help her.

Finally, some interactions demonstrated managers and staff recognising that learning was 2-way through the mutual exchange of ideas and information. A team leader described how she and her manager (ALM3) had bounced ideas off each other to generate possible solutions to deal with a particularly difficult situation with a service user by:

Just talking about different things that we could be looking at, bringing different ideas. I've maybe got set ideas, ALM3 has maybe got something else and by comparing ideas that we've got and trying to come to a solution from there (ASM2).

### *5.2.2 Peer Learning*

Whilst neither organisation has a formal mentoring scheme the view was expressed by key respondents that mentoring, hierarchical and peer, occurred informally in each organisation, although it was not labelled as such. The key informants saw this as a positive development and felt there was no need for such developmental relationships to be 'approved' by the HR Departments.

There were many examples of informal learning between peers taking place at all levels within both organisations.

I can phone up one of the other project leaders and say do you think this would be OK? (ALM5).

Physical proximity was seen to facilitate peer learning.

We all share an office and we all bounce things off each other...it's more of an informal support kind of thing. We learn from each other just from chats (ASLM3).

One team leader described how she got help from a fellow team leader when she had to deal with a performance problem with a member of staff.

She gave me some information to do a piece of work with the worker and it really helped. I would have gone in blindly and I don't know if I would have been so successful if we hadn't discussed it. I think the thing is about sharing, I mean I've done it with her. I've said 'have you tried this?' So it's about supporting each other with our learning...Of course she phoned later on the day 'how did it go?' [*said with great emphasis*] and reflecting on it 'it went really well' (ASM19).

A first line manager described how she had provided guidance to a fellow manager (ALM2) who had had difficulty in delegating, stressing that she had to take care not to be too prescriptive, given that it was a peer she was assisting.

I think it's not a matter of dictating in any shape or form but actually just facilitating and suggesting and kind of exploring various situations and options. Helping the other person to see some advantages in what is happening but being very open and accessible and discussing and sharing things not dictating (ALM1).

A group of head office staff, with a professional interest in learning, has formed a mutual 'mentoring group'. Other groups of staff have also established informal networks for learning.

Several first line managers mentioned that they participated in 'networks' with peers. One described how she had:

...gone out of my way to develop relationships with other first line managers and I feel I have had good support from them (BLM2).

This manager in turn encouraged her staff to share knowledge and ideas by establishing a peer support group where:

...staff can have time out to just look at practice issues (BLM2).

Another example provided was a group of first line managers meeting every couple of months for an informal lunch.

That's where you can get to know about things. You couldn't write an agenda or write up a minute, but it's really about keeping in touch with them (ALM2).

At the senior level peer learning was also valued. One senior line manager described how he liked on an informal basis to:

...debate with people who have a level of well-tested practice and experience (BSLM3).

### *5.2.3 Team Learning*

Learning in teams was also valued.

You learn from others obviously, not just your seniors but also the other staff. They all come from different backgrounds and have different experience so listening to and observing them is a great advantage (BSM8).

Line managers were involved in facilitating team learning. For example, a senior line manager described a team building event he had facilitated to help a relatively new team in the organisation assimilate the organisation's values. He stressed to the team that he didn't want them to adopt the values because they had to but because they recognised that the organisation's approach to care was valid. He then emphasised that they too could influence organisational decisions and actions by putting forward their ideas and sharing their experiences, and that there was a mutual learning relationship as,

...we'll be influenced by you as much as you'll be influenced by us; a reciprocal relationship of information sharing (ASLM4).

A first line manager, who was very keen on using creative approaches to stimulate learning, described how he had experimented at a team meeting by sharing his knowledge of learning processes, in particular Edward de Bono's thinking hats idea. He took six different coloured hats to a staff meeting and said:

'I've got this information and I just want to throw it your way' (ALM3).

He had used this approach to help staff overcome feelings of negativity, about a service user's situation, that he felt blocked the team from moving on to consider more creatively how they could help that individual. He did however recognise that due to individuals' different orientations to learning that some people 'bought it right away and some did not'. One staff member who did 'buy it' felt that as well as benefiting her individually she felt the team benefited by being exposed to these ideas as:

We as a team can come to a happy medium where everybody had maybe got a bit of input and no one feels that their opinion isn't valued (ASM14).

Examples of cross-functional learning were also provided. For example, a senior line manager described the challenge of helping employees come to terms with the impact of new technology. She had provided advice across her organisation but had stressed that she too was still learning the system and had asked as others grew in competence to share their knowledge in turn. Some people within the organisation had responded positively to this request and in particular:

...from a department that I don't usually get involved in and I was very pleased (ASLM2).

#### *5.2.4 Managers learning from staff*

Managers also recognised that they learned from their staff.

One first line manager commented that she had learned frequently from members of staff regarding working with service users. This manager tended to be wary of adopting new practices with service users, but had recently followed advice from staff to experiment, safely, with new approaches to several service users. She concluded that she had learned to:

...respect other people's experience and other people's viewpoint to take the risk and accept that you might not always be right (BLM4).

One senior line manager stated that:

Most of my learning about myself comes from the staff that I support by seeking their opinions about how we're doing and then reflecting with them (BSLM2).

Similarly, a first line manager described how through supporting an individual undertaking a SVQ she had also gained knowledge.

I've got a lot of stimulation from working with ASM15 and seeing her progress and seeing her widening her ideas as well and improving her practice. But I think I've had a lot from that because we would be looking things up together and I would be looking up stuff and I would be giving it to her and say I saw this and I read that. So it was a knock on effect for me because I had to have other stuff to bring her (ALM5).

She also acknowledged that she sometimes modelled herself on her staff particularly with regard to the way they worked with different service users.

Watching some staff working with people who get on better with people than I do and the way they approach them and seeing their approach to it and maybe even asking them about it 'why did you do it that way?' (ALM5).

### **5.3 Managers' Commitment to Self-development**

It was argued that developmental managers accessed learning and development opportunities for themselves because:

If you as a manager are quite happy to learn I think it becomes the culture of the place. You're not saying to other people 'I've actually been on all the courses and I know it all but I think you are desperately needing to go'...the message is that we all need to learn and we will continue to learn throughout out life and it's about helping people to be comfortable enough to do that because some people have had really bad experiences with learning (ALC).

This view was confirmed through discussions with managers, and indeed staff, which revealed a generally positive and proactive approach to continuous learning motivated by the desire to keep up to date and to improve the quality of service to service users.

One manager recognised that engaging in continuous development could have a positive effect on staff, and ultimately on service users.

I feel I need to continue developing myself. If I don't develop myself I'm not going to encourage others and I'm not going to be motivated...So if I can keep that at a certain level then hopefully it will roll over and the rest of the team will feel that...[and] it spills on to service users and their development (BLM1).

The importance of managers interacting with the external environment was also highlighted as benefiting the development of staff. For example a senior line manager (ASLM6) who engaged in continuous professional development, through his participation in external networks, was described as benefiting his staff team by sharing that knowledge.

He's very active in things that are going on outwith the organisation in terms of keeping us up-to-date and that filters down to our meetings and supervision (ASLM5).

## **6. Organisational Learning**

The resultant learning climate not only stimulated individual learning but also could be seen to be facilitating organisational learning. Organisational learning in turn was also recognised as having some influence on employee learning. Both organisations were recognised as beginning to engage in organisational learning processes.

Key respondents believed that Quarriers was at a stage in its development where it needed to engage in more organisational learning processes led by senior managers, and indeed was beginning to do so.

We have to find a way of corporately at senior level of sitting down, not allocating blame for anything, but what were the key points of where this went wrong and how can we learn from that and how can we become more proactive...We have to find a way of modelling that at Directorate level and being very honest with one another in that process and helping each other in constructive ways...That whole area of learning I'm really interested in...and with that in mind we have a day in May where the whole senior staff will looking at where we're at related to the quality initiative and how do managers feel that has gone...the areas that could be matched with learning and development (HR Director).

A practical example was provided by several respondents who commented positively on the contribution that the staff conference on the Learning Organisation had made to individual and organisational learning, as its participative approach facilitated inter-group communication.

[Staff] liked sitting at a table with somebody from services for people with epilepsy and hearing what they were doing. It was held at HQ so they got to go to different bits and that's where you see things that we've only talked about...they could see places now instead of just seeing the name and the systems...just touching on it slightly and they loved that and they really felt more part of Quarriers from that as well – the big organisation – as well as the wee bit here. It enlarged their thinking of Quarriers as an organisation (ALM5).

The impact of the learning organisation initiative at Quarriers, as described in Chapter 7, could be seen in staff describing the culture of the organisation as a learning organisation.

It's a learning organisation; you are always learning (ASM4).

Finally, it was suggested that Quarriers as a whole was now:

...at a stage where we're thinking more deeply than we were in the past (Director of HR).

With regards to RFS it was felt that although the organisation had perhaps not been so good in the past at stopping and reflecting, perhaps because of the pressures of rapid growth, the last year, however, had seen a notable change and that there was now significant evidence of organisational reflection through:

...support improvement evaluations, service users going out and doing evaluations and the Quality Handbook. These are all saying to staff we're reviewing, we're looking and we're learning - you do the same. This is OK, this is the kind of organisation we are. I think it is quite bold to stop and look publicly/explicitly (ALC).

Such organisational reflective processes involved staff by asking their opinions of organisational activities and what could be improved.

It's really about asking them what do you think? It's more inclusive and that information gets fed back...that should [then] filter down to learning and development (ALC).

There was therefore recognition that there should be, and that there was, interaction between organisational learning and staff development.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter has helped address the research question regarding the organisational variables influencing manager's developmental behaviours.

There was recognition that both organisations were committed to HRD and learning. This was not only formally expressed through organisational documents, statements and commitment to liP, but was also expressed by a range of respondents, including staff who believed that the organisations actually supported learning.

Most respondents were engaged actively in learning, with managers and staff engaged in a wide range of formal and informal learning activities.

Respondents generally valued formal learning activities, e.g. courses, educational programmes and SVQs. Examples were provided by staff of transferring learning from such activities into their work practice. An additional value of these learning activities were the opportunities to network within or outwith the organisation. Limitations were the limited access to training of particular groups of staff, a weakness both organisations are currently addressing. Finally, a few staff did not value such structured learning activities, preferring on-the-job learning.

Employees' willingness to learn was reinforced by the emphasis placed on continuous learning through formal HRD policies and activities including supervision and appraisal/SDR, and informal 2-way discussions with managers. Such processes were seen as providing particularly valuable sources of learning by staff, managers and key informants, as was previously seen in Chapter 8.

All stakeholders placed considerable value on experiential learning, an aspect of learning where line managers clearly play a facilitative role, and which will be explored in detail in the next two chapters. Experiential learning involved learning from new tasks, problems, mistakes and learning from others.

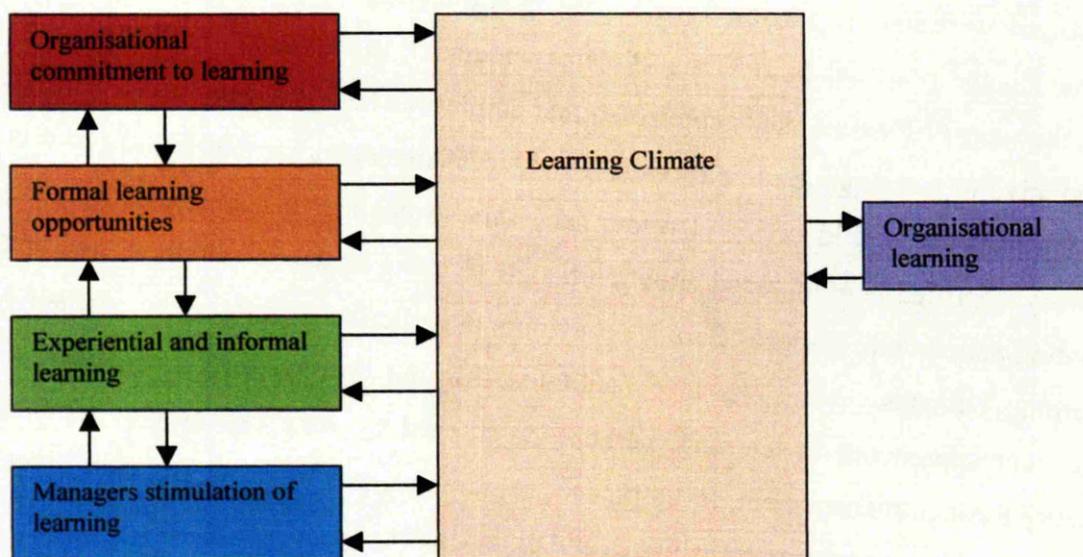
Managers were seen as playing a crucial role in stimulating learning, being recognised as having the potential to generate climates conducive to learning. Both this study and the recent iIP assessments confirmed that employees believed there was a climate conducive to learning. Examples were provided of managers turning round projects giving staff the confidence, and pride, necessary to engage in learning. Important factors identified here included allowing people to make mistakes, within reason, and treating people with respect. Caring behaviours in particular contributed to conducive learning climates. Managers also facilitated learning through their recognition of different approaches to learning, perhaps heightened by their exposure to learning theory through management development programmes, and by providing staff access to appropriate opportunities, resources and experiences.

There was strong evidence of learning from others – managers, peers, teams and subordinates – which was highly valued. Much of this had been encouraged by managers who recognised that others within the organisation had expertise and knowledge to offer. Such learning contributed to learning about care and management.

Managers by demonstrating their own commitment to learning recognised themselves, and were recognised by others, as role models for learning. By demonstrating their continued willingness to learn they were communicating to staff, and service users, the value of learning. In addition staff benefited from the new knowledge gained by managers.

There was some recognition that the organisations themselves were beginning to learn how to learn and to engage in organisational reflective processes. These organisational learning processes involved staff, and were mirrored by employees in supervision and in personal reflection.

Finally, it is argued that the above discussion and examples provided confirm, as proposed in the introduction to this chapter, that the learning variables identified do interact virtuously with each other to create positive learning climates in each organisation. Therefore the model proposed in Figure 10.1 has been confirmed by this study and is presented again in Figure 10.4 below.



**Figure 10.4 – Confirmation of interaction of learning variables**

The next chapter presents a cross-case analysis and draws conclusions regarding the behaviours demonstrated by line managers.

CHAPTER 11 – CONCLUSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter, utilising the framework provided by the conceptual framework in Chapter 4, and presented again in Figure 11.1, articulates the conclusions that have emerged from the primary findings and analysis in Chapters 6-10.

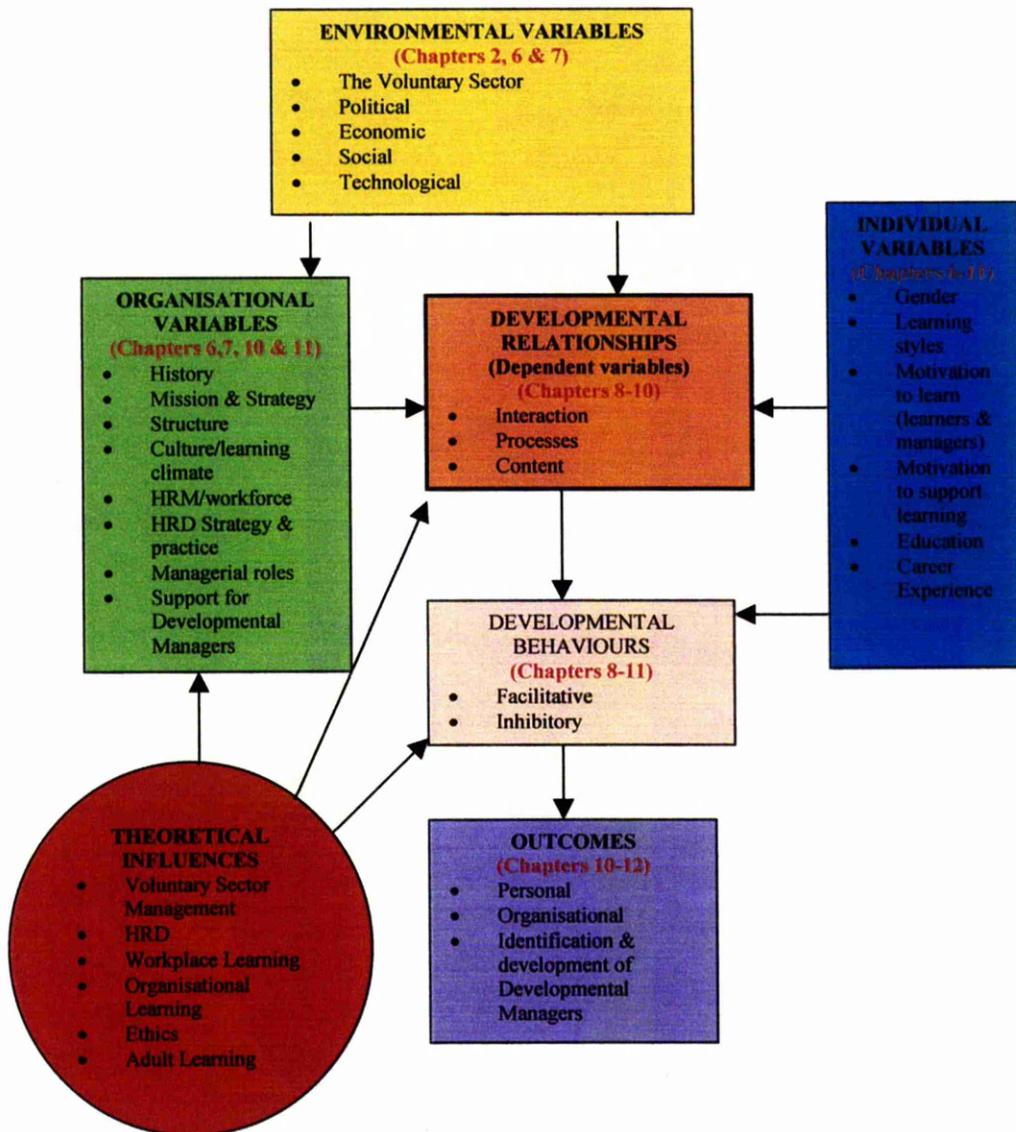


Figure 11.1 Conceptual Framework

In particular, the chapter identifies commonalities and differences between the two case study organisations. The chapter begins by summarising the environmental and

organisational influences on learning and managers' developmental behaviours in the two case study organisations. The chapter then discusses the individual variables that have influenced the way managers and learners have behaved and interacted. Developmental relationships are then discussed by examining the nature, processes and content of developmental interactions. This analysis has enabled the identification of developmental manager behaviours and thus informs the discussion on the competencies required by developmental managers in Chapter 12. The outcomes of these developmental interactions, both personal and organisational, are then discussed.

The chapter concludes by confirming that the five research questions have been answered.

## **2. ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES**

RFS and Quarriers were operating in a highly dynamic environment, as could be seen in Chapters 6 and 7.

A key development for both organisations was the Care in the Community legislation, which enabled both organisations to grow rapidly from the mid-1990s. However this 'mixed economy of care' approach has seen the replacement of grants with contracts for the delivery of specific services and increased demands for accountability (SCVO, 1999). Therefore both organisations have to deliver services which provide both value-for-money and quality. This has resulted in both developing more professional and managerial frameworks such as business planning, quality systems including EFQM and IIP, SVQs, and strengthening traditional approaches such as supervision. Interviews with managers and staff showed that some developments were welcomed, such as quality standards and training. However, concerns were expressed about the increasing bureaucracy in both organisations that have emerged from these external pressures and the organisations' rapid growth.

Whilst both organisations acknowledged that they had to operate within the 'contract culture' climate they were keen to ensure that voluntary values would not be lost. RFS while recognising that the 'marketplace' had become more competitive, wanted

to retain the values of co-operating and collaborating with other voluntary organisations, and this was seen by their membership of umbrella bodies, such as SCVO and CCPS, organisations which Quarriers also participate in. Quarriers are also keen to retain the independence of the sector and this is reflected in their strategic aim for an agenda for independent action. This aim is supported by the voluntary income that the charity raises through the work of its Fundraising and PR department; RFS do not have such a function.

Both organisations are well placed to cope with the impending changes in regulation of care in Scotland, the continued de-institutionalisation of social care and the requirement to provide person-centred services. Both RFS and Quarriers' philosophies welcome person-centred approaches, and they have embedded person-centred planning into their cultures and social care practices. At a more practical level there is increasing pressure on providers, where possible, to provide individual supported accommodation. As well as the logistical challenges that such a development presents, a key issue will be how to address the management and development needs of staff who will be working increasingly remotely from their line manager. The insight into current practice provided by this study may assist that process.

The establishment of the Scottish Social Services Council will increase pressure on RFS and Quarriers, to increase the numbers of qualified care staff. As much of the increase in qualifications will be achieved through SVQs, line managers will be required to play an increasing role in facilitating workplace learning.

As was seen in Chapter 2 social and technological changes also created learning needs for RFS and Quarriers.

In conclusion, this dynamic environment plays a critical role in influencing the priority learning needs of RFS and Quarriers. Both emphasise the acquisition of qualifications for front-line staff, through workplace learning approaches, and management development.

### **3. ORGANISATIONAL INFLUENCES**

#### **3.1 History**

Despite their very different origins and long-term histories Quarriers' and RFS's recent histories have much in common. Both have grown rapidly since the mid-1990s and there has also been diversification of services compared to their original foundation. Quarriers is no longer solely a children's charity, and RFS is no longer solely a mental health charity. Both are increasingly delivering services, such as support for people with learning disabilities, within individuals' communities rather than in large-scale projects. Key informants in both organisations felt that the organisations were at a critical point in their organisational life cycles, following this period of rapid growth and diversification. The challenges now facing the organisations were retaining their cutting edge innovation, whilst controlling the level of bureaucracy that inevitably accompanies growth.

#### **3.2 Mission and strategy**

Both organisations have similar missions – to help individuals who are disadvantaged, for whatever reason, to overcome or minimise those disadvantages. In particular both organisations emphasise that the needs and rights of individuals are the central focus of organisational activities. To ensure these missions are accomplished the strategic policies of both organisations echo similar themes, such as quality, continuous improvement, and standards. Of particular relevance to this study were their aspirations to be learning organisations. This could be seen in the language used in policy documents, such as strategic plans and Annual Reports, and in respondents' statements. A reminder of some of these is provided below.

To ensure that this learning organisation's staffing and all other resources are continuously used most effectively and efficiently (RFS Corporate Plan 2000-2003).

To be a learning organisation (Quarriers Strategic Plan 1999-2002).

...without learning and development services will stultify (Chief Executive RFS).

It's a learning organisation; you are always learning (Staff Member Quarriers).

Both organisations also used processes, such as staff conferences and, working groups, to inform policy development and the sharing of knowledge across the organisations.

Their commitment to learning organisation ideals heightened the role of line managers as developers. This was particularly the case in Quarriers where learning organisation processes and publications stressed the role of line managers as facilitators of learning in the workplace.

### **3.3 Structure**

Both organisations have traditional organisational structures with their respective boards<sup>35</sup> at the top, with service delivery at the bottom and several management layers in between. RFS also had a functional structure which it believed provided the rationale for its existence. This structure had the individual person supported by the organisation at the top, then support staff and in this case HQ staff and the management committee were at the bottom.

Paton and Hooker (1990) found that organisations, such as RFS and Quarriers, with dispersed operational structures could have problems with staff development, as senior managers may be at a distance from staff. This is less of a problem for junior staff as their direct line manager is still easily accessible, although it will become more of a problem, as discussed above, with the move towards individual supported accommodation. There is however a challenge for senior managers, based at Head Office, developing first line managers based in projects. However, due to the commitment of senior managers this problem was minimised, although there was some acknowledgement that distance, and the time involved in travelling, was a potential barrier to development.

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<sup>35</sup> Council of Management at Quarriers, and Management Committee at RFS

### **3.4 Culture**

The cultures of both organisations were values-based, supported by their commitment to social care models of practice and person-centred planning. That these values were translated into everyday practice was confirmed by respondents at all levels, and in Quarriers, by their IiP assessment which recognised that staff had ‘a strong sense of identity, pride and genuine belief in Quarriers’.

The values that underpin our mission statement are values about the person-centred approach, about dealing with people in their place of need whatever that is and responding directly and therefore giving people a sense of hope for positive change (HR Director Quarriers).

I think the value base is person-centred (First Line Manager RFS).

In both organisations some concerns were expressed that the contract culture, rapid growth, and the consequent increase in bureaucratic processes could threaten the idealism of both organisations and result in values being applied inconsistently.

It has had to become contracting, outcome orientated...to do with the culture that we bid for contracts. I think all voluntary organisations have to an extent lost the individuality they had (Staff member RFS).

I think they're expanding a great deal and I don't know that they don't want to start to think about consolidating...I think sometimes we push ourselves too far...I feel the bureaucratic side of it is increasing (First Line Manager Quarriers).

However, a positive outcome of such growth was that it offered staff increased career development opportunities.

Chapter 4 concluded with a discussion on the possible relationship between voluntary sector ethics, values and beliefs on developmental interactions and the developmental behaviours of managers. Of particular interest was whether RFQ and Quarriers managers transferred their human centred approach to social care to the learning and development of employees. Respondents recognised that these social care values were indeed transferred to the management of staff.

I think the culture is very much about being an enabling organisation and enabling not only the clients that we come into contact with but also the members of staff (Senior Line Manager RFS).

Putting the people we work with at the centre of our work is really important and that comes across through person-centred planning and also in forms of staff development. So I think there is always a link; you can't separate how we work with staff from how we work with service users (Training Manager Quarriers).

The application of such values could be most clearly seen in the caring behaviours demonstrated by all managers in this study.

The transfer of values from social care to employee development could also be seen in organisational practices such as the supervision and appraisal processes which mirror PCP, the development of learning and development plans, and learning portfolios.

Links between culture and learning could be most clearly seen by Quarriers' Learning Organisation experiment, which was seen to be impacting on managerial attitudes and communication in the organisation.

Managers are understanding that learning is a cultural activity at the heart of service delivery, it's not separate (HR Director Quarriers).

I felt pretty confident about the organisation being a learning organisation and I always felt it was true that we were able to impart information back up the way to people...[*whether*] it was line managers or people superior to myself as well as staff at all levels (Senior Manager Quarriers).

Finally, line managers were seen as having significant influence on culture at a local level.

It is therefore concluded that culture played an important role in influencing managerial behaviours.

### **3.5 HRM and the workforce**

#### *3.5.1. HRM*

Given that the primary focus in this study was HRD, HRM practices were only explored briefly. Cunningham (1999) argues that the environmental pressures facing voluntary organisations have stimulated greater interest in HRM and it is suggested that voluntary sector values could interact successfully with 'soft' HRM (Ball, 1992; Cunningham, 1999). Cunningham (2001b) found that voluntary organisations were trying to adopt learning cultures and that many were using other 'soft' HRM processes such as appraisal, consultation and communication. However, he also found some evidence of 'hard' HRM measures such as cuts in pay and conditions and increasing emphasis on disciplinary procedures, in response to contract culture pressures. Both case studies demonstrated a mix of soft and hard HRM, although their commitment to HRD emphasises the softer aspects of HRM

In RFS the personnel department is separate from the training and quality function and aims to ensure the organisation's mission is achieved by valuing employees and supporting them. Attributes of 'soft' HRM can be seen in the organisation's espoused commitment to equal opportunities and training, and a statement by the Chief Executive in the most recent corporate plan (2000).

...we are a human service organisation and without any doubt our greatest asset is our staff. The quality of staff at Richmond Fellowship Scotland in terms of their accumulated knowledge attitudes and activities is second to none and they will continue to receive full support within this organisation as we all move forward together.

Aspects of 'hard' HRM may be seen in the organisation's lack of trade union recognition.

The HR function and systems are seen as having an integral role to play in helping RFS to achieve its learning organisation goal through effective utilisation of the workforce's skills.

Similarly to RFS, the aim of the HR function at Quarriers is to maximise the contribution of staff to help achieve the organisation's mission.

The organisation has sought to keep its staff development priorities and commitments alive, despite financially tough circumstances, because we believe this will reward us richly by producing a professional staff group, committed to continuous improvement and quality services (Chief Executive, Foreword in Quarriers Staff Development and Training Handbook, 1997)

Quarriers have a Human Resources Department. However it has two teams of staff. One focuses on general HR activities, such as resourcing and employee relations. The second concentrates on staff development. The HR Department is staffed by CIPD qualified professionals, and this professionalism can be seen in the range of policies and practices produced by the department. Soft HRM can be seen in its emphasis on staff development, with elements of 'hard' HRM in its discipline and absence procedures.

In both organisations the senior person responsible for HR, the HR Director at Quarriers and the Personnel Manager at RFS, as well as the Training and Quality Manager for RFS, were part of their respective senior management teams. Therefore HR issues could be 'kept as a significant item on the organisation's strategic agenda' (Quarriers' iip Storyboard, 1998, p.2).

### *3.5.2 The workforce*

Both Quarriers and RFS have a high proportion of female staff, reflecting the Scottish voluntary sector workforce. Another characteristic of the Scottish workforce is that is well educated, particularly at managerial and professional levels, although few of the former have management qualifications (SCVO, 1999). This was also reflected in both Quarriers and RFS. Most managers were well qualified, as were many of the staff they were managing.

Leat (1993) identified two possible issues in the management of such staff. Firstly, the difficulty in measuring outcomes with professional staff, particularly in social care. Secondly, the emphasis on professional autonomy may lead to resistance to

being managed. These issues did not emerge significantly in RFS or Quarriers. In Quarriers, for example, the development of quality standards appeared to be generally welcomed by staff as it gave them a clearer picture of what they were trying to achieve and the tools to measure those achievements. It should also be noted that the standards were developed through consultation with staff and thus they had an opportunity to influence how their work would be evaluated. This process encouraged the acceptance of the need to provide evidence of outcomes for both internal and external consumption. Secondly, in both organisations, given their social care background, the use of supervision as a key management process was accepted by all staff, including those in non-social work roles such as administration. Staff generally welcomed the supervision process as a regular opportunity to talk one to one with their manager about work issues. It was interesting to note the very positive attitude of staff who had not experienced supervision in previous employment.

In my previous job I never got any supervision or reviews. I never had an opportunity to air my concerns or say anything at all about my job or about what I was doing or what I thought about anything I was doing. Since I came here it's been very in-depth...how have you felt about this and are you clear about that'...I think it is really, really good (Quarriers staff member).

### **3.6 HRD Strategy, Practice and Line Managers' roles**

#### *3.6.1 HRD strategy*

There were common themes emerging from the HRD strategies of RFS and Quarriers. These included the desire to maintain IiP accreditation, recognition of the role of line managers in HRD processes, encouragement of staff to take responsibility for their own learning and the expansion of accredited training such as SVQs. There were also explicit links made between learning and quality, with both strategies aiming to support the continuous improvement of staff and ultimately services. Another common feature was the emergent HRD strategies, published as the fieldwork was coming to a close, using language that emphasised learning rather than training.

A key element of both organisations' HRD strategies is their supervision and appraisal policies. These demonstrate the links between learning and development and the quality of service provision.

To enhance individual performance in order to improve the quality of services, encourage professional and personal growth and increase accountability between the individual and the agency (Quarriers Supervision Policy, 1996).

Regular staff supervision and appraisal are essential to realising [RFS's] commitment to deliver the best possible high quality services (RFS Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy, 1998).

As can be seen in 3.6.3 below line managers play a central role in the supervision process.

### *3.6.2 Approach to Learning and Development*

There are operational differences in the way Quarriers and RFS deliver their central training activities. Quarriers have a central training function and much of the formal training provision is delivered at HQ, although some local training is also provided. RFS have recently decentralised their training function, and each geographical area has an Area Learning Co-ordinator who works in partnership with local managers to identify, design and facilitate learning, as well as delivering core programmes.

In terms of central training courses both organisations offer similar provision covering social care, management and organisational policies. Staff in both organisations generally valued such courses not only for their content, but also for the opportunity to network with other staff in the organisation. Both organisations used core training courses, such as induction, to introduce and reinforce the values of the organisation. The researcher found these particularly powerful learning experiences. Managers contributed to the delivery of these courses.

Both organisations are recognised SVQ assessment centres, important given the impending regulation of social care in Scotland. Managers played an active role in the SVQ process, acting as assessors and/or internal verifiers. Staff also have access

to external training and education where relevant to their jobs. In both organisations staff are encouraged to record their learning in individual portfolios.

### *3.6.3 The role of line managers in HRD*

Policy documents and key informants articulated the central role that line managers play in the development of staff at Quarriers and RFS, and the overall development of the organisations.

Key role and potential for a bigger role in facilitating learning (Training and Quality Manager RFS).

If an organisation is going to develop your project leaders, your service managers, your service directors have to be developers (Director of Quality Quarriers).

Senior managers also recognised the critical role that line managers play in facilitating learning.

I think it is the most important role, it's crucial to what they do...it forces thinking on them so that they consider their staff are the lynchpin...We're here for service users. What we're actually here to do depends on staff actually understanding what they're involved in doing (Senior Manager RFS).

I increasingly think that project leaders have the key role in the organisation and will be so in the next period given the size we are now and I think it is absolutely crucial that they give priority to staff development (Senior Manager Quarriers).

Quarriers, for example, outlined the responsibilities of managers in development as including: assessment of training and development; induction; support and supervision; providing clear information; on the job-instruction, coaching and counselling; taking corrective action where staff need to be aware of poor performance; and offering positive role models to colleagues (LiP Storyboard, 1998). These responsibilities are reflected in a range of the behaviours identified for developmental managers such as: identifying development needs; supporting; informing; advising; providing feedback; and role modelling.

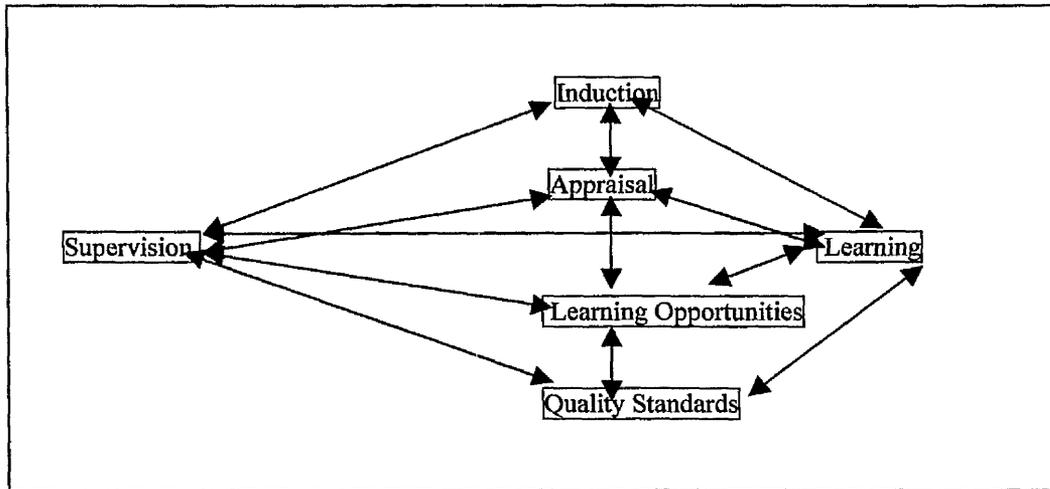
Managerial responsibility for learning is most clearly seen in managers' contributions to the supervisory processes of both organisations.

Chapters 2, 6, 7 and 8 have demonstrated that supervision in social care provides a framework for line managers as developers and is a holistic approach to managing, teaching and supporting staff (Sawdon and Sawdon, 1995). It is the pivotal element in an organisational system which links key organisational processes such as induction, quality standards, appraisal and learning opportunities.

Supervision is a process that is naturally there where I am expected to perform in a certain way; supervisees are expected to perform in a certain way. So the system is there to support the developmental role (First Line Manager Quarriers).

Both organisations have explicit supervision policies stating the purpose and frequency of supervision, appraisal and training needs analysis. Critical incidents involving supervision showed individuals and managers identifying learning opportunities, and reflecting on and evaluating learning opportunities experienced. These are examples of good adult learning practice. Supervision also enabled managers to remind staff of or introduce staff to the standards of performance expected by the organisation. This interaction can be seen below in Figure 11.2.

In Chapter 2 concern was expressed that supervision has not fulfilled its potential due to managers lacking facilitative skills and having limited understanding of adult learning (Sawdon and Sawdon, 1995; Hughes and Pengelly, 1997). Both RFS and Quarriers addressed this through their training courses for supervisors, and their increasing emphasis on adult learning theory on development programmes for managers. The support provided for line managers as developers is discussed further below.



**Figure 11.2 Organisational Framework for Supporting Learning**

### 3.6.4 Support for line managers

Both organisations provided training courses to help managers with their developmental responsibilities. These included courses on supervision, appraisal, training for trainers, and coaching, and were designed to maximise the links with practice. Increasingly such training incorporated input on aspects of adult learning theory such as learning cycles and styles to:

...help people see that people may be approaching things in a different way because of their learning style (Practice Teacher Quarriers).

Identify developmental activities that complement individuals' preferred learning styles (Learning and Development Programme May 2000-October 2000, RFS).

Written guidance was also provided to managers. As well as these formal processes managers in both organisations also reported that they had received individual support from the training function. This was likely to increase in the future, particularly in RFS with the establishment of the ALC posts.

Managers also felt that their professional training and background, in fields such as social work and nursing, had helped prepare them for their developmental

responsibilities. Managers also had the opportunity to acquire SVQ D units to support the assessment and internal verification processes in both organisations.

Managers had also learnt how to be developers through experiential learning, for example by reflecting on how their own managers had facilitated their learning, including through supervision, or on reflecting on developmental interactions with their staff and peers.

I think what has been best for me has been having a manager myself who's been good at that. Who I have felt developed me, who's given me a chance to stretch my wings a bit and find out what I am capable of (Senior Manager RFS).

I think it is quite crucial that project leaders have the space to reflect themselves on what they are doing as a project leader. It is crucial that they get their own supervision (Practice Teacher Quarriers).

I really respected her. I just thought she had a good handle to her work and how to do things right. She's a great communicator and I learned an awful lot from her, in a fairly informal basis. When I was promoted I could not have done the job without her either. I just felt that it was somebody that I could trust to say 'look I don't know where I'm going with this' and get advice from her (First Line Manager RFS).

Managers at Quarriers also highlighted that the organisation's culture had encouraged them to undertake developmental responsibilities.

...it's commitment to learning, the Learning Organisation stuff, the SVQs and now the Quality Standards...having come from the health board...I just saw there was a totally different environment, totally different commitment right from the word go and I think that in itself gives you the drive to see that happen with other people (First Line Manager Quarriers).

The importance of culture in stimulating learning is discussed further below, through exploration of the interaction between developmental managers and learning climate.

Most managers recognised that they still required further development for their developmental roles. Such development included the need to acquire management qualifications and D units, training or further training in organisational processes such as supervision and appraisal, and being able to identify learning needs more

effectively. Several managers at RFS suggested that the support of a mentor would enhance their developmental performance.

In both organisations managers identified few barriers to their developmental roles, if anything they underplayed them. The main barriers were workload, time, financial and staffing resources, which could result in them giving insufficient attention to learning.

...one of the struggles that line managers have in their developmental role are the other pressures that are around, so sometimes they are overwhelmed by just reacting to the situations. I think what sometimes happens is that instead of seeing it as an opportunity for development there is almost not the time and they're rushing on to the next thing...or the time for reflection is actually quite difficult to build in (Director of Quality Quarriers).

I think all my managers are genuinely concerned to do it and see the need for it. I think it is obviously harder for them because day to day they are dealing fairly frequently with some of the major things like staff shortages which absorb a phenomenal amount of time and stress. So I think they feel pulled in a lot of different directions (Senior Manager RFS).

Increasing bureaucracy, including that generated by the HR function, was also cited as a barrier.

You've got pressure coming from HRD...you've got development reviews to do. You've got this to do and you've got that to do...and it's very, very hard to feel that you're being a developer and that sometimes it feels just like a paper exercise (First Line Manager Quarriers).

### *3.6.5 Learning Climate*

Chapter 10 concluded that both organisations were committed to learning and that this could be seen in formal policies, management actions and was independently confirmed by liP assessors.

It's an organisation that attempts to have a learning culture (Staff Member Quarriers).

I think the culture of the organisation is very much geared towards learning and development (Staff Member RFS).

Chapter 10 also concluded that managers played a critical role in creating a climate conducive for learning.

It's about promoting a culture that we're the best. I think that's quite important because people feel good about going to their work and they're working for a joint cause (First Line Manager).

This involved letting people make mistakes, and treating people with respect, consistent with adult learning theory (Knowles, 1984).

I think it is about having the culture right that people know you're not perfect. That mistakes are all right and most are actually remedied quite quickly (ALC RFS).

Caring behaviours were recognised as contributing significantly to the creation of positive learning environments, for example by enabling individuals to feel comfortable about approaching their managers or due to their encouragement of staff ideas.

You feel quite motivated when you know there is an encouragement from your manager that what you want to do is important (Staff Member Quarriers).

Learning was also facilitated by managers utilising different approaches to learning, heightened by their awareness of adult learning principles communicated by organisational courses and publications, and by enabling staff to access a range of learning opportunities.

I think that at one time everybody thought that [*learning*] meant going on a training day but now we're into recognising different ways of learning such as reading, getting a video or just having small coaching sessions (RFS staff member).

Another outcome of the learning climates was the willingness to share learning across, up and down the organisation, much of which was encouraged by managers. This could be clearly seen in the extent of peer learning at all levels of the organisations, thus confirming the final element of the working definition in Chapter 1.

## *Conclusions*

I can phone up one of the other project leaders and say do you think this would be OK (First Line Manager Quarriers).

You learn from others obviously, not just your seniors but also the other staff. They all come from different backgrounds and have different experience so listening to and observing them is a great advantage (Staff member RFS).

### **3.7 Management Development**

As well as the specific development opportunities provided for their developmental roles and responsibilities managers in both organisations also had access to general management development. In RFS there was a 6-day Management Development Programme, which several managers commented on positively. RFS had also experimented with action learning sets, and those that focused on HR issues tended to be the most successful. Quarriers managers could access internal training courses and a number of managers have been sponsored on the Certificate in Social Work Management.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) argued that there are three essential prerequisites for management development. Firstly, a positive attitude towards learning and this was clearly demonstrated in both organisations where both managers and staff demonstrated a willingness to continue learning, as seen in Chapter 10. Secondly, the capability of the facilitator of learning. The managers in this study have all demonstrated clear abilities to develop more junior managers and staff through the behaviours discussed in Chapter 8. The training specialists in both organisations were also recognised as providing valued support to individual managers. Thirdly, support provided by the organisation. This final prerequisite was seen in the increasing investment in management development activities in both organisations, through the provision of training courses and other support from the training functions, funding for external study and of course through their own supervision.

### **3.8 Summary of cross-case analysis**

This cross-case analysis had demonstrated considerable internal and external coherence between the two case study organisations.

External coherence can be seen in them having to respond to the same environmental pressures such as increasing competition, regulation and demand for quality. This pressure had reinforced the need for effective HRD and in particular had further emphasised the importance of supervision for ensuring staff performance and development was maintained, if not improved.

Internal coherence between the two organisations could be seen in their missions, cultures, corporate and HRD strategies. In particular clear links could be seen in both organisations between social care values, such as person-centred planning, and practices adopted for HRD and the behaviours of their managers in facilitating learning.

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES**

This section addresses the research questions regarding the influence of individual variables that have influenced managers' behaviours and what motivates them to facilitate learning.

##### **4.1 Gender**

Although two key informants suggested that women might be more natural developers than men there was no evidence to suggest that female and male managers in these two organisations adopted different behavioural sets when facilitating learning. This is perhaps not surprising given the social care nature of their employment where individuals with caring and nurturing qualities are more likely to work.

##### **4.2 Learning style**

The sample size of managers and employees was too small to offer statistically significant findings regarding learning styles (Honey and Mumford, 1986). However, one clear finding about learning styles emerged and this related to the interaction of learning styles, which could be seen to be complementary or could create the potential for conflict. An example of this could be seen in a developmental relationship, where

## *Conclusions*

a reflector employee, who generally found his activist manager supportive, commented that at times the manager was inclined to rush to jump to conclusions not allowing the employee to fully explain the situation or problem.

The interaction of learning styles could be most clearly seen in the thinking category. One incident demonstrated the difficulties faced in developmental interactions between a reflector developer and an activist learner. However, another demonstrated a pragmatist learner recognising the value of learning from a reflector/theorist developer. Perhaps in the second example the learner, who was more experienced, had more confidence in his own abilities and saw the differences in learning styles as a means to improve his performance. Indeed he had asked a previous manager, who was a theorist to act as a mentor to him. This perhaps suggests that learning styles should not be looked at in isolation but should be considered as part of a holistic picture about the learner. Interestingly, one respondent felt that a downside of learning styles was that individuals may act out the stereotypical behaviours of their identified style or use it to justify not participating in certain learning activities, and thus not benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities<sup>36</sup>.

There was evidence that managers were becoming increasingly aware of the need to consider the possible interactions between learning styles.

There's no point telling the activist to sit there and do that theory first because you've lost them. It was really helpful for me to think about the different learning styles and how people learn and then try and tailor things to that person (ALC RFS).

This was demonstrated particularly by managers using the Learning Style Questionnaire to identify individuals' learning needs and/or preferred ways of learning. Several managers requested copies of the Learning Style Questionnaire, from the author, to use as part of team building exercises.

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<sup>36</sup> The author has seen evidence of this when working with students.

### **4.3 Motivation to learn**

As noted in Chapter 10 the willingness of individuals to learn was encouraged by a range of formal and informal processes that emphasised continual learning including induction, supervision, appraisal and two-way discussions with managers. Most respondents were actively, and willingly, engaged in learning activities which ranged from formal learning activities, such as training courses and education, to informal learning opportunities, such as coaching by line managers.

Developmental managers were recognised as individuals who were engaged in learning both for themselves and for their staff, thus confirming the working definition of developmental managers proposed in Chapter 1.

Somebody who is a learner themselves, I think that would be my bottom line (Director of Quality).

They're thinking of their own learning, are focused and have a grasp of how other people learn (Training and Quality Manager RFS).

A by-product of their willingness to learn was that it showed managers as role models to staff. If they were willing to participate in learning, that was likely to encourage staff to follow suit.

If you as a manager are quite happy to learn I think that becomes the culture of the place (ALC RFS).

I feel the need to continue developing myself. If I don't develop myself I'm not going to encourage others and I'm not going to be motivated (First Line Manager RFS).

Interestingly, part of managers' continued development included their willingness to learn from their staff, as well as from formal management development activities.

Most of my learning comes from the staff that I support by seeking their opinions about how we're doing and then reflecting with them (Senior Line Manager RFS).

## Conclusions

Watching some staff working with people who get on better with people than I do and the way they approach them and seeing their approach to it and maybe even asking them about it. 'Why did you do it that way?' (First Line Manager Quarriers).

### 4.4 Motivation to support learning

Neither organisation has performance-related pay, therefore the focus was on the intrinsic factors that motivated managers to facilitate employee learning.

All managers accepted, and many welcomed, having some responsibility for facilitating the learning of their staff. Indeed the role was seen as critical.

I would say that it is an essential part of all managers' jobs be it service director, service manager or project leader...I just see that as an essential part of the job (Senior Manager Quarriers).

I really firmly believe *that* unless we know our staff and unless we know what their development needs are and the areas which they excel and which could be utilised. I really don't think we can provide a quality service unless as managers we know that about the people that work for us. I see it as a very serious part of my job (First Line Manager RFS).

Two main motivators emerged across the two case studies. One was ensuring staff were meeting organisational standards of performance, and the second was the satisfaction of helping someone else develop.

It is important for me that the reputation of the organisation is good and that's not just what I do but obviously is what the people that I am responsible for do as well. So it's important that I'm developing people (First Line Manager Quarriers).

It was a really powerful thing as a supervisor to see her go through that level when you have that gut instinct when you think people can do it...I get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from seeing someone develop to that level (First Line Manager RFS).

### 4.5 Educational and career background

As has already been mentioned in 3.4.1 above, and Chapter 8, managers were generally well educated and a number were continuing to study for further

qualifications. Several managers suggested that their professional training had helped them as developers of others. This confirms the view of Storey (1992) that managers who have experienced development themselves are more aware of the need to develop others and are more able to facilitate such learning.

Chapters 8 and 9, and 5.3 below, demonstrate that career experience influenced some developmental behaviours. Experienced managers were more likely to have the confidence to openly share information and to let go. They were therefore more able to delegate tasks to staff; an important element of experiential learning. From an employee perspective first line managers appeared to be more approachable, perhaps a reflection on their closer physical proximity to their staff.

## **5. DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Prior to this study there had been very limited research into the ‘managing people’ behaviours of voluntary sector managers. Those that have been identified include diplomacy, openness, effective listening, and empathy (Cornforth and Hooker, 1990). In this study analysing the developmental relationships represented by the micro-case studies Chapters 8 and 9 have identified the developmental behaviours of managers. This analysis examined the developmental interactions within these relationships by exploring their processes and content.

### **5.1 Developmental interactions**

Developmental interactions occurred within a range of circumstances, such as formal and informal supervisory sessions, discussions or through everyday work activities such as care of service users and meetings. These interactions provided evidence of the nature of the developmental relationships.

A common feature of developmental interactions was the security and comfort felt by many staff during the process. This was seen particularly in those incidents within the caring cluster involving behaviours such as encouraging and being approachable.

## Conclusions

I suppose the language that she uses with you, her tone, how she is sitting, the questions she is asking – she's very encouraging. It's not the heavy hand of your line manager coming down...She looks very at ease, which makes me feel at ease (Staff member RFS).

ALM5 is the kind of person you can say anything to her and she's not going to take offence at what you're going to say...there's not a fear (Staff Member Quarriers).

The consequence of not providing security for learning could be seen by an employee describing how she felt after working with a previous manager who had not demonstrated facilitative behaviours.

...by the time that manager left I felt I'm useless, I'm hopeless because I had been constantly told that and everything was my fault (Staff Member Quarriers).

The content, developmental behaviours and processes used in these interactions are discussed below.

### 5.2 Content

The content of developmental interactions can be classified into three categories as seen in Table 11.1.

Personal domain	Organisational domain	Personal-organisational domain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal problems</li><li>• Study</li><li>• Adjusting to new roles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work practice<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Social care</li><li>➢ Management</li></ul></li><li>• Understanding the organisation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Career development</li></ul>

**Table 11.1 Content of Developmental Interaction**

Firstly, the personal domain saw consideration of personal problems that impacted on performance and also affected readiness to learn.

...on a personal support level I've needed a lot of that recently and I've found that I've had it when I've needed it (Staff member RFS).

## *Developmental Managers*

The support throughout this I thought was tremendous because it shows how much you are valued. I was able to get myself back together (Staff member Quarriers).

Secondly, the personal domain involved supporting staff undertaking study or training.

...it wasn't like being back at school...I think there is probably a confidence in her that I knew she would make it OK (Staff Member Quarriers).

'Do you really think I'm up for it?' She said 'yes you'll be fine, just go and do the course'. She has confidence in you, which makes you feel good about yourself (Staff Member RFS).

Thirdly, the domain saw managers supporting staff adjusting to new roles.

It's sort of been coming to ALM6 and saying 'this is what is happening, this is what I've done and is it OK?' (Staff Member Quarriers).

The organisational domain involved conversations and actions which concentrated on work practice, either in relation to social care or management duties.

BLM5 is very good at modelling. BLM5 does a lot of direct work with service users so staff see him working with service users, related professionals and carers (Senior Line Manager RFS).

She gave me some pointers to think about when I was dealing with the situation and she obviously made sure I felt comfortable about dealing with the situation (Staff member Quarriers).

[*He gives*] tips on how supervision should be. It's tips like obviously you can't supervise everybody in the same way; people don't learn the same way nor need the same support as the next person (Staff member RFS).

Discussions on work practice also involved helping staff solve problems or deal with issues.

We've got supervision next week so it's [*service user complaint*] on the agenda for that and that will give us an opportunity to review what happened (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

## Conclusions

He never told you. He always made you work it out for yourself...Asking you questions, kept asking you more...Probably I developed more in that 8 month period than I did in the previous 4 years (First Line Manager RFS).

Within this domain there was also evidence of managers helping more junior staff to understand the organisation's culture and practices.

Because they were very open about the history of RFS and the project it's helped me to put things into context, to separate things out – what's me and what's the organisation (First Line Manager RFS).

[I helped her] understand the different culture and perhaps less rigid regime that she might have been familiar with (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

The organisation-personal domain included interactions which focused on the career development of individuals, these could also contribute to succession planning in the organisation.

He's taken quite a lot of time out to do that [give feedback]...as well as it being a priority for the project and the organisation I can see that he also thinks along the lines of my development...that makes me feel valued...and inspires enthusiasm (Staff member RFS).

I've been placing responsibility on both of us to look at learning opportunities that might help longer-term career development (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

### 5.3 Developmental behaviours

Analysis of critical incidents within developmental interactions revealed a range of facilitative and inhibitory behaviours as described in Chapters 8 and 9. Most of the positive facilitative behaviours were mirrored by a negative inhibitory behaviour as can be seen in Table 11.2 below.

<b>Facilitative Behaviours</b> →	<b>← Inhibitory Behaviours</b>
Caring	Not being assertive Not giving time Being task orientated
Informing	Withholding information
Being professional	
Advising	Being dogmatic
Assessing	Not assessing
Thinking	Not thinking
Empowering	Controlling
Developing developers	
Challenging	

**Table 11.2 – Comparison of Facilitative and Inhibitory Behaviours**

Each comparative category of behaviours will now be briefly discussed. It should be remembered that there was considerably more evidence of developmental behaviours, and that managers themselves identified most examples of inhibitory behaviours. It should also be noted that most managers demonstrated inhibitory behaviours, as well as facilitative behaviours, indicating that it is difficult even for developmental managers to behave in a facilitative manner continually and consistently.

### *5.3.1 Caring*

Chapter 8 provided considerable evidence of caring behaviours, almost certainly a reflection of the caring nature of the work carried out by each organisation, managers and staff.

People have to feel that they are concerned about them as a person and recognising the stress that they're under...they respond when they say they will and they're accessible (Practice Teacher Quarriers)

These behaviours, such as support, approachability and reassurance, played a vital role in creating environments that are conducive to learning and creating conditions that allowed developmental relationships to develop and flourish.

The working relationship we have is very positive in terms of BLM5 supporting me (Staff Member RFS).

## *Conclusions*

...because I had somebody supporting me I wasn't frightened if I made a mistake (Staff Member Quarriers).

Another feature of this category was the considerable time and effort that managers devoted to developing their staff.

Three inhibitory behaviours demonstrated lack of care and attention to the development of their staff. Firstly, managers failing to behave assertively resulted in staff feeling neglected or reluctant to approach their managers for help or advice, particularly when lack of assertiveness resulted in behaviour that could be described as aggressive.

I went on a tirade...I gave him a great big row (First Line Manager RFS).

Secondly, insufficient allocation of time to developmental activities inhibited learning of employees. Thirdly, the pressure on managers, at times, to achieve operational objectives could result in them failing to prioritise developmental activities.

I am very task orientated...for people who aren't like that I think that's hard because they may feel 'I'm not being given the chance to learn' (First Line Manager RFS).

### *5.3.2 Informing*

Informative behaviours revealed that most managers were pleased to share their knowledge with staff and others. However, clear evidence emerged that managers need to have confidence in themselves to engage in such a developmental activity.

I feel confident in sharing that experience and knowledge (First Line Manager Quarriers).

He was happy to impart that information and knowledge and happy to have someone learning from him without thinking there was maybe a threat attached (First Line Manager RFS describing her Senior Line Manager).

Informative behaviours play a critical role in ensuring that individuals have sufficient knowledge to do their jobs effectively.

## *Developmental Managers*

*She* would early on be introducing a spectrum of information, explaining it and making it available and facilitating the learning whatever that took. My ideal manager has got a way of breaking that down into the size of chunks that make sense. I do know of some managers who pick a policy and have discussions one to one and I think that's really important because that's a way of the manager ensuring that the individual understands what they are supposed to be doing (HR Director Quarriers).

Information is shared with folk; knowledge isn't used as a power tool (Training Manager Quarriers).

However, some managers admitted that they currently, or had in the past, limited staff opportunities for learning because they themselves lacked confidence in their own ability and/or experience. Managers recognised the inhibitory impact that this could have given that it:

...must have been really frustrating for them because they've not really been involved (Senior Line Manager RFS).

There was also some evidence that managers didn't always effectively transfer tacit knowledge.

It was all the bits in between that she knows in her head that hadn't been put down. Maybe if I had observed her doing a few things that would have been better (Staff Member Quarriers).

### *5.3.3 Being Professional*

The professional category focused on the competency of managers, and three behaviours were revealed here: role-modelling, standard setting, and planning and preparing.

Of the three role modelling came through as the most influential behaviour. With staff, in particular, identifying the value of having role models they could aspire to.

If you think somebody is a good manager then you try to model yourself on how would they maybe handle this (Staff Member RFS)?

## Conclusions

I see lots of things with ASLM5...it's all work practice (Staff Member Quarriers).

Whilst many staff admired their managers they did not necessarily model them slavishly.

It's all about taking different bits and pieces, just watching how they do things (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

There was limited evidence of managers being aware of the potential of role modelling.

Whilst no inhibitory corollaries were identified, in this sample, it could be argued that the risk of staff modelling inappropriate behaviour is possible.

She's not always had the best role modelling from managers whom she has worked with in the past. So I think there's an aspect of her unlearning before she can learn (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

Standard setting saw managers stating or demonstrating what they saw as acceptable standards of performance, a behaviour encouraged by the quality initiatives in each organisation.

There should be a basic level there that I am looking for within all of the staff (First Line Manager Quarriers).

There was less evidence of managers planning and preparing for developmental interactions or creating systems for learning, due to the fact that structured systems were already in place in each organisation. However, there were some examples that showed managers going beyond the organisational systems or creating systems that pre-empted the establishment of organisational systems. Most interactions within this category occurred within the context of induction.

*She* would be well-prepared and planned...she would have a well thought out induction programme which would be continually judged against how the individual was learning, pace of learning, and preferred style of learning (HR Director Quarriers).

Developmental activities here involved creating checklists and records of progress, arranging meetings with other people in the organisation, and debriefing.

#### *5.3.4 Advising v being dogmatic*

Advisory behaviours ranged across a continuum from directive instruction to non-directive counselling. Experienced managers were more likely to counsel staff, whilst less experienced managers were more likely to act in a directive fashion, which could ultimately result in them behaving dogmatically thus inhibiting learning.

More directive behaviours such as instruction and coaching tended to be used in developmental interactions focusing on work practice.

She coached me in how she does it and then I would do it (Staff member RFS).

Coaching and guidance were used to help staff with managerial responsibilities deal with a range of people management issues.

I had really been advising her that when people come to her with issues like this they are adults (First Line Manager RFS).

Managers also provided guidance to help staff with personal and professional development, such as assisting staff undertaking qualifications and helping first line managers develop managerial competencies.

It's like being a signpost (First Line Manager Quarriers).

He's been very supportive in giving me his advice (Staff Member RFS).

There was also some evidence that managers used counselling to help staff deal with stress.

I asked 'what's been happening'...and we literally just talked it through (First Line Manager Quarriers).

## *Conclusions*

As noted above there was evidence that managers were sometimes overly directive when they behaved dogmatically. This resulted in managers expecting staff to do things exactly as they wanted them done and/or at the pace that they would carry out the task.

Right this is the way we do it (First Line Manager Quarriers).

I had been driving them too hard (First Line Manager Quarriers).

Consequences of such dogmatism were that it became difficult for staff to express different views or opinions, or resulted in them lacking confidence in their abilities.

[I's] really difficult to put something across that might differ from her opinion (Staff Member RFS).

[I'd] driven them to go and do something that they're not at the stage of being comfortable doing and they therefore do it badly. That then gives them the cycle of 'I'm not good at that' and therefore they do it badly (First Line Manager Quarriers).

### *5.3.5 Assessing*

Within assessment two sets of behaviours were identified: providing feedback and recognition, and assessment of development needs.

Feedback, an important facilitator of adult learning (Hilgard and Bower, 1966), and recognition were identified by both managers and employees as playing an important role in reinforcing learning by providing constructive criticism and increasing confidence in one's abilities.

He does it in a constructive way, which is the best way I would say because you can obviously work from that (Staff member RFS).

I think that because I was getting some feedback he must believe that I can do this (First Line Manager Quarriers).

## *Developmental Managers*

There was limited evidence of the managers sampled not providing appropriate feedback to their staff. When this did happen it resulted in staff being unsure of themselves or not being aware of shortcomings in their performance.

The first couple of months I was thinking 'am I doing OK?' I was not getting any feedback 'that yes you're fine' (First Line Manager Quarriers).

Another example revealed a first line manager having difficulty in confronting performance problems with her staff.

If she's got problems which she needs to address which are negative, she will either leave them out or not address them (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

Managers identifying development needs addressed both short-term training needs and long-term development needs. There was also recognition that training needs reflected the changing needs of service users.

Few managers were described as failing to identify the development needs of their staff, and this is hardly surprising given that both organisations had extensive development systems and the generally positive behaviours demonstrated by managers. Two reasons given for not identifying development needs included over-emphasis on developing services rather than people, and not being proactive at looking at people's weaknesses. Both of these are related to two other inhibitory behaviours described above - putting operational activities ahead of developmental activities and the difficulty of dealing with negative aspects of performance. There was also some recognition here by managers that they had also not fully considered learning styles when considering staff development needs.

*5.3.6 Thinking*

Thinking behaviours saw managers encouraging staff to take time out to think reflectively and/or prospectively. Most incidents within this category occurred within the context of supervision.

We look for opportunities in learning from one situation to the next (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

I was getting one staff member to reflect more about their practices and think what they were doing on a day to day basis (First Line Manager RFS).

Some senior line managers recognised that they did not always give staff a chance to think things through, often as a consequence of two other inhibitors - the desire to control staff and operational or time pressures - as a result opportunities for learning were lost.

...a much more effective way long term is to let them reach their own conclusions and guide, facilitate them in that process. I'm not always the best at that especially under pressure when you want the right thing done now (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

It's tempting sometimes just to cut to the chase and sort something rather than saying 'you go and deal with that' (Senior Line Manager RFS).

The second thinking behaviour within this category was clarification. Such behaviour was recognised as helping staff understand their role and how it contributed to organisational objectives.

I came away from that clear in my own mind about what I was doing (First Line Manager Quarriers about Senior Line Manager).

I think a lot about that is sitting down together and trying to achieve clarity about what we are actually saying and where we are going (Senior Line Manager RFS).

Clarification involved managers either explaining things to staff and/or asking individuals questions to help them clarify things in their own minds.

## *Developmental Managers*

She might want you to explain exactly why you want to pursue a particular area. You have to be very specific and clear with her (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

My main role was probably questioning what BLM4 was saying and getting her to a point where she was actually crystal clear (Senior Line Manager RFS).

The impact of such clarity was summed up by a first line manager at RFS as 'like curtains being pulled back'.

However, such clarity was not always present and this resulted in staff feeling confused and uncertain, which impacted negatively on their confidence. To their credit a number of managers recognised this failing in themselves and resolved to address it.

I hadn't explained what the intention was...So I think that inhibited some people...one or two people seemed a bit confused about what I was getting at (First Line Manager Quarriers).

I've never explicitly discussed this with him and I'll need to do that (Senior Line Manager RFS).

### *5.3.7 Empowering*

There was limited evidence of empowering behaviours. Initially, this seemed surprising given the learning-orientated cultures of both organisations, however this is likely to be partly a consequence of the nature of the organisations' work with service users which requires staff to work within strict policy parameters, a result of increasing regulation of social care. It should, however, be noted that less experienced managers were less likely to engage in empowering staff, another example of their relative lack of confidence in comparison to more experienced colleagues. A particular example of this could be seen in the difficulties that less experienced managers faced initially in delegating to junior staff.

The more unsafe I felt the more controlling I got...Now I'm conscious of letting people [go]. I know it's not always going to be right but it's how they learn (Senior Line Manager RFS).

## *Conclusions*

Managers who found it difficult to delegate tended to demonstrate controlling behaviours, which resulted in them taking over or interfering in tasks being undertaken by staff.

[I] probably held the reins too tightly until I gained confidence (First Line Manager Quarriers).

[I] tend to solve it all and I don't let the person work through it and I solve it my way. I don't let them do it (First Line Manager RFS).

At times even experienced managers found it difficult to let go because:

I know at the bottom line the responsibility is mine (First Line Manager RFS).

There was also evidence that managers who delegated didn't always do it consistently and as a consequence:

...if she had already done it I haven't learned how to do it (Staff member RFS).

The reluctance to let go could also be seen in managers engaging in excessive monitoring of staff, which could make staff nervous.

A second empowering behaviour was showing trust in staff. This was seen at two levels. Firstly, trusting staff to get on with their work without excessive monitoring, which can also be related to delegation. Secondly, developing relationships with staff so that they feel sufficiently confident to confide in their managers.

ALM4 is very, very competent and I know that she will ask me anything she doesn't know. So I'm quite happy not to sit on her shoulders (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

Getting them to trust you, trust is the big thing (First Line Manager Quarriers).

### *5.3.8 Developing developers*

Managers' commitment to development was emphasised by them developing junior staff also as developers, to facilitate both formal and informal learning. A particularly insightful example of this behaviour was provided by one managerial stream in Quarriers where this behaviour transferred from the senior line manager through all levels to a team leader. There was recognition that developing staff was in itself a good developmental opportunity for staff with supervisory responsibilities.

An opportunity for them to know what supervision is about and to offer someone else support, advice and encouragement (First Line Manager RFS).

### *5.3.9 Challenging Behaviours*

There was little evidence of the challenging behaviours, more traditionally associated with mentoring (Kram, 1983), in the developmental interactions examined. When demonstrated such behaviour was used to stimulate staff and broaden horizons.

I think as a staff developer it isn't all about praising and patting on the back and sending them on training courses, but there is a great deal of it about challenging and helping staff to see that they can do better even in the smallest of ways (First Line Manager Quarriers).

If you're not getting challenged yourself you're not going to challenge service users in the work you do (First Line Manager RFS).

## **5.4 Processes**

Clear links between managerial behaviours and organisational processes such as supervision, work practice and standards could be seen.

My ideal manager would regularly meet with their employee through supervision and through on-the-job learning as it happens day in, day out as required – coaching and instructing (HR Director Quarriers).

## *Conclusions*

Behaviours that mirrored the objectives of the supervision policies included: providing feedback; standard setting; caring behaviours including supporting, encouraging, being approachable and reassuring; identifying development needs; clarifying; empowering and challenging. Perhaps most importantly of all supervision involved regular one to one contact between an employee and their manager, enabling managers to facilitate reflective practice.

The process of reflecting on your work with the help of another person in order to help you do it better (Practice Teacher Quarriers).

Staff provided examples of managers using learning in the workplace to expand their knowledge and expertise.

She took me to a review the other week and she also took me to a new referral. This was new for me because that side I've never seen before...I think it is about giving you the fuller picture (Staff member Quarriers).

There's been times when I've been in the sitting room and because she used to be on the shopfloor she's said 'oh does he like it that way because he didn't before?' and I'll say 'what did he do before?' and then she'll tell you (Staff member Quarriers).

There was a clear link between professional behaviours, particularly standard-setting, with the values, and quality and standards initiatives in both organisations. This was best demonstrated by a critical incident where a senior line manager from Quarriers facilitated a team building day with a group of staff having difficulty adhering to the values and standards of the organisation.

## **6. OUTCOMES**

### **6.1 Personal learning**

A range of positive personal outcomes from facilitative developmental interactions was reported. These included: individuals settling in to new employment more easily; learning new work practices; individuals being more able to cope with stressful situations; confidence-building which helped individuals both cope with the demands

of their jobs but also in some circumstances cope with a return to study. There was also evidence that managers were helping individuals to improve their abilities to be reflective practitioners.

[I'm] more assertive, more confident in using my skills and also in what I'm talking about to people about what my role is, and my responsibility, but also where that stops. I think it's made me critically evaluate my practice more (Staff member RFS).

## **6.2 Organisational learning**

A range of positive organisational outcomes from facilitative developmental interactions was reported. These included improved services for service users; more effective teams; junior employees contributing to the development of services and operations in the organisation; improved morale; and improved communication across the organisation.

We as a team can come to a happy medium where everybody has maybe got a bit of input and no one feels that their opinion isn't valued (Staff member RFS).

Such outcomes were confirmed by recent inspection reports.

Each organisation's recognition as an Investor in People confirms that managers must have been playing an active part in the development of staff. This has become increasingly important given the 8<sup>th</sup> indicator in the new IiP standard which requires managers, at all levels, and individuals to give examples of action that managers have taken or are taking to support the development of people.

There was some evidence that both organisations were beginning to engage in organisational learning processes through, for example, strategic review and evaluation processes which involved staff and managers.

...we're thinking more deeply than we were in the past (Director of HR Quarriers).

...support improvement evaluations, service users going out and doing evaluations and the Quality Handbook. These are all saying to staff we're reviewing, we're looking and we're learning – you do the same (ALC RFS).

The clearest example of this was Quarriers' Learning Organisation conference and associated activities.

They really felt more part of Quarriers from that as well – the big organisation – as well as the wee bit here. It enlarged their thinking of Quarriers as an organisation (First Line Manager Quarriers).

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has demonstrated that this thesis has answered the five research questions outlined in Chapter 1 by: identifying managerial behaviours that facilitate or inhibit learning; by identifying what motivates line managers to develop staff; and by exploring the influence of organisational and individual variables on developmental interactions and the developmental behaviours of line managers.

The next, and final, chapter considers the implications of this research for theory and practice.

## **CHAPTER 12 – IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter compares and contrasts the empirical results with existing knowledge, theory and concepts. The chapter then identifies an agenda for further research. Lessons for stakeholders – academics, managers, HRD specialists and voluntary organisations - are also drawn out. The chapter also presents a Developmental Manager model to enhance understanding of how the role interacts with individual, organisational and environmental variables. The chapter then confirms that the five research questions have been answered. Finally, the chapter concludes with the author engaging in reflective practice regarding the processes involved in this study and its outcomes.

### **2. COMPARISON WITH EXISTING THEORY**

This section compares the empirical findings with the theoretical influences outlined in the conceptual framework, and which were discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

#### **2.1 HRD**

Five themes (Wilson, 1999; Horowitz, 1999) in the HRD literature are of particular relevance to this thesis.

##### *2.1.1 HRD enabling the organisation to respond to challenges and opportunities*

A range of environmental drivers (Garavan et al., 1995) has stimulated the emergence of strategic HRD. This growing interest in HRD has been reflected in the voluntary sector's response to the challenges facing the sector, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Harris et al., 1991; Osborne, 1996b; SCVO, 1999; VSNT0, 2000a).

Chapters 6,7 and 11 have shown that HRD was playing a central role in enabling both organisations to respond to a range of environmental factors including social policy,

technological and societal. Of particular significance is the increasing regulation of care and the contract culture.

### *2.1.2 Integration of corporate and HRD strategies*

Explicit and implicit in theoretical discussions of HRD, is its linkage with corporate strategy.

Chapters 6 and 7 have shown the close integration of corporate and HRD strategies in the case study organisations. This was seen most clearly in HRD's role in sustaining the values of each organisation, and providing underpinning to their quality initiatives and professional standards.

### *2.1.3 A systematic approach to learning and development*

Thomson et al. (2001) found that the use of systematic organisational processes facilitated management development, and it can be assumed that this could be extended to wider employee development. Marsick and Watkins (1997) also argue that it is important to create a support system which encourages individuals to grow.

The HRD strategies and learning climates created in both organisations, building on the person-centred values of social care, contributed to the support systems available in each organisation. Figure 11.2 in Chapter 11 depicted the organisational framework for learning and development showing that both organisations have adopted a systematic approach to learning and development. The most important element in this learning system is supervision, providing a pivotal link between individuals and their manager, and between individuals and the organisation as a whole.

### *2.1.4 Partnership between the HRD function and line managers*

Writers such as Storey (1992), Heraty and Morley (1995), IPD (1995), and Hyman and Cunningham (1998), have expressed concern about the competence of managers to undertake developmental roles. Training of line managers as developers was

therefore recognised as critical in Chapter 4 (e.g. Mumford, 1993; McGovern et al., 1997; Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999; Buckingham, 2000). Chapter 4 (e.g. Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994) also highlighted that managers need support for their HRD responsibilities and roles, and that such support is a critical factor in maximising the efficacy of line managers as developers.

Both RFS and Quarriers revealed a positive partnership between the HRD function and line managers. HRD systems provided a framework, consistent with the Cabinet Office's model (1993), for managers to operate within. Training courses provided managers with the skills and knowledge to undertake developmental responsibilities, which included the provision of insights into adult learning. HRD specialists also provided advice to individual managers. RFS's HRD function, through the decentralised role of the Area Learning Co-ordinators, adopted a more explicit client-customer approach (Bevan and Hayday, 1994). Whilst at Quarriers the notion of partnership in people management was expressed by the HR Director and Training Manager.

*[The HR Department should be seen]* as a facilitating department where the management of people is very firmly held by the line managers (HR Director Quarriers).

*[Training and Development specialists]* should help develop and promote learning but as much of it as possible *[should]* be owned by the line management structure (Training Manager Quarriers).

### *2.1.5 The creation of a learning culture*

A consistent theme in the theoretical influences explored in Chapter 3 was the central role played by organisational culture in encouraging learning in organisations.

A very powerful finding from the empirical data was the strength of the learning culture in each organisation. It is concluded that the organisations' commitment to learning and the commitment of individual managers to facilitate learning created these climates, in which staff were willing to engage in learning. The importance of learning climate is discussed further in 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 below, whilst the role of line managers in facilitating learning is discussed in 2.7.

In conclusion, HRD plays an important role in supporting corporate strategy and providing a framework for learning. As was seen in Chapters 6, 7 and 10 HRD is also an important influence on how line managers undertake their developmental responsibilities.

## **2.2 Workplace Learning**

Chapter 4 demonstrated a resurgence of interest in workplace learning (NSTF, 2000; IPD, 2000) and highlighted the important, if under recognised, role of informal learning within the workplace (Marsick and Watkins, 1997; Eraut et al., 1998; IPD, 2000; NSTF, 2000).

Chapters 6,7 and 10 demonstrated that the workplace was seen as an important source of learning in both organisations, and in particular line managers are seen to play a major role in facilitating such learning (Marsick and Watkins, 1997; IPD, 2000; NSTF, 2000) as they are best placed to assess and deliver learning in the workplace (Heraty and Morley, 1995).

There is so much that actually goes on that you are able to help people develop and learn within that sort of [*workplace*] setting. There is nobody better equipped to do that than the managers who are there and with the people at that point in time (Senior Line Manager RFS).

Marsick and Watkins (1997) described such managers as being able to present challenges to staff and this can be seen in the examples of challenging behaviour described in Chapter 8.

Marsick and Watkins also suggest that managers can draw out lessons from experience for future circumstances, and can surface assumptions and tacit beliefs that help with clarification. This could be seen frequently in supervisory interactions where case study managers used thinking behaviours to get staff to reflect on past experiences to inform their future practice, and encouraged reflective or prospective thinking to help learners clarify their role or situation.

Woodall (2000) has expressed concerns about workplace learning. Firstly, the need for active promotion and support by managers in environments where there is limited opportunity for guided reflection, and secondly, the need to have effective integration of workplace learning with other HRM processes, such as performance management. RFS and Quarriers resolved the first through supervision which provided regular opportunities for guided reflection, as could be seen in the developmental interactions in the thinking behaviour category. Furthermore, both organisations, through their training courses and publications to help managers with their developmental responsibilities, emphasised the role of the workplace as a source of learning opportunities. The need for integration was addressed by the creation of the organisational frameworks described in 2.1.3 above.

Finally, Beckett (1999) and the IPD (2000) argued respectively that to support workplace learning effectively managers need to understand the theory and practices of adult and workplace learning, and as noted in Chapters 6 and 7 this was being addressed by both organisations.

By analysing a range of critical incidents within developmental relationships this empirical study has confirmed the vital role that line managers play in supporting learning in the workplace.

### **2.3 Organisational Learning and the Learning Organisation**

As noted in Chapter 4 a proposition of this research is that line managers may act as a channel between individual and organisational learning by participating in *learning partnerships* with their staff and others given that:

...learning processes within organizations usually involve interaction between individuals (Probst and Buchell, 1997, p.148).

The relationship between organisational and individual learning has been highlighted in the learning organisation concept which has emphasised the importance of creating a conducive environment for learning by individuals and groups (Senge, 1990; Pedler et al., 1991). Chapter 4 also recognised the role of line managers in facilitating the

journey towards the learning organisation ideal by helping to create a conducive learning climate (Mumford, 1993; Salaman, 1995; Senge, 1996; Ellinger et al., 1999a).

Chapter 10 confirmed that managers played a critical role in stimulating learning. They were recognised by respondents, and independent liP assessors, as creating climates conducive to learning. This was achieved by giving staff confidence and pride in their work, allowing people to make mistakes, and treating people with respect, all of which are also consistent with adult learning theory. In particular the caring behaviours demonstrated by managers helped staff feel comfortable in developmental interactions. Managers also facilitated learning through their utilisation of different approaches to learning which enabled staff to access a range of learning opportunities. In particular, managers encouraged staff to share learning with others, consistent with Nonaka's (1996) spiral of knowledge, and thus there was some evidence of individual learning transferring to organisational learning. This process was enhanced by employees' commitment to the values of RFS and Quarriers, which Nonaka argues is key to tapping tacit knowledge. The sharing of knowledge could also be seen in managers encouraging grassroots staffs' ideas, which could inform future organisational practice, and the use of staff conferences.

Senge's concept of the leader as steward in learning organisations has resonance with the values of these two social care voluntary organisations as:

*People's natural impulse to learn is unleashed when they are engaged in an endeavour they consider worthy of their fullest commitment (Senge, 1996, p.297).*

This role was also demonstrated by case study managers' commitment to their respective organisation's purposes and through their conscious, and unconscious, adoption of role modelling.

Keep and Rainbird (2000) suggest that Senge's, and others', vision of managers' roles in learning organisations is somewhat idealistic. Firstly, they argue that managers lack facilitation skills, and secondly, they wonder about the impact on managers if their staff become more knowledgeable and skilled. This research has shown that the

managers studied here possessed skills for facilitating learning and that RFS and Quarriers were developing these further through training. There was little evidence of managers seeing the development of their staff as a threat to their position. Although there was some evidence of, particularly inexperienced, managers limiting facilitation of learning until they had sufficient confidence in their own managerial abilities.

A key test of organisational learning is whether espoused values are translated into managerial reality (Argryis, 1990; Salaman, 1995). The primary results showed a mixed response to this test. There was limited evidence of empowerment, which is often claimed to be a voluntary sector value, although it was argued in Chapter 11 that this may be a reflection of the regulation of social care, as well as managers' difficulties in loosening control. This also suggests that the rhetoric of the empowerment movement of the 1990s has some way to go before it is translated into reality. However, there was clear evidence that the human centred values of social care had been transferred to the care of staff, which will be discussed further in 2.4 below.

This study has provided tentative conclusions that suggest line managers may act as a conduit for the transference of individual to organisational learning, and as suggested in Chapter 11 this role should be explored more deeply in further research.

## **2.4 Ethics and Values**

A key question to ask is whether or not the values of adult learning identified in Chapter 3 (Rokeach, 1972; Knowles, 1984; Brookfield, 1986; Garrick, 1998; Walton, 1999; Woodall and Douglas, 2000) were present in the case study organisations.

From this study evidence does emerge that a human-centred approach to HRD was present in both organisations, and endorses the author's assertion in Chapter 4 that voluntary organisations were likely to provide conditions conducive to developmental humanism. This human-centred approach was demonstrated particularly in supervision. Formal supervision happened every 3-4 weeks, and it is argued that such regular contact helps develop learning relationships where people are prepared to discuss issues and concerns in an open and constructive manner.

The respect for individuals could be seen in the caring behaviours demonstrated by all managers. As noted in 2.3 above these behaviours contributed to creating learning climates where staff were willing to approach their managers for help and support. The acknowledgement, by employees and managers, that feedback, even when negative, should be given constructively shows the value placed on respecting individual personality. Recognition and praise were seen to enhance confidence, which could increase self-esteem.

Freedom of expression and the sharing of information require an open and positive learning climate. Generally this was present in RFS and Quarriers underpinned by organisational values, propagated through policy statements, training courses, supervision, role modelling, and the caring behaviours demonstrated by managers. Managers generally welcomed sharing their experience and expertise through provision of information, coaching and guidance. There was however recognition that managers need to feel confident to engage fully in such activities. Trust was also recognised as enabling managers and supervisees to engage in open and honest discussion.

However, managers did not always behave consistently and there was limited evidence that staff were not getting full access to information or experiences, sometimes due to commercial sensibilities. That prevented employees seeing the full context of particular situations, and could contribute to lack of understanding or feelings of lack of involvement.

Advisory behaviours, such as coaching and guidance, enabled staff to learn in a collaborative and active manner. However, where managers behaved dogmatically it led to staff reluctance to approach managers with alternative perspectives and thus freedom of expression was limited due to a lack of psychological safety (Schein, 1993; Woodall and Douglas, 2000). This could therefore stifle organisational creativity and inhibit organisational learning.

The need for collaboration in defining goals, planning and implementing learning and work activities and evaluation was manifest in the organisational processes of supervision, appraisal, learning and development plans, and learning portfolios – an

organisational framework which replicated the person-centred planning process for service users. The value that staff placed on these processes was demonstrated by them highlighting critical incidents from supervision and appraisal discussions, and by several respondents volunteering their learning and development plans to the author.

Finally, staff observing managerial behaviour in the workplace and looking for appropriate role models demonstrated the need for managers to be aware of their actions. Staff clearly respected some managers as role models and aspired to follow their example. What was less clear was how many managers were aware of the potential influence their *professional* and *ethical* behaviour could have on employees.

It is clear from this study that the ethics and values of the case study organisations influenced the behaviours of line managers in developmental interactions.

## **2.5 Adult Learning**

Chapter 3 recognised the crucial role line managers play in facilitating learning and the need for managers to understand adult learning theory to enable them to carry out this role effectively.

The facilitative behaviours of managers can be linked to three schools of learning identified by Hilgard and Bower (1966), and could inform future training of developmental managers.

### *2.5.1 Stimulus-Response Theory*

Stimulus-response theory argues that the learner needs to be actively engaged in learning. The application of this theory could be seen in the processes used by case study managers which actively involved learners in the identification of learning objectives and their support of learning within the workplace, which gave staff the opportunity to practice new skills.

### *2.5.2 Cognitive Theory*

Cognitive theory can be seen most clearly in the thinking behaviours demonstrated by managers, with supervision providing an ideal opportunity for a key principle of adult learning – critical reflection. Discussion of thinking behaviours highlighted the importance of making time available for staff to engage in reflective and/or prospective thinking, particularly given the demanding and hands-on nature of much of their work. There was however some recognition that this process did not come easily to all individuals, especially those with more active learning styles.

Clear evidence also emerged of the importance of managers providing clarity in the workplace as this helped individuals understand their role in the organisation and gave them clear direction about what they were trying to achieve.

Another important element of cognitive theory feedback was also reflected in managerial behaviour as it was recognised as a critical behaviour in facilitating learning by staff and managers. Feedback also plays an important part in motivating adult learners; especially those motivated by achievement, anxiety and approval (Otto and Glaser, 1970).

### *2.5.3 Motivation and Personality Theory*

The culture of the organisations and the behaviours of managers played an important role in motivating individuals to learn and addressed many of the elements of motivation and personality theory. Again this could be seen most clearly in the supervision process which provided an opportunity to address the learning needs of individuals, whilst the culture of the organisations created the norm of continuous learning.

Chapter 3 also highlighted the importance of experiential learning in adult learning, and two concepts were focused on – the learning cycle and learning styles.

#### *2.5.4 Experiential Learning*

Coaching provided the clearest examples of Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle being followed, although it was not clear if this was done consciously by *coaching managers*. Again this link between a developmental behaviour and learning theory could be articulated in future training of managers. Whilst within thinking behaviours, reflective thinking can be linked to the reflective observation stage of the cycle, whilst prospective thinking can be linked to the active experimentation stage of the cycle.

Hughes and Pengelly (1997) argue that a development need for managers undertaking supervisory processes is their ability to understand these processes of adult learning. There was evidence in both organisations, that managers, and to a lesser extent staff, were becoming more aware of the value of understanding that different people have different approaches to learning. Managers were being introduced to this concept in the training courses provided by their organisations to help with their developmental responsibilities.

This study has confirmed the argument in the literature that line managers need to be given training in adult learning principles to enable them to facilitate their employees' learning as effectively as possible.

## **2.6 Management Development**

Storey (1992) argues that managers are more capable of developing employees if they have experienced development themselves.

The case studies provide evidence of both formal and informal approaches to management development. RFS and Quarriers recognised the need to develop their managers and this was demonstrated by their investment in formal training courses for managers and sponsoring managers on educational programmes. Managers' learning needs, like those of their staff, were discussed in their own supervision and appraisal meetings. Managers also recognised that they learned about management through experience, particularly in learning about managing staff.

I think as a manager you're always learning because you have to always be able to react to different people within the organisation in different ways because people are different, their circumstances are different as well (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

Another valuable source of management learning, as suggested by Dartington (1992), was peers.

We all share an office and we all bounce things off each other...it's more of an informal support kind of thing. We learn from each other just from chats (Senior Line Manager Quarriers).

As noted in 2.7.3 below there was limited evidence of mentoring, however there was some recognition of the potential value of mentoring, particularly in RFS.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) argue that management development is a bridge between organisational development and self-development. This could be seen in the managers' commitment to self-development, which they saw not only as a means of developing themselves as managers, but also recognising the knock-on effects on staff which could then enhance service delivery.

I feel I need to continue developing myself. If I don't motivate myself I'm not going to encourage others...So if I can keep that to a certain level then hopefully it will roll over and the rest of the team will feel that...[and] it spills on to service users and their development (First Line Manager RFS).

This also confirms the conclusion in Chapter 4 that developmental managers were likely to engage in self-development and endorses the first element of the working definition of developmental managers in Chapter 1.

The process of self-development also involves learning to learn and thus enhances the ability of self-developing managers to support the development of others through their enhanced understanding of learning principles (Mumford, 1993; Salaman, 1995). Organisational processes such as personal development plans also support self-development (Stewart, 1999b) and these could be seen in the learning and development plans developed by individuals in collaboration with their managers.

Bruce and Leat (1993) identified five broad approaches to management development in the voluntary sector. Both RFS and Quarriers, as seen by their practices outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, fall into the 'differentiator not-for-profit managers' category. This means that they are largely pro-management, but see managing a voluntary organisation as distinctive from managing a business.

This research confirms the need for voluntary organisations to invest in management development, and to adopt approaches consistent with their mission and needs. It also confirms that managers who have been exposed to development are more able to support the development of others.

## **2.7 Developmental roles and line managers' behaviours**

The central theme in this thesis is the role of the line manager as developer, and the links between the literature and the behaviours of the managers in RFS and Quarriers are explored below.

### *2.7.1 Devolution of HRD*

Whilst Chapter 4 demonstrated the increasing devolution of HRD responsibilities to line managers, it recognised there was limited empirical evidence of how this responsibility was translated into practice (Mumford, 1993; McGovern et al., 1997, de Jong et al., 1999).

In both case studies managers were perceived, by key informants and senior managers, to have the key role in HRD, and managers willingly accepted this responsibility. Their motivation to facilitate learning was driven by their desire to ensure appropriate standards of performance were reached and their pleasure in seeing others grow, consistent with those motivators identified by AMED (1991) and Mumford (1993). This developmental role was seen to be growing in significance, given the increasing emphasis on SVQs, which utilise a competency-based approach to learning and assessment. Both organisations encouraged managers to utilise the workplace more as a source of learning and there was clear evidence that they were doing so. Their developmental responsibility was most clearly demonstrated by their

role in the supervisory process. Developmental responsibilities were also emphasised in managerial job descriptions.

### *2.7.2 Barriers*

Chapter 4 identified an extensive range of barriers to managers adopting developmental roles. This research confirms some, but not all.

Those that were consistent with the literature were lack of time and tensions between operational and developmental duties. However, there was no empirical evidence to suggest that managers felt that devolution had been pushed on to them, given the traditions of supervision in social care, although there was some concern about the growing bureaucracy created by HRD systems.

The literature has identified that a key barrier to managers being effective developers is their own lack of development. There was little evidence of this in the case studies as most managers were well qualified and most were currently engaged in further learning, either formally or informally.

A further barrier that was identified in the literature was the lack of development of managers for their developmental roles (Bevan et al., 1995). Again this was not the case in RFS and Quarriers, as managers received training and other development for their developmental responsibilities.

Bevan and Hayday (1994) also identified that some managers were uncomfortable in engaging in ongoing dialogue and appraisal processes with their staff and thus avoided these. This was addressed in the case study organisations through the supervision process, which ensured that managers engaged in regular dialogue with their staff. The lack of performance-related pay also limited inhibitions about appraisal.

Another potential obstacle to managers undertaking developmental responsibilities is the lack of consideration of this role in managerial performance appraisals (McGovern et al., 1997; Storey and Sisson, 2000; Keep and Rainbird, 2000). Both

RFS and Quarriers ensure that managers' people management responsibilities are covered in their own supervision and appraisal.

### *2.7.3 Developmental roles*

The existing literature has tended to focus on five specific developmental roles – coach, mentor, peer learner, counsellor and appraiser - and these were discussed in Chapter 4. The links between these roles and the facilitative behaviours identified in Chapter 8 are discussed below.

Singer (1974) and Mumford (1993) suggest that for *coaches* to be effective, they need to have some understanding of learning theory, in particular learning styles, so that they adopt an appropriate approach when coaching staff. As seen in the case studies managers were showing increasing awareness of learning styles when considering learning opportunities for staff.

Singer (1974) argues that most the most important skill of coaching is listening as it demonstrates that the manager 'recognises' that the individual has something worthwhile to say. This attribute can be related to the caring behaviours of managers, such as encouraging, commitment and involvement, which showed managers valuing their employees.

There was little evidence of formal *mentoring* occurring within the case study organisations, although the provision of supervision may fulfil some of the objectives and outcomes of mentoring (Ritchie and Connelly, 1993). However some informal mentoring could be perceived in the desire of some staff to approach managers as mentors.

Nevertheless, the potential of the managers in this study to be mentors could be seen in the similarity of their behaviours with some of those identified by Clutterbuck (2000) in mentors, such as communication, conceptual modelling, commitment to own learning and strong interest in developing others. The challenging behaviour identified by Kram (1983) was also seen in a few managers. More significantly psychosocial functions, such as acceptance and confirmation, were replicated in the

managers' caring behaviour of reassurance, and both Kram's research and this study have highlighted the importance of role modelling.

Clutterbuck's (1998) description of *counselling* for learning includes behaviours, such as helping people develop the confidence and motivation to undertake learning, and offering support, and challenging.

Whilst there was limited evidence of counselling in this study, which tended to be the preserve of senior line managers and more experience first line managers, there was some synergy with Clutterbuck's behaviours. Caring behaviours demonstrated by all managers in this study, such as reassurance, encouragement and support, and challenging behaviours, demonstrated by a few, can be compared to Clutterbuck's description.

Clutterbuck also suggests that managers, who provide counselling, should receive counselling. This was mirrored to some extent in RFS and Quarriers, as staff with supervisory responsibilities also received supervision themselves. This gave them a fuller insight into the process, as noted by a team leader describing how his manager's supervisory style influenced his own approach to supervision.

It is very professional...it leaves an awful lot of room for thought during the actual process and also it's good because there is a sense of I'm the supervisor [*the manager*] and you're the supervisee [*team leader*]...It's been a really worthwhile and helpful experience for me actually being part of that process (Staff member RFS).

Chapter 4 also discussed *peer learning*, and peer mentoring in particular. McDougall and Beattie (1997) identified five categories of peer mentoring behaviour. The links between their behaviours and those identified in this study are shown in Table 12.1 below.

Peer Mentoring (McDougall & Beattie, 1997)	Line Manager as Developer (Beattie, 2002)
Communicative	Informing
Affective	Caring
Cognitive	Thinking
Learning	Reflecting, Coaching, Role modelling
Challenging	Challenging

**Table 12.1 Comparison of Peer Mentoring and Line Manager as Developer**

Critical behaviours for effective *appraisal* are reviewing performance, feedback and coaching (Myland, 1997). These behaviours were demonstrated by case study managers in the assessing category, where managers identified development needs and provided feedback and recognition to staff. Managers also demonstrated coaching in developmental interactions.

Myland (1997) argues that for appraisal to be effective managers need to receive appropriate training in appraisal skills, whilst Woodall and Winstanley (1998) argue that managers should themselves be appraised on their appraisal performance.

Both of these arguments were recognised by RFS and Quarriers through their training for appraisers and in managerial appraisals.

#### 2.7.4 Line Managers' Behaviours

As noted in Chapters 1 and 4 there has been, until recently, limited empirical work into the behaviours of line managers as developers and this thesis was undertaken due to the limitations of the existing predominantly normative mainstream literature.

Cornforth and Hooker (1990) concluded that voluntary sector managers had a high degree of concern for people and as a consequence adopted a participative approach to management. It was this view, and the belief that the sector was more likely to provide examples of developmental humanism, that encouraged the author to focus on the voluntary sector. Cornforth and Hooker's description of participative management can be applied to the managers in this study as they demonstrated behaviours, in Chapter 8, such as leading by example, being approachable,

supporting, encouraging and empowering staff to achieve personal and organisational goals. The behaviours identified in this empirical study will now be compared with those identified in the previous limited mainstream literature.

From a normative perspective Mumford (1993) identified a range of behaviours used by managers when helping other managers to develop, and several can be linked with the behaviours identified in this study as shown in Table 12.2

Mumford's Behaviours (1993)	Beattie's Behaviours (2002)
Democratic/participative decision-making	Being approachable
Planning ahead	Planning and preparing
Being able to question, reflect and plan	Thinking
Role modelling	Role modelling

**Table 12.2 Comparison with Mumford's Behaviours**

The most substantive piece of research examined in this field was that of Ellinger and Bostrom (1999), however it should be remembered that they only interviewed line managers, unlike this study which also included employees and HRD specialists. There is considerable synergy between the behaviours they have identified and those identified in this study. For ease of comparison these are presented in Table 12.3 below, and several comparative examples are also discussed briefly.

Question framing (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999) saw managers asking staff questions to generate their own solutions and getting employees to focus on the possible consequences of their actions, similar to the encouragement of prospective thinking seen in this study.

Ellinger and Bostrom argue that feedback is a particularly significant behaviour and this was confirmed in this study. Interestingly the language used by one of their respondents describing reflective feedback - 'I see that as holding the mirror – a reflection of what has just taken place' (p.763) - is replicated in a description of a critical incident provided by a senior manager in RFS:

I genuinely do endeavour more to be a mirror and reflect back at him.

Ellinger and Bostrom’s analysis provides little evidence of the caring behaviours identified in this study, apart from empathy, which perhaps strengthens the argument that there is a need to test this study’s outcomes in non-caring environments. There is also no evidence of role modelling in their findings, and it is suggested here that this may be a consequence of them not questioning the employees of managers, given that in this study most examples of role modelling came from employees. Ellinger and Bostrom acknowledge their lack of employee perspective, and suggest that for fuller understanding of developmental processes, we need to hear the employee’s voice, as has been addressed in this thesis. There is also little evidence of challenging emerging in their research, however it is acknowledged here that this study also found limited evidence of this behaviour.

Ellinger & Bostrom’s Behaviours (1999)	Beattie’s Behaviours (2002)
<p><i>Empowering Cluster</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question framing</li> <li>• Being a resource</li> <li>• Transferring ownership</li> <li>• Holding back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking</li> <li>• Informing</li> <li>• Empowering</li> <li>• Thinking</li> </ul>
<p><i>Facilitating Cluster</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing feedback</li> <li>• Working it out together</li> <li>• Creating and promoting a learning environment</li> <li>• Setting &amp; communicating expectations</li> <li>• Stepping into other</li> <li>• Broaden perspectives</li> <li>• Using analogies, scenarios</li> <li>• Encouraging others to facilitate learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Feedback</li> <li>• Thinking</li> <li>• Preparing and planning; Identifying development needs</li> <li>• Assessing; clarifying</li> <li>• Empathising</li> <li>• Thinking</li> <li>• Thinking</li> <li>• Developing developers</li> </ul>

**Table 12.3 Comparison of Facilitative Behaviours**

A more limited study by de Jong et al. (1999), which only consulted HRD specialists, identified three types of developmental roles that can be tentatively compared to this study’s findings. Their analytic, supportive and trainer roles could be compared respectively to the assessing, caring and advising categories.

A more general survey by Gallup (Buckingham, 2000) identified four critical management behaviours that could be related to facilitative behaviours. These are, firstly, having managers that care. Secondly, employees knowing what is expected of them, which can be linked to clarifying, and thirdly having a role, that fits their

abilities, which requires managers to assess performance and ability. The fourth is receiving feedback and recognition, which were also identified in this study.

AMED's (1991) profiles of 'professional' developers suggested that they had a commitment to self-development and the development of others, and this has been mirrored in the developmental managers examined here. They showed a commitment to their own learning and their commitment to other people's learning was demonstrated in their responses to the question exploring how they felt about developing staff. The AMED study also suggested that developers would have humanistic values and these could be seen in the values-base of each organisation.

AMED's profile included developers valuing autonomy above order, respect for the individual over regulation and professionalisation of practice. Whilst, as demonstrated above in 2.4 managers showed respect for the individual, they also exhibited concerns about professionalism and this could be seen most clearly in their actions encouraging staff to achieve, or even exceed, the performance standards expected by the organisations.

Finally, there was little discussion in the literature of inhibitory behaviours apart from Mumford (1993) listing reasons why managers do not provide help.

The above discussion demonstrates that this thesis has contributed to our knowledge about the developmental behaviours of line managers.

### **3. AGENDA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Seven areas for further research have been identified.

Firstly, this study has focused on the voluntary sector only. It is therefore suggested that the results of this research could be tested for wider applicability in other organisational settings. Other caring environments, such as the NHS and education, would seem obvious sectors to test the behaviours, in particular to see if the caring behaviours are replicated. It is suggested that the role of managers as facilitators of learning in for-profit environments should also be explored to examine if there are

commonalties in the behaviours of non-profit and for-profit managers, or not. It is also recognised that this research was carried out within large voluntary organisations. Therefore the findings should be tested for applicability in smaller voluntary organisations, which may not have the resources of RFS and Quarriers to provide the supporting framework identified as influential on the behaviours of managers.

Secondly, two key informants suggested that gender might play a part in influencing developmental behaviours. Although, there was no evidence of this in this study, it is acknowledged that women dominate the voluntary sector workforce, including at managerial levels. In addition many people, male and female, with caring and nurturing attributes are attracted to work in social care. It is suggested therefore that this research should be replicated in industries with a male dominated workforce and/or which are more constrained by a return to capital, such as financial services or manufacturing.

Thirdly, Chapters 8 and 9 revealed that some behaviours could be seen operating at different depths. For example, support could be simply supporting an individual with an everyday task, or could be emotional support for staff coping with distressing situations or personal problems. This degree of differentiation is worthy of further research, and would require either a more in-depth study focusing on only a few behaviours, such as support or lack of assertiveness. Alternatively, we may be best served by longitudinal research observing the progress of developmental relationships over a period of time, which might enable us to observe the deepening of relationships and behaviours more effectively.

Fourthly, there was some evidence that the interaction of learning styles could either enhance developmental relationships, or could create tensions between the two parties. It was, however, acknowledged that the sample size was too small to attribute statistical significance to this finding. It is suggested that a survey across organisations comparing the learning styles of managers and staff, and relating these to the outcomes of developmental interactions may give us greater insight into the influence, or not, of learning styles on developmental relationships.

Fifthly, coaching in contrast to mentoring has been relatively neglected in management research. Given that this is a significant developmental role undertaken by line managers, there is need for HRD academics to turn their theoretical and empirical attention to this subject. This is a subject which could be well served by action research.

Sixthly, this study has focused only on managers assessed as 'competent' by their organisations. To further enhance our understanding of managerial behaviours a survey should be carried out on a wider cross-section of managers.

Finally, Chapter 11 propounded tentative conclusions that line managers could be a significant conduit in the transfer of learning from individuals to organisational learning. It is suggested that further study is required to test this conclusion, which would be best addressed by in-depth longitudinal research in a small cross-section of organisations.

#### **4. LESSONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS**

##### **4.1 Voluntary organisations**

As suggested in 2.1.3 the good practice demonstrated in RFS and Quarriers in terms of the organisational frameworks provided for learning should be considered by other voluntary organisations, particularly given the increasing regulation of care in Scotland and the increasing demand to have more qualified staff. In particular, it is suggested that voluntary organisations consider how they can replicate the learning climates created in both organisations, which resulted in considerable sharing of knowledge across each organisation.

A growing challenge for voluntary organisations, as well as other social care providers, is the increasing number of staff who are engaged in lone working, reflecting changes in how individuals with learning disabilities and mental health problems are being supported. It will be critical that such organisations retain the regular contact with staff, that is currently provided by supervision policies and

practices, to ensure that that these staff do not become isolated from the rest of the organisation and that their development needs are not neglected.

#### **4.2 Other organisations**

Public and private sector organisations as well as absorbing the lessons in 4.1 above should also consider the powerful impact that supervision had on learning within RFS and Quarriers. There was clear evidence that much learning occurred in developmental interactions that took place within supervision discussions. It is argued here that such regular contact enabled the development of effective *learning partnerships* (Probst and Buchell, 1997), and should be considered seriously as an approach by other employers. An issue for organisations to think about is the span of control that line managers have and whether it is small enough to enable them to get to know their staff's needs and abilities sufficiently.

#### **4.3 HRD specialists**

A challenge often faced by HRD specialists is getting line managers to take employee development seriously. This was addressed effectively in the case study organisations by including people management responsibilities in managerial appraisals and job descriptions, which could be replicated by other organisations.

Central to effective facilitation of learning by line managers was the support provided by HRD specialists. Firstly, this included the learning and development framework provided in each organisation. Although HRD specialists need to ensure that in their desire to encourage managers to take a more systematic approach to developing staff they do not overwhelm them with paperwork, which may distract them from *actively* developing staff. Equally valuable was the training in developmental knowledge and skills provided by the HRD function, particularly the increasing emphasis on adult learning. It is suggested to further enhance such training the links between learning theories and facilitative behaviours, as described in 2.5 above, are highlighted to managers. HRD specialists could also adopt an internal consultancy role where they provide advice and guidance on employee development issues to individual managers and employees.

#### **4.4 Managers**

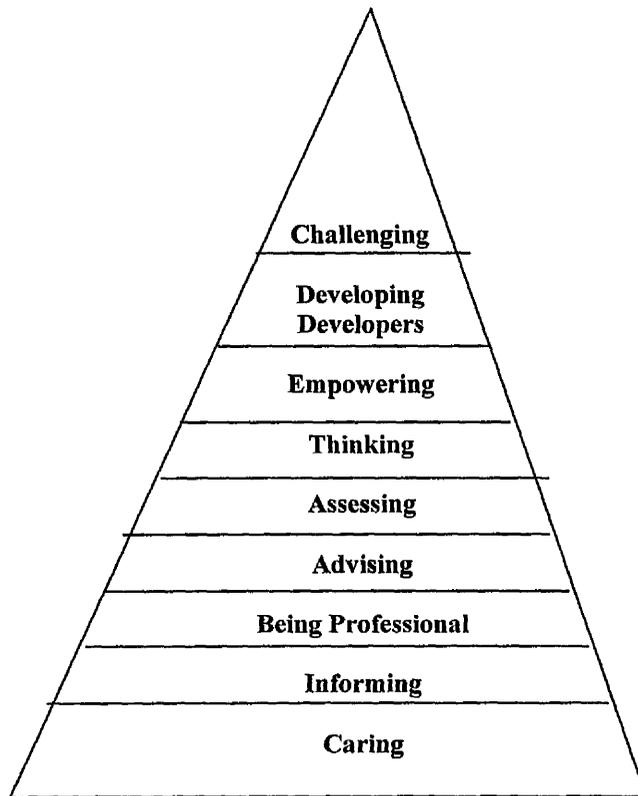
Key lessons for managers are the reminder that, after the individuals themselves, they are the most important influence on an individual's learning in the workplace. To enhance their performance it is suggested that managers need to be informed of the behaviours, which have been identified in this study, that facilitate and inhibit learning. One possible way of doing this would be by presenting them with a hierarchy of behaviours as shown in Figure 12.1. A hierarchy is suggested because, as this research has shown, managers are not able to carry out all the behaviours at once or all the time. Behaviours, such as caring, informing and being professional, are at the foundation levels of the hierarchy because these are closest to the 'professional' backgrounds of the managers and thus it would be easier to help them develop these behaviours. Whilst more sophisticated facilitation behaviours, such as empowering and challenging, are at the higher levels, as these are behaviours that managers will become more comfortable with as they gain more experience as facilitators of learning.

In addition it is important to inform managers that their actions are observed closely by staff, as was demonstrated by the latter's identification of role modelling as a facilitative behaviour, and therefore managers need to consider what example they are setting employees by their actions. Finally, managers need to be advised of the need to make their tacit knowledge, and that of others, more explicit.

#### **4.5 Academics**

Academic responsibilities emerging from this study include fulfilling the research agenda identified in 3 above. A further responsibility is to utilise the findings of this study in management learning curricula. The author contends that the outcomes of this study should inform specialist HRD modules on DMS and MBA programmes, as well as the Learning and Development and Management Development standards of the CIPD's Professional Education Scheme for HR specialists. The knowledge gained from this study should also be used to underpin the small but growing provision of voluntary sector management education in UK universities and colleges,

and the author intends to utilise this thesis in the development of a badged MBA for the voluntary sector in Scotland.



**Figure 12.1 Hierarchy of Facilitative Behaviours**

## **5. THE DEVELOPMENTAL MANAGER MODEL**

To enhance understanding of how environmental, organisational and individual variables influence Developmental Managers the author has developed a Developmental Manager model. The discussion in Chapter 11 provided the basis for the model which is presented in Figure 12.2 below.

The outer boundary of the model delineates the environmental influences that were driving the need for learning in the case study organisations. The dashed arrows represent the ongoing dynamism of this environment. Organisational influences, such as history, mission and strategy, culture and values, and structure, are represented as cornerstones of the model which are then integrated with the HRD strategy and learning climate of the organisation. The highlighted central box represents the learning and development framework outlined in Chapter 11, and the two-way arrows

represent the interaction between learning and development processes and organisational variables such as strategy and culture. Supervision has been presented in colour in recognition of its considerable influence on developmental interactions. Within this learning and development framework learners and managers participate in developmental relationships and these are influenced by individual variables such as learning style, motivation and educational and career background. The resultant developmental interactions enabled the author to identify the facilitative behaviours used by managers, as well as a range of personal learning and organisational learning outcomes. The arrows emanating from developmental interactions to organisational learning, and between organisational learning and personal learning are presented in dashed format to represent these more tentative findings.

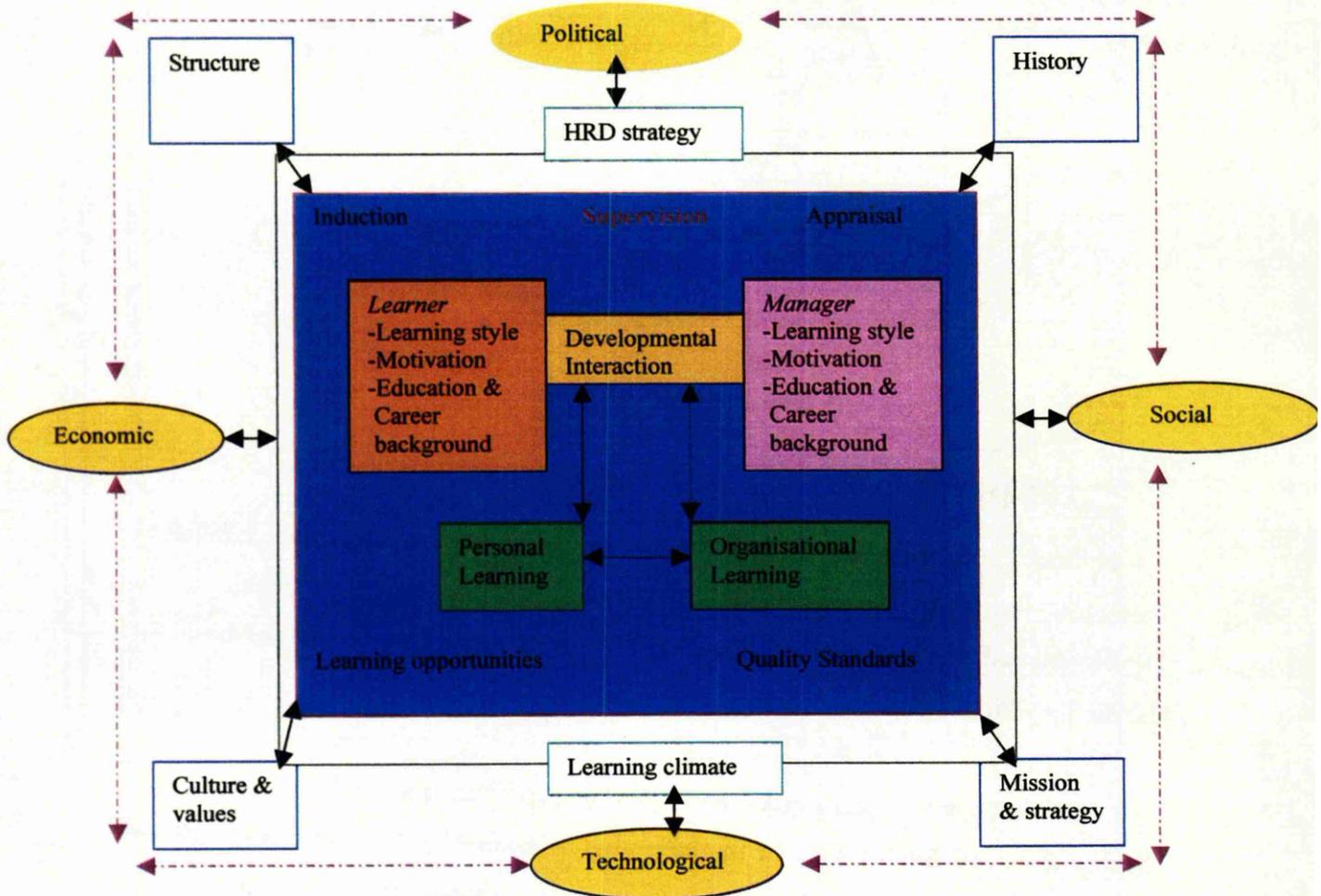


Figure 12.2 The Developmental Manager Model

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This thesis concludes by confirming that the five research questions outlined in Chapters 1 and 4 have been answered by this thesis.

- i. What do line managers do *to facilitate* learning has been answered in Chapter 8.
- ii. What do line managers do *to inhibit* learning has been answered in Chapter 9.
- iii. What *motivates* line managers to develop staff has been answered in Chapters 6 and 7.
- iv. What influences do *individual factors* have on developmental behaviours has been answered in Chapters 8-11.
- v. What influences do *organisational factors* have on developmental behaviours has been answered in Chapters 6, 7, 10 and 11.

In conclusion, this final chapter has improved our theoretical and applied understanding of the line manager as developer, and the thesis has achieved its aim of identifying the behaviours used by voluntary sector line managers when facilitating employee learning in the workplace.

## **7. THE RESEARCHER AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the discussion below the author reflects on the processes and outcomes of this doctoral study in an attempt to engage in a process of epistemic reflexivity. Johnson and Duberley (2000) define epistemic reflexivity as:

...the researcher attempting to think about their own thinking by excavating, articulating, evaluating and in some cases transforming the metatheoretical assumptions they deploy in structuring research activities as well as in apprehending and interpreting what is observed (p.178)

Three main themes are explored. Firstly, the author reflects on her contribution to knowledge both in terms of her discipline, HRD, and in terms of the research context,

the voluntary sector. Secondly, the author reflects on the research process adopted and some of the issues that have emerged from her research strategy. In particular she considers the implications of 'insider' research. Finally, she further considers the potential implications for policy and practice. This reflective exercise will also be informed by reference to literature contained in the thesis and also some publications published since submission. In particular McGoldrick et al.'s (2002) book 'Understanding Human Resource Development: A research-based approach', which sets out to examine key issues in HRD and consider the methodological strategies adopted to explore these issues, has informed this reflection.

## **7.2 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

### **7.2.1 Human Resource Development**

#### *7.2.1.1 HRD Theory*

The dominant theoretical discipline influencing this thesis was Human Resource Development underpinned by a range of perspectives on learning theory, such as andragogy, work-based learning, the learning organisation and ethics. However, it should be noted that the critical focus of this thesis was the role of line managers in facilitating learning in voluntary organisations. The author was highly critical of the limited existing literature on this subject, regarding it as largely normative and prescriptive, and thus recognised that this topic presented a significant gap in HRD knowledge. The thesis did not therefore set out to critique general learning theory, although, the author acknowledges that if she had concentrated on one or two perspectives on learning this might have facilitated a deeper level of critical analysis. However, a wider range of theoretical perspectives of learning were explored to gain insight into both learning processes and the nature of learning partnerships, such as those that might develop between line managers and individual employees. Themes that emerged from this literature review included: the potential influence of organisational variables on learning, in particular the culture of the organisation and the relationship between the HRD function and managers; learning partnerships; learning processes and their interaction with individual variables such as motivation and learning styles; the role of informal learning in the workplace; and human-centred

approaches to learning. These themes were then explored in relation to the role of line managers as facilitators of learning. In returning to the literature as part of this reflection the author recognises that a perspective on learning theory that would have been worthy of further exploration was social learning (Bandura, 1986), an omission the author intends to remedy in the future. She also intends to explore the use of social network theory (Higgins and Kram, 2001) as a means of analysing and understanding developmental relationships between line managers and their staff.

The author's approach to the literature review was both challenged by and influenced by the development of HRD over the past 10 years. On a more practical level the author as a part-time student found that she had to cope with greater changes in the literature (HRD and voluntary sector management) in comparison to a full-time student whose study would cover a shorter time-span.

The author, and others (e.g. Woodall et al., 2002), would contend that in comparison to other management disciplines, such as strategic management, marketing, and even HRM, HRD is still an emergent discipline. An example of this is when the author and a colleague were introducing HRD into an MBA programme seven years ago, they found that no substantive UK textbook on strategic HRD was available (until Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996). Since that period there have been a growing number of publications in the field (e.g. Wilson, 1999; Walton, 1999) and the emergence of two new research-oriented journals, the *International Journal of Training and Development* and *Human Resource Development International*. The former tends to take a 'systems-oriented' perspective on research, whilst the latter views HRD as 'undefinable' (McGoldrick et al., 2002). However, in comparison to HRM, HRD still lags behind in terms of publications and conceptual development. Much of the pioneering work in HRD has been conducted in the USA, and there is a very close relationship between the US Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) and the UK University Forum of HRD (UFHRD). The author's institution is a member of the latter and McGoldrick et al.'s (2002) new book is a product of that forum. Much of the development of HRD in the UK has emerged from business schools, whereas in the USA the discipline has emerged more from the domains of adult education or instructional design.

McGoldrick et al. (2002) acknowledge the need for more critical theory in HRD. However their review of the current state of knowledge on HRD demonstrates the theoretical complexity, and confusion, of the discipline.

Recent attempts to define the concept of human resource development (HRD) by academics, researchers and practitioners are proving frustrating, elusive and confusion. This suggests that HRD has not established a distinctive conceptual or theoretical identity. The process of HRD is frustrated by the apparent lack of boundaries and parameters, elusiveness is created through the lack of empirical evidence of some conceptual aspects of HRD e.g. strategic HRD, learning organization and knowledge management. This is further complicated by the epistemological and ontological perspectives of individual stakeholders and commentators in the HRD arena (p.2).

They conclude that this means there is no dominant paradigm of HRD research and that there is 'no single lens for viewing HRD research, and there are many voices expressing individual opinions' (p.4). Different perspectives of HRD are also dependent on whether the focus is on learning or performance. The author has tried to bridge these perspectives by exploring individual learning, but by also considering the outcomes at the organisational level. She, however, found herself challenged on this at a voluntary sector conference by delegates from the adult education tradition whose focus is firmly on individual development, as opposed to organisational development. Interpretation of HRD policy and practice are also influenced by the root disciplines underpinning HRD (ibid.) such as: sociology, cultural anthropology, organisational theory, philosophy, adult education, axiology, psychology and human relations theories. It is the latter four which have most influenced the author.

A further challenge for HRD researchers, including the author, is coping with the historical development of HRD with its roots in 'training and instructional design, to training and development, to employee development, to human resource development' (McGoldrick et al., 2002 based on Jacobs, 2000). Such roots also very much reflect the professional development of the author.

...management research cannot be carried out in some intellectual space which is autonomous from the researcher's own biography. Indeed it would seem that epistemic reflexivity must relate to how a researcher's own biography affects the forms and outcomes of research

(Ashmore, 1989) as well as entailing acceptance of the conviction that there will always be more than one valid account of any research (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p.179).

McGoldrick et al. (2002) note Hatcher's (2000) view that weaknesses in HRD practice are a reflection of limitations in HRD theory. They argue that to address this inherent weakness HRD should not be trying to stake a particular territory but should 'enhance its capability to theorize on the basis of a solid research base' (p.7), which their current volume attempts to address, and to which this study has made a contribution.

A major criticism of HRD, and indeed HRM, is the lack of empirical evidence demonstrating its presence in organisations, and its influence and impact on individuals and organisations. This study has been an attempt to address that empirical deficit by providing an evidence base (Hamlin, 2002) for HRD's contribution to individual learning and organisational performance, and in particular by providing evidence of managers' facilitative and inhibitory behaviours, rather than creating a normative list based on anecdote and consultancy imperatives. McGoldrick et al. (2002) note that most of the contributions in their current volume are based on case studies as a medium for empirical research, an approach to research followed by this author.

Taken together, the combination of case studies with qualitative data gathering methods indicates a strong preference for depth and richness of data and for texture and nuance rather than numerical patterns and statistical validity (p.11)

Although they do acknowledge the contribution of US quantitative traditions to our understanding of HRD.

#### *7.2.1.2 Personal Philosophy and HRD*

Citing Swason et al. (2000), McGoldrick et al. (2002) argue that three philosophical elements - ontology, epistemology and axiology - influence an individual's understanding and expression of HRD. The author will describe briefly how this

philosophical framework influenced her selection and interpretation of the literature, and how it influenced her research strategy.

Firstly, with regards to ontology (how we see the world) the author acknowledges that she has a humanistic view of the world and therefore sees the potential for growth in humans, both individually and in groups. She recognises that this means she is more attracted to the optimism of many HRD perspectives, although not without being prepared to criticise both their concepts and practices. However, a potential danger of this perspective is that it may result in a naïve approach to questioning and analysis of empirical data. The author believes she limited this by exploring the inhibitory behaviours of managers as well as their positive behaviours.

Secondly, with regards to epistemology (how we think about our world) the author suggests that there is range of thinking in HRD ranging from critical theory to practice-oriented perspectives (See Figure 12.3). Due to her background as an HRD academic, with roots in HRD practice and her current role as a director of a charity, the author sees herself at the nexus of these perspectives, which she views as part of a continuum rather than being paradigmatic. This has resulted in the literature review including literature from both practitioner-oriented sources and literature more critical of HRD concepts, such as the learning organisation and work-based learning. The author believes that by exploring both perspectives and then relating these to her empirical findings in Chapter 12 she has been able to make a contribution to HRD knowledge.



**Figure 12.3: Perspectives on HRD Thinking**

Critical theorists such as Legge (1995) have challenged the rhetoric and reality of HRM. However Sambrook (2002) a nursing practitioner/trainer turned academic argues that rhetoric is reality and words constitute action. Her analysis thus absorbs the discourses of both academic disciplines and professional practice, as has this study. From a voluntary sector perspective Hall (1993) also expresses concerns about the divide between practitioner and scholarly literature.

At its most basic level, scholars scoff at the practitioner literature as hopelessly superficial, and practitioners regard scholarly work either as trivial or incomprehensible (pp.259-260).

Whilst sympathetic to Sambrook's thesis there is a need to recognise that research at this level, which has adopted a social constructivist approach, should explore the perceptions of different stakeholders regarding the relationship of reality to rhetoric. A key question is whether organisational and managerial practice reflects rhetoric? In other words does espoused theory in organisations translate into theory-in-use, and what are different stakeholders' perceptions of this theory-in-use? The need to consider a range of stakeholders in HRD research has been articulated by Thomson et al. (2001). Whilst they were researching management development their arguments could equally be applied to HRD research generally.

...attention needs to be given to the pluralist/stakeholder versus organizational/unitarist assumptions of organizational theory. They are important not only in their own right, but also because our methodology depends on being able to compare and contrast the views of different actors (p.23).

Recognising the need to consider the potentially contrasting perspectives of different stakeholders the author interviewed employees, first line managers, senior line managers and key informants with HRD roles. However, the data collected from these stakeholders was remarkably consistent, contrary to our expectations of social construction, as different stakeholder groups provided similar, and positive, assessments of managerial behaviours, organisational culture and HRD practice, which corroborated senior management statements and organisational documentation. This high degree of consistency supports Higgins and Thomas's (in press) view that high levels of developmental assistance engender employee commitment. The main criticism of organisational culture that did emerge was not so much about the existing cultural norms themselves but concerns expressed by first line managers and employees that the current culture could be threatened by the rapid growth experienced by both organisations.

The author however acknowledges that, whilst she gained a rich picture of each organisation, she did not achieve a complete picture of either organisation. Firstly, the research design only sampled a range of projects, activities and managers in each

organisation. Secondly, in one case study organisation the author was unable to explore a particular section of the organisation due to a major change programme, including redundancies. It is likely that in this organisational setting with staff probably feeling insecure and demoralised that contrary evidence of macro-organisational variables and managerial behaviours would have been gathered. Thirdly, the author recognises that her questioning in this area was inadequate. Having asked a very open question to get respondents to describe the culture of the organisation she should have followed this up by probing questions such as:

What do you like about working in this organisation?

What do you **not** like about working in this organisation?

This latter question might have generated more contrary evidence about organisational variables such as culture and strategy. At a micro-case study level with regards to managers' behaviours the issue of contrary evidence was addressed by asking both managers and staff to identify critical incidents where managers had inhibited learning.

Finally, a weakness of the research design is that it concentrated on voluntary organisations only. The author is sure that a comparative study of voluntary social care organisations with their statutory counterparts would reveal not only significant differences between them but also significantly different interpretations by different stakeholders within the latter.

Thirdly, with regards to axiology (the values that determine how we should and actually act in research practice), as well as the humanistic influences described above, the author has been very much influenced by phenomenological perspectives of the world, preferring to engage with her research population rather than remaining detached from it as in the positivist tradition. Such values also contributed to her critique of the existing literature on line managers' roles in learning as much of it was presented normatively or rooted in anecdotal rather than empirical evidence. Clearly, these values also affected the research strategy adopted, in particular the ethnographic element of the research design. The author whilst recognising in Chapter 5 that there are considerable strengths in participant observation through being able to be involved

in the lives and activities of these being researched, has on reflection recognised the need to be more aware of its limitations, particularly at the participant end of the continuum as Gill and Johnson (1997) argue that:

...there is also the imminent danger that, by becoming embroiled in the everyday lives of subjects, the researcher internalizes subjects' culture and becomes unable to take a dispassionate view of events and unintentionally discards the researcher elements of the field role. That is they actually become a member of the organization, or 'go native' (p.114).

The limitations of ethnography and phenomenology are discussed further in 3 below.

### *7.2.1.3 Contribution to HRD Knowledge*

To conclude this section the author outlines some of the contributions to HRD knowledge that this thesis has made by examining findings which have confirmed previous views, contradicted others and created new knowledge.

In terms of confirmation the first example is that the macro case study evidence confirms that HRD strategy (Garavan, 1995; Wilson, 1999; and Horowitz, 1999) can play an important role in supporting corporate strategy and in helping organisations respond to environmental challenges.

The second is confirmation of Thomson et al.'s (2001) and Marsick and Watkins' (1997) arguments that formal learning systems can encourage individuals to develop. Critical within Quarriers and RFS's learning frameworks was the pivotal contribution of supervision in linking organisational and individual objectives.

The third area of confirmation focuses on the need for partnership between the HRD function and line managers (Cabinet Office, 1993; Bevan and Hayday, 1994) to maximise workplace learning, which was recognised both by managers and HRD managers and practitioners. An important aspect of this partnership was the recognition of the need to develop managers, both in terms of their general development as managers and as developers of their staff (e.g. McGovern et al., 1997; Ellinger and Bostron, 1999), thus addressing concerns about the competency of

managers to adopt such roles (e.g. Storey, 1992; Heraty and Morley, 1995; Hyman and Cunningham, 1998).

The fourth area of confirmation was the critical role of organisational culture in providing a conducive climate for learning and empirical evidence emerged from both case study organisations of managers' contributing to the creation of such an internal environment.

The final area of confirmation was the clear evidence that human-centred approaches to learning, underpinned by the values and ethics of adult learning and current social care practice, are possible to implement in practice. The big challenge for HRD policy and practice is to see whether such an approach can be transferred into environments which are likely to be less sympathetic to these values, such as the corporate world.

Findings, which challenged some of the existing literature, are now discussed. Firstly, the evidence from the case study organisations demonstrated organisational systems and managers providing the opportunities for guided reflection and integration of HR frameworks, often through supervision, that Woodall (2000) fears is lacking in many organisational contexts.

The author's findings would also challenge the views of Tough (1979) who argued that facilitators of learning should not be controlling. In the reality of organisational life even managers who have been assessed as good developers demonstrated some controlling behaviours, particularly those who were less experienced. Tough also argues that facilitators of learning should not influence learners. This is a somewhat naïve view given that most facilitators of learning are trying to influence learner's knowledge, attitudes or skills, or trying to get people to think in different ways. In the evidence presented in this thesis most of the evidence of influencing was trying to improve the care of vulnerable people. In this context does the end justify the means?

With regards to barriers to devolution whilst this study corroborated barriers such as time and the conflict between operational and developmental duties, the findings challenged other barriers that have been identified in the literature (Bevan et al.,

1995). Managers in the two case study organisations did receive development for their developmental roles, and they were also comfortable in engaging in dialogue with their staff through the supervision process.

Findings that contribute to knowledge focus on the behaviours that were identified and the developmental manager model developed on completion of the study. This provides an analytical framework to enhance understanding of the context in which developmental interactions occur and which influence the behaviours of managers, and learners. As noted in Chapter 4 much of the literature in this field is normative, and although the author acknowledges she has confirmed some of the common-sense views of this literature, she believes she has now provided evidence of what managers do to facilitate (and inhibit) learning. Whilst there is significant overlap with Ellinger and Bostrom's (1999) empirical study, work that was undertaken simultaneously to the author's, there are a number of differences. These differences emerged from two factors. Firstly, research in the voluntary sector revealed more in terms of caring behaviours. Secondly, role modelling was revealed in this study as an important behaviour. However, it was mainly employees who identified it in this study. The author argues that this in itself is a contribution to knowledge, as in much HRM research the voice of employees is neglected (Mabey et al., 1998). Yet they are a major stakeholder in HRM and by paying more attention to their perspectives researchers could challenge the more managerialistic interpretations and practices of HRM. Whilst in this study there was limited disagreement between stakeholders (discussed further in 3 below) the author recognises that in more pluralistic contexts, such as the public sector, there is likely to be greater stakeholder divergence.

The study also addresses an empirical deficit identified by writers such as Mumford (1993), McGovern et al. (1997) and de Jong et al. (1999) who argued that there was little empirical evidence of how the devolution of HRD to line managers is translated into practice. By examining how such devolution operates in a sector where line managers have had and have accepted such responsibility for many years, through the process of supervision, has provided lessons for other sectors who have recently or are about to embark on such devolution (some of these lessons will be discussed further in 4 below). Interestingly one of the key informants remarked that she had attended a seminar where a major high street bank was talking about the difficulties of getting

employees to accept personal-development planning, a process that was firmly embedded in both case study organisations. She concluded from this that the corporate sector had much to learn from voluntary organisations, rather than vice versa.

A further empirical deficit identified by writers such as Kamoche (2001) and Cunningham (2001) is the dominance of the corporate sector in HRM studies. This study has provided an insight into HRD policies and practices into the voluntary sector, thus enabling us to examine such practices in a different organisational context. It has also provided a research environment free from the influence of capitalist pragmatism, which McGovern et al. (1997) argue undermines the developmental humanism inherent in many HRM concepts.

In terms of learning theory the author has been able through analysis of empirical data, such as critical incidents involving coaching behaviours, to operationalise concepts such as the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). Such operationalisation could inform development programmes helping managers and employees learn how to learn, and tests whether theoretical concepts can be applied in practice.

### **7.2.2 Voluntary Sector Management**

As Cunningham (2001) noted above there has been little academic HRM research into voluntary organisations in the UK. This study through its in-depth study of HRD into two leading Scottish charities will contribute to enhancing both academics' and practitioners' knowledge of the sector.

Professor Margaret Harris of Aston Business School, the first UK Professor of Voluntary Sector Organisation, argued in her inaugural lecture in 2001 that university business schools have a critical role to play in 'caring' about and for the voluntary sector. She presents two arguments the first is an academic imperative, whilst the second is a democratic imperative.

Firstly, she argues that business schools with aspirations to excellence need to include in their teaching and research activities the full range of organisational types as all sectors of the economy and society face management and organisation challenges.

Just like business and governmental agencies, third sector organizations experience problems of organization and management. In fact, as my own research over the last twenty years confirms, voluntary agencies experience problems of organization and management that can be at least as complex and intractable as anything faced by managers in the commercial or governmental sectors. And those may not be ones that can be explained using the standard theories (p.101).

The author shares Harris's view, based not only on this study and other research projects into the voluntary sector, but as Programme Leader for a voluntary sector management education programme she has found that this lack of empirical and conceptual understanding of the sector presents significant challenges in educating voluntary sector managers who are often resistant, understandably, to theories developed in other sectors which do not recognise the complexity and context of voluntary sector management.

Harris's second argument is based on her concerns that the sector is over-reliant on government funding, at times inappropriately regulated and in danger of losing its identity as it becomes increasingly viewed as an instrument of the state. She argues that universities, themselves publicly funded bodies, should be using specialist resources to help 'those striving to ensure the future of the voluntary sector and democracy' (p.103). This has been recognised at the author's own institution with its emphasis on social inclusion and the establishment of a Voluntary Sector Research Centre to enhance our knowledge of voluntary sector organisations. Outputs from this PhD will contribute to that centre's work by informing future HRM research into the sector and to the curricula of voluntary sector students, both on our specialist voluntary programmes and to support voluntary sector students on our mainstream DHRM and MBA programmes. It will also benefit our many public sector students who work in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Harris concludes that:

Voluntary sector practitioners...need teaching, training, and advice that enables them to handle complexities to make informed choices, and to resist inappropriate regulation. And they need teaching, training, and advice that is sensitive to the distinctive management issues faced by people who work in voluntary organizations. Repackaged business models are unlikely to be fit for this purpose... (p.107).

This study by adopting a grounded approach to data collection and theory creation has identified managerial behaviours and contextual influences from within the sector, rather than transplanting any identified in another organisational context. This it is argued is a contribution to our knowledge about voluntary sector management. However, the author would caution how these are used in practice, as she does not wish to adopt a prescriptive approach. Therefore the behaviours identified should not be imposed on other voluntary sector settings but need to be further tested, and if necessary adapted, to meet the different contingent circumstances of for example smaller voluntary organisations or voluntary organisations operating in another field, such as environmental charities.

An aspect of mainstream management theory that did appear to sit comfortably with the two case study organisations was 'soft' HRM with its emphasis on learning and development. However, the question to be asked here was 'soft' HRM already present in these organisations, through the process of supervision, long before Personnel and Industrial Relations academics ever coined the term 'Human Resource Management'?

### **7.3. METHODOLOGY**

In this section the author reflects on four aspects of the research methodology and these are:

1. The limitations of phenomenology
2. The social constructionist approach adopted in this study, in particular exploring the consistency of findings that emerged.
3. The ethical dilemma involved in collecting data that could not be utilised in the study.

4. The implications of being an ‘inside’ researcher and the reaction of respondents to the research process.

### **7.3.1 Limitations of Phenomenology**

The author recognises that phenomenology has limitations and that the claim that ‘pure’ induction is possible can be challenged. Gill and Johnson (1999) develop this point further.

The claim is that it [*analytic induction (AI)*] shares with positivism the implicit assumption that there exists a theory-neutral observational language in which the researcher is construed as *tabula rasa* who can objectively elucidate and present the ‘facts’ of a cognitively accessible empirical world. To ground AI, or any methodology, in such a subject-subject (or indeed subject-object) dualism (re)constructs an epistemic privilege which ignores the processes by which any observer inevitably projects background preconceptions embedded in his or her own language (Spinelli, 1989). For Hammersley (1992), such issues are especially problematic for any approach which is committed to accessing members’ phenomenological worlds so as to reveal their subjectivities (p.125).

The author recognises, whilst trying to be as objective as possible, that her preconceptions have affected this study to some degree. This can be seen most clearly in her selection of the voluntary sector as a research context and the two case study organisations selected because the author believed that they would provide examples of good practice. She also acknowledges, whilst minimising their impact on data collection during interviews by minimising the use of HRD language, that her preconceptions about her underpinning discipline and the research context will to some extent have undoubtedly influenced her interpretation of data.

To redress some of these limitations the author proposes in post-doctoral work to test the findings of this thesis in other organisational contexts. This will be undertaken by firstly replicating research protocols used here across a wider sample of managers and organisations to further test the validity, reliability and generalisability of this study’s findings. Secondly, by developing survey instruments to further test the findings, thereby utilising the benefits associated with the positivistic tradition whilst ameliorating the limitations of the phenomenological tradition. The author also

intends to collaborate with an American academic who has been researching the same topic, but in different organisational contexts. Whilst she, and colleagues, have adopted a similar data collection strategy to the author their analysis has utilised quantitative techniques, which of course are popular in US management/social science research. This collaboration will not only expose the author's findings to a different research tradition but will also allow some cross-cultural comparison of managerial behaviours and organisational variables. Finally, Hammersley and Atkinson (1992) encourage researchers to be more open to other research traditions. Whilst they acknowledge that not all social scientists can be proficient in every research method they argue that there is a need to:

...overcome the paradigmatic mentality and reconstruct a social science community in which work using different methods combines to further collective understanding of the social world (p.237).

The author's post-doctoral intentions demonstrate that she is acknowledging this argument.

### **7.3.2 Social Construction and Stakeholder Perspectives**

One of the unexpected findings of the study was the overall consistency of views gathered from different stakeholders – senior line managers, first line managers, employees and key informants – contrary to what might have been expected from a research strategy adopting a social constructivist approach. Several factors may explain why this occurred.

Firstly, it was clear that both case study organisations had very strong cultures which most respondents appeared to value. Indeed the author had selected these organisations because of her knowledge that they were highly regarded within the social care field and are perceived to be preferred employers in the voluntary sector. Therefore she believed they would provide evidence of the good practice she was looking for. As noted above the author would hypothesise that if this research was replicated in public sector and private sector care organisations the results would reflect more pluralistic perspectives. However, it should also be noted that whilst the

culture of the case study organisations was viewed as being generally positive, particularly at the operational level, staff were prepared to criticise their organisations and managers. In particular, concerns were raised about the potential threat to the values base of each organisation arising from the rapid growth that both organisations had experienced in recent years. It should also be noted that senior managers whilst relatively confident that the overall conclusions of this study would be positive they also recognised that there would be some organisational and managerial weaknesses, including the dangers of growing bureaucracy and recognising that not all managers across the organisation would necessarily emerge as good developers of staff.

Secondly, since the study used purposive sampling of managers regarded as 'good' developers by their organisations it perhaps, in retrospect, is hardly surprising that much of the evidence gathered from both managers and staff was positive and consistent. In addition one section of one of the case study organisations was not included in this study as it was undergoing major change, including potential redundancies and redeployments. Therefore the organisation viewed this to be an insensitive time to be exploring HRD, and the author herself acknowledged that the environment in this part of the organisation was unlikely to be conducive to learning, and it is likely that it would have produced more contrary evidence.

One difference that did emerge was that two key informants, both female, believed very strongly that women were more natural developers than men were. However, analysis of the interview data gathered from managers and staff revealed no significant differences in the behaviours of male and female managers. This is worthy of further investigation perhaps in organisations with a more equal division of genders than that present in social care organisations. This study's findings provide some support for Wajcman's (1998) view that organisational traits may influence management style.

A significant difference that emerged between managers and staff was the importance of role modelling in learning. This behaviour was identified predominantly by staff rather than managers. This insight demonstrates the value of listening to the 'employee voice', an approach that more HRM researchers should consider.

### **7.3.3 Ethical Dilemma and Data Collection**

One of the dilemmas that Miles and Huberman (1994) identify for qualitative researchers is the challenge of choosing between two goods such as reliability and ethics. This was a dilemma faced by the researcher. Some data was collected by the author which both corroborated and challenged her findings regarding organisational culture and managerial behaviours. However, due to the manner in which that data was collected it could not be utilised in the study. Examples of both are described below.

The first example provides both corroborating and challenging evidence. As part of the participant observation phase, described in Chapter 5, the author attended a number of internal training courses relevant to the study. At the commencement of one of these two first line managers, who had joined the charity from the public sector, were sitting next to the author. They were engaged in a deep conversation about the organisation and in particular their senior line manager, who happened to be part of this study's sample. They were contrasting the charity's culture with that of their previous employers. The charity in contrast to their former public sector employers was viewed as having a much 'more positive and liberating' culture. They spoke about their manager in what can only be described as glowing terms. From their perspective she was clearly a facilitative manager and they described her as being 'empowering' and showing a willingness to learn from her two first line managers who had different areas of expertise from her. Positive vocal nuances and lots of smiling complemented their words. What was interesting from the author's point of view was that this was a behaviour she had not picked up in interviews with the manager and other staff. Furthermore, she had, to her surprise, found limited evidence of empowering behaviours across both case study organisations. This was perhaps an incident that challenged that view. However, the author felt that because of her ethical view that research should be carried out explicitly, believing that covert research is an infringement on civil liberties, she could not use such examples in the substantive thesis. Indeed, in this case she interrupted the managers' conversation and revealed who she was in order to prevent any embarrassment on the two managers' part.

The second example revealed some challenges to the unified culture of one of the organisations by exposing some internal divisions. However, as the information was given in the strictest confidence to the author she could not use it in her analysis of that case study organisation.

#### **7.3.4 The 'Inside' Researcher**

Johnson and Duberley (2000) argue that from a constructivist perspective method is not all and that researchers need to consider their impact on the research process. Although they acknowledge that this is not an easy process

...It is an incomplete and perhaps messy process which recognizes that in undertaking epistemic reflexivity we do not arrive at 'the answer'. Rather researchers gain more (but not complete!) understanding of the complex and ongoing relationship which exists between themselves and their research (p.191).

The need for such reflexivity is particularly important for researchers undertaking research with an ethnographic element (Gill and Johnson, 1999).

As outlined in Chapter 5 the author had concerns about carrying out 'insider' research into an organisation in which she has significant governance responsibilities. A particular ethical concern was whether she was abusing her position and obliging the organisation and individuals into participating. Utilising Miles and Huberman's (1994) ethical framework at all stages of the research as a checklist addressed this concern, and is demonstrated by the author not researching part of the organisation which was going through radical change, during the fieldwork phase, at the request of senior managers. On a more practical level this involved, in the case of both organisations, providing an outline of the proposed research to both senior managers and individual respondents before they agreed to participate. It also involved the author agreeing with gatekeepers the ground rules and boundaries for the research. The author also requested that HR practitioners in both organisations asked the selected sample of managers and employees if they were willing to participate before the researcher contacted them, so that if anyone was uncomfortable with participating it would be easier for them to refuse. To the researcher's knowledge no one who was

approached refused. However, the researcher checked before the commencement of every interview, and every other interaction with the research population, that individuals were happy to participate and stressed that they could opt out at any time. The author believes that her own personal style ensured that anyone who did not wish to participate would have been able to say so. That status is less of an issue in voluntary organisations could be seen in a Quarriers' first line manager asking the author what the Council of Management actually did!

A concern that may be expressed about 'insider' research is that respondents may tell you what they think you want to hear or to present themselves in a good light. However, the author contends that this is more likely to happen to researchers from outside who are likely to have less organisational knowledge and therefore are less able to recognise when respondents are manipulating data. The author also believes that she minimised any manipulation of data through the use of critical incident technique in her interviews and due to the fact that she is a highly experienced and trained interviewer, due to her professional background. The author also believes that if anything some respondents were overly modest about their contributions. A particular example demonstrates this. One critical incident was identified by three respondents which demonstrated a first line manager providing considerable support to an individual employee over an extended period of time. The respondents who identified it were the employee, one of their colleagues and the line manager's Senior Line Manager. The one participant in the developmental interaction who did not identify it was the first line manager, who whilst identifying a range of critical incidents tended to focus on more mundane examples. If she had really wanted to present herself a good light then the critical incident identified by other respondents would have been a better example.

Another concern that may be raised about 'insider' research is that researchers themselves may be thought of as being too involved and thus may not be sufficiently objective. This concern can be exacerbated by the physical impossibility of including all the data collected in a qualitative study that may corroborate the researcher's conclusions. The author has an advantage over readers of this work in that she was also able to observe the behaviour of respondents. Their vocal nuances and non-verbal language supported what they were saying. An example of this was

demonstrated by a senior line manager discussing the performance of one of his first line managers. He assessed her as a very able manager and clearly valued her contribution to the organisation. When talking about her he had a wide smile, sparkling eyes and spoke enthusiastically. The author has also the benefit of seeing complete transcripts of critical incidents, which reveal the full context of the respondents' experiences, whilst the reader has to make do only with selected illustrative quotations. However, aware of the potential risk of subjectivity with regard to Quarriers the author analysed the results from RFS first, the organisation where the author is not an insider, so that the author's knowledge of Quarriers would not overly influence her interpretation of results. The fact that the results from Quarriers were substantially corroborated by the results from RFS, as could be seen by the degree of internal and external coherence in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 11, demonstrates that to a significant degree objectivity was achieved.

The author however acknowledges that complete objectivity was not achieved. Indeed, it is unlikely that any qualitative study can claim genuinely to be free of any subjectivity. In her methodology chapter the author acknowledged that ethnographic approaches to research in particular can result in researchers 'going native'. However, she felt she had minimised this by reminding herself constantly that she was engaged in this study as a researcher not a manager, although acknowledging feelings of emotion due to the nature of work carried out in both organisations. However, now with the advantage of some distance from the research process the author recognises that she had perhaps gone more native than she had realised. This was demonstrated during the viva examination of the thesis where the author found herself not only defending her thesis, but also the case study organisations and in particular 'my' respondents. However, those feelings were as much for RFS's managers and staff as they were for Quarriers'. These feelings reminded her of how she felt when she had completed her sabbatical. At this time the author was full of admiration for the commitment, energy and in particular the compassion demonstrated by managers and staff in both organisations. It was a very humbling experience; an experience that many academics would benefit from! The author therefore acknowledges that she is part of this world, particularly given her role in Quarriers. However, whilst this may have resulted in some subjective interpretations of the data gathered, she does not believe it invalidates the conclusions from this thesis as she believes that this

engagement with the voluntary sector world has enabled her to get insights that an 'outsider' would not be able to achieve. She also recognises that the thesis contains her interpretation of this world, although she did engage in validity testing with the research population.

The author's engagement with the empirical world being investigated could also be seen in the degree of trust that respondents had in the author. Some respondents revealed very personal details about themselves during the course of interviews because they trusted her not misuse the data. Many of these have not been utilised in the study due to their sensitivity. Other respondents observed that they had disclosed much more information to her than they would have to other researchers. For example, respondents were prepared to discuss details of developmental interactions that occurred within the 'sanctity' of supervision. For a few respondents their interviews seemed to serve as almost as a cathartic experience with individuals reflecting on what they had learned and considering future actions. An example of this could be seen in an interview with a First Line Manager, which lasted two and a half-hours, where the manager resolved to follow her ambition to become a practice teacher. Finally, the researcher believes that most respondents enjoyed participating in the research.

A number of lessons for other researchers have emerged from this novice ethnographer's experiences. Firstly, being explicit about her role to all participants, not just 'gatekeepers' and senior managers, led to high levels of co-operation from respondents. Secondly, the need to recognise one's limitations. The author did not have the skills to engage in the social care operations of either organisation, therefore most of her research was conducted at the observer end of the participant-observation continuum. Although in other activities, such as training courses, she was able to participate fully and thus was actively engaged with the research population. Thirdly, she had to take care not to express her opinion about events, policies, or individuals where she would be abusing her position or breaching confidentiality. Fourthly, researchers adopting ethnographic approaches need to consider whether they have or can adopt the appropriate personal style for the world they are researching. Finally, researchers should consider the ethics of ethnographic research at all stages of the research process including design, implementation, analysis and dissemination.

Otherwise the potential to do harm and/or bring research into disrepute becomes a very real possibility.

## **7.4 POTENTIAL IMPACT ON POLICY AND PRACTICE**

This final section considers the potential impact of the results of this thesis on policy and practice.

### **7.4.1 Policy**

A number of voluntary sector policy bodies may find the results of this study useful. Firstly, the Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (VSNTO) may feel that this study, with its focus on line management responsibilities, complements its previous work on senior management development for the voluntary sector. Secondly, the Scottish University for Industry (SufI) has recently established a voluntary sector group as one of its working groups. They welcome the development of case studies of good practice to share with organisations whose HRD practice is not so advanced. This study provides such examples of good practice. Thirdly, the findings will also be shared with the Research Unit at the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) who are developing a database of Scottish voluntary sector research. Part of all these organisations' remits is to utilise, support, sponsor and disseminate research into learning within the sector. It is the author's intention to ensure that her findings are shared with these three bodies, and to explore options with them to build on this study by exploring the topic in smaller voluntary organisations and as suggested above with voluntary organisations operating in fields outwith social care. The research also contributes to greater understanding and knowledge of the sector, which can inform the sector's dealings with bodies such as the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Executive and local authorities. Finally, the study's qualitative findings complement some of the quantitative findings of SCVO's (1999) workforce survey by addressing the people management development needs identified by the sector's managers.

The author would hope that her findings would also be of use to other key bodies such as the as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Council for Management

Education and Leadership (CMEL), the Chartered Institute for Personnel Management and Development (CIPD) and Investors in People UK/Scotland. However, she is more cautious in these assertions given that the findings are based on two case studies within a distinctive sector, and thus she shares to some extent the views of McKenna and Beech (2002).

In view of the developments in the theory and practice of HRM, and taking into account the prevalence of complex, demanding and changing organisational situations, it would be inappropriate for HRM to prescribe one best way of doing things. A more appropriate approach would be to support 'reflexive choice making'. This involves understanding the domain of choice (p.300).

Firstly, with regards to the SQA the behaviours identified could inform any review of relevant SVQ 4 Management standards. In particular the facilitative behaviours can be related to C10 (Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance) and C13 (Managing the Performance of teams and individuals). Examples of critical incidents and the behavioural descriptors may assist assessors and internal verifiers assessing candidates' performance.

Secondly, management development and performance is undergoing major scrutiny in the UK with the recent establishment of the Council for Management Excellence and Leadership (CMEL) under the chairmanship of Professor John Burgoyne. Studies such as these that provide empirical evidence of managers influencing individual and organisational performance may provide useful knowledge to help shape the views and recommendations emerging from this potentially influential body.

Thirdly, the CIPD is increasingly recognising the need for HR specialists to work in partnership with line managers. Evidence from this study has demonstrated how this partnership can work in practice and could assist HR specialists in other environments build improved relationships with the line. In terms of the CIPD's curricula modules such as Learning and Development, Management Development and Organisational Change could be informed by the outcomes from this thesis.

Fourthly, with regards to Investors in People the author believes that the findings from this thesis, in particular the links between HRD practice and organisational strategy, and the line management behaviours, could assist IiP assessors, many of whom are unfamiliar with the voluntary sector, to assess more effectively whether voluntary organisations are meeting the IiP standard. The findings may also challenge their perceptions of the sector. However, given that the findings are based only on two case studies the author does not believe she could advise on changes to IiP policy. On a more practical level organisations could compare their managers' behaviours to those identified in this study to assess their readiness for IiP assessment.

#### **7.4.2 Practice**

A potential practical outcome from this study is to utilise the behaviours identified to inform the development of competencies for managers. However, prior to doing this the author believes there is a need to further test the behaviours in more organisations. This could either be achieved by carrying out further grounded research or translating the behaviours identified into competences and then using Behavioural Event Interviewing to test whether these behaviours are present in other managers and/or in other voluntary organisations and/or in other sectors. The author then intends to develop a psychometric instrument to enable organisations to assess whether their managers possess these or assess if they require to be developed. The development of such competences could enable organisations to take an integrated HR approach to this particular managerial role as they would inform recruitment and selection processes and decision-making, performance management processes and development programmes for managers. However, it should also be noted that these would need to be incorporated into overall role profiles for managers. Some organisations, such as Siemens, are experimenting with separating development and task management responsibilities. Here 'manager coaches' adopt the former role. Clearly the findings from this study would be particularly beneficial to such organisations to help them prepare their managers for such responsibilities.

The organisational influences and managerial behaviours (facilitative and inhibitory) identified could also inform the development of items in instruments such as attitude

surveys designed to assess the culture of organisations and relationships between managers and staff.

HR practitioners in the voluntary sector will also benefit from these findings. Emergent findings have already been shared with the recently established Voluntary Sector HR network and the author intends to share the final findings with them, as well as approaching them for further research opportunities. The findings from these two leading charities will give them an insight into how to develop an HRD strategy for their organisations and to plan how to involve line managers in HRD processes. The author also hopes that the findings will enable them to make a stronger case for HRD within their employing organisations and to external funders.

It should also be recognised that full-time specialists do not always provide HR support in many voluntary organisations. Either it is provided by general managers who accept HR responsibilities as part of their remit or by consultants who provide services when required. The author through a lead role in the Voluntary Management Development Unit (VMDU)<sup>37</sup> will be able to ensure that the curricula of voluntary sector students is informed by this study and will disseminate findings to consultants, and other interested parties, through VMDU seminars and publications.

It is also hoped that the results of this research could inform other health and social care organisations, particularly those in the public sector such as NHS trusts and social work departments. However, particularly with regard to the latter the author recognises that the current context and organisational problems facing local authority departments may not provide the conducive conditions for managers to act as facilitators of learning, despite the existence of formal supervision policies. Professor Bob Holman (2002), one of the most influential writers on childcare in the UK wrote recently about the growing crisis in statutory social work services. He noted in particular that the children and family services of Glasgow Social Work Department have a current vacancy rate of 21%, and that 300 children have not been allocated a social worker. Learning is unlikely to flourish in these circumstances.

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<sup>37</sup> A partnership between Glasgow Caledonian University and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Finally, to conclude this thesis, the author hopes that this reflection on the research process and outcomes demonstrates that she has engaged in a process of 'epistemic reflexivity' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p.178).

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