Management Development and Training in Hong Kong.
A Case Study of a Multinational Corporation:
A Grounded Theory Approach.

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Wiktor Jan Tutlewski, MSc (Leicester), MBA (Monash)
School of Education
University of Leicester

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

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Wiktor Jan Tutlewski

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING.
A CASE STUDY OF A MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION:
A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

By

WIKTOR JAN TUTLEWSKI

ABSTRACT

This study generates a tentative theory of how management development trainers (MDTs) manage their own learning and apply that learning in practice in a multinational corporation in Hong Kong. The thesis adopts a symbolic interactionist approach and uses a grounded theory methodology in the investigative process. The main source of data originates from a series of successive in-depth face to face interviews with a key group of 10 MDTs working for the multinational corporation. The data was supplemented by further data taken from trainee evaluation forms and a journal kept by the researcher.

The first major outcome of this study is the generation of the theory of Transferring Relevance in management learning and its application. This theory describes how MDTs learn <u>and</u> apply that learning through socio-psychological processes. The core category discovered was labeled as the process of Adapting, and was supported by four other categories termed Analysing, Acquiring, Delivering, and Evaluating. A second major outcome was the development of a typology of MDTs with regards to how they acquire and deliver learning experiences to their target trainees. The typology reflects the MDTs preferred approaches in the analysing, acquiring, adapting, delivering and evaluating processes in the theory of Transferring Relevance. Consequently, the MDTs can be broadly classified into three types of learner-deliverer: Academic-Educators, Conceptualiser-Facilitators, and Practitioner-Guides.

As this is the first study of its kind in this organisation, and no similar study has been conducted previously in Hong Kong, this research adds to the extant knowledge in the substantive area of management development in Hong Kong. It provides a new perspective on the way in which MDTs manage their role and has further implications for business organisations, practising MDTs in other organisations, and teaching/training professionals in both business and academic institutions; thereby further developing theory, research, and practice.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The need to be competitive in business is crucial to survival. Businesses must adapt to changes in their environment and are continually facing new challenges. Managerial staff must meet these challenges by developing policies and practices that increase organizational flexibility and innovation. In turn, the managers must be readily adaptable and able to learn new ways for improving managerial effectiveness and organisational performance. The organisation, the supervising manager, and the individual manager are primarily responsible for providing relevant learning opportunities for managerial staff. In large organizations, however, these training services are often facilitated by a Management Development and Training Department or similar entity.

The members of Management Development and Training Departments are currently facing changing roles, depending on corporate requirements (Sloman, 2003). These departments often face expectations for specialised services as their role increasingly shifts from the provision of 'training' (which focuses on an instructor led, content based intervention) to 'learning' (which uses a more self-directed, work based process), and from the use of in-house MDT personnel to the use of consultants (Darling et al., 1999). Some theorists and practitioners argue that a single model, like the systems approach or the consultancy model, does not align with industry changes. Consequently, the Management Development and Training Department must manage the training culture according to current trends (Sloman, 1999). These changes require an examination of learning and application practices for those whose main role is to provide meaningful learning experiences.

According to Saks & Haccoun (2007) changes to the trainer's role in the United Kingdom are also recognised by the American Society for Training and Development in the USA. These contemporaneous changes require professional certification through an educational process based on four roles - Learning Strategist, Business Partner, Project Manager, and Professional Specialist – and nine areas of competence. Such changes are becoming more common within the Human Resource Development (HRD) profession and within the changing role of the Human Resource Management (HRM) professional. The
HRM professional is often expected to undertake the role of Business Partner, HR Expert, Change Agent, and Employee Champion (Ulrich, 1997). Some commonalities between

Management Development and Training, and Human Resources, include Business Partner 'Specialist' functions and the need to adapt to change and learn. Additionally, the Management Development Trainer (MDT) is increasingly expected to provide services that align improved business performance with business strategy (Thompson et al., 2001). Hence, the MDT professional needs to understand the business, to efficiently facilitate strategic change, to provide foundations for core competencies, and to enhance relationships that involve the employer and employee (Pettigrew et al., 2006; Swart et al., 2005). Effectively, the MDT must upgrade their own learning methods to provide relevant educational, training, development and learning experiences. In other words, the MDTs own knowledge, skills and abilities must be able to change, adapt, meet, and align with both organisational and individual learning requirements. MDTs need to learn and adapt for the benefit of the organisation, its managers, and themselves. The question is, 'how do they do this?' The question forms the basis of this research.

This study examines the substantive area of management development and training from the perspective of specific (MDTs), operating within the context of a large multinational corporation in Hong Kong. It explores various influences on the MDT professionals including their organisational roles, their learning preferences and styles, and how they apply their own learning in practice. Using in-depth interviews with core MDT professionals from RB Ltd (a pseudonym) and a grounded theory approach, this study aims to construct a typology of MDTs.

Whilst existing literature extensively examines how managers learn, management development practices, and the field of organisational and management learning, there is very little literature investigating how management development professionals learn and apply their learning in practice. Whilst the participants in this study are either in-house managers or long serving consultants themselves (operating at executive levels), a question that immediately arose was whether the same theories that applied to general management learning, and other andragogical (adult learning) principles (Knowles, 1990), also applied to this group of professionals. Similarly, how do these MDT professionals warrant continual employment, from a major multi-national organisation, that expects the ongoing managerial development? What was it about these particular MDTs that made them special to RB Ltd? This particular case study presented an ideal opportunity to conduct such research in Hong Kong, and add a fresh perspective to the extant literature in the area.

1.1   Problem Statement

The problem being researched explores how MDTs manage their learning <u>and</u> apply that learning in practice. The 'management' of their learning included a thorough examination of how the individuals embrace their own learning and how they apply this learning in their role of training and developing others, within their specific organisational context.

In the organisation being studied, fictitiously called RB Ltd for anonymity purposes, there are a core team of 10 MDT personnel. The members are either full time staff or freelance consultants that have worked previously in RB Ltd as full time staff or for a considerable length of time. This group comprises of three Chinese and seven European MDTs who are responsible for providing managerial and executive training and development throughout the entire organization. At executive levels, these MDTs provide education and learning events for managers and executives so that they can better handle their current and future roles. This executive-level responsibility reinforces the corporate policy of business enhancement, of staff continuous improvement, and follows a practice of using adaptive managerial core competencies.

A specific question that arises is that if these 10 MDT professionals have responsibility for providing programmes, events and interventions for managerial staff, how does the MDT upgrade and translate their learning into useful and relevant experiences for trainees? In other words, how do MDTs ensure that through their own educational, training, development and learning experiences they deliver services that improve both individual and corporate performance?

As a past member of the MDT team with RB Ltd I am fortunate to be able to gain access to both the individuals involved and to the particular policies, practices and programmes currently being designed and delivered within the organisation. It is rare that an opportunity arises for conducting such research within an organisation of this scale, which is possibly why no similar research seems to have been conducted, as far as is known by the current researcher.

1.2   Aim of the Study

This research aims to develop a theory of how a group of MDT professionals, working for a multinational corporation in Hong Kong, manage their own learning <u>and</u> apply that learning within their training and development roles. Consequently, this research aims to produce a learning and application typology applicable to this group of MDTs. There are three identifiable elements to the aim, as indicated by the three goals below.

To achieve the aim this research has three primary goals:

1. To determine how MDT professionals 'manage' their learning;
2. To determine how these MDT professionals apply that learning in their everyday working role;
3. To develop a theory of MDT learning and application by identifying gaps between theoretical models of the MDTs role and the information gathered from research participants.

1.3   Background Information

This section places the research within a business context. The organisation being researched, RB Ltd has 'survived', adapted and grown over the past 180 years. It has engendered a complex network of trading companies and currently employs some 260,000 staff world-wide, with its headquarters in Hong Kong. The ability of RB Ltd to adapt to change is self evident. However, it must continue preparing business unit managers and executives for the complex roles required for the business' continuous development. This ability to adapt, change, and continuously improve is a central feature for both the organisation and the department responsible for providing the environment, context, and services to accommodate continuous development.

RB Ltd currently claims to be 'value' driven. These core values originate from the Group Managing Director's (MD) annual address given in February 2003. During this address, the MD stated that four core values, *". . . taken together, can promote positive change and lead to higher levels of Performance. This success in turn helps attract the right people and culture, and so the cycle of continuous improvement and sustainable performance is perpetuated."*

Figure 1.1   Core Values - Pride in Performance (PIP)
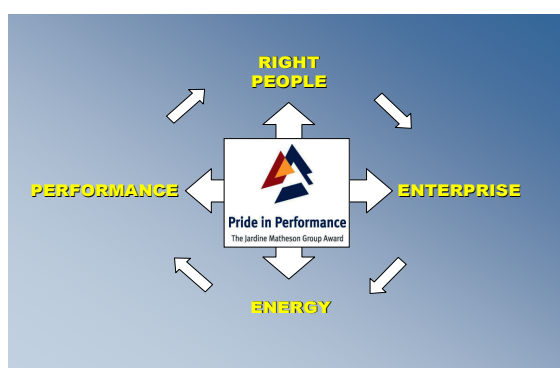
Source – RB Ltd EDD, 2005; with permission

The MDTs in RB Ltd aim to ensure that the organisation employs individuals with enterprise, energy, and high performance levels. The Head of Executive Development produces, in conjunction with senior management and the associated companies, an annual Leadership Development Plan for all managerial and executive personnel. This Leadership Development Plan is formed by conducting an ongoing corporate and individual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) that reflects the changing training and development needs of the managerial and executive personnel as perceived by senior management, and the subsidiary companies.

As a result of conducting ongoing TNA's a 'gap' is often acknowledged between corporate objectives and the training provided. The process usually starts with an annual assessment of all management programmes and interventions contained in the organisation's Leadership Development Plan. A group consisting of the Head of Executive Development, the Group Human Resources Manager, and the Human Resources Committee (which includes three Chief Executive Officers from subsidiary companies and the Group Managing Director), review the evaluations. A decision is then made as to the managerial programmes, or interventions, that should be revised or dropped or additional programmes designed and tested for practicality and relevance. This reassessment of programmes and initiatives, and their comparison to the underpinning core values and managerial competencies, requires all the MDT professionals to be able to learn and adapt new approaches to fit the training and development 'gaps' that either appear or are required.

This is not to say that all forms of training and development come from the domain of the Executive Development Department (EDD), rather that the time an employee spends away from their workplace needs to be perceived as a cost-effective investment. This is one reason why the EDD charges out for its services, rather than incorporating a cost centre in the company. All the programmes, initiatives and plans must cover their own operating expenses. The Leadership Development Plan, apart from 12 Elective Programmes and some corporate tailor-made programmes, is open to all managerial grades, and includes the following components (see Figure 1. 2 below):

Figure 1.2 Leadership Development Plan. Components - RB Ltd

- Directorate Level
    - o Director's Development Initiative (DDI)
    - o Harvard/Insead/London Business School
- General Management Level
    - o Business Enhancement Initiative (BEI)
    - o Senior Executive Programme (SEP)
- Management Level
    - o Development Centres
    - o Executive Leadership Programme (EDP)
- Supervisory Level
    - o Basic Finance Workshop
    - o Core Management Skills

The four different levels in the Leadership Plan consist of basic managerial education, skills training, development programmes and business learning initiatives. It should be highlighted at this point that a major difference in delivery comes from the manner in which the programme is constructed and presented, for example, whether it is content (content/trainer) based, conceptually (learner/trainer) driven, or through a context or environment provided to facilitate the learning.

An underpinning element in all programmes or interventions is the enhancement of the core managerial competencies set by the organisation. As a consequence, all the MDTs have a specific area of expertise in educating, training or developing competencies, and are actively

engaged in designing, delivering, formulating, and evaluating learning issues emanating from the Leadership Development Plan programmes indicated above.

Within the Department there are a core of 10 MDT professionals (the participants in this research) who have roles and responsibilities within the framework of the programmes/interventions described above. The reason these members are called 'core' is that they have had a long relationship with the company. The first four members listed in Appendix A are classified as permanent staff, whereas members listed at 5, 6, and 9 previously had permanent positions before being retained on a part-time consultancy basis. Members 7, 8 and 10 are external management consultants who have had a long relationship with RB Ltd and are well acquainted with the corporate culture. Appendix A provides an overview of the background of these professionals. It is included to give an insight as to the depth of experience and qualifications for each of these professionals, and includes their stated desire for further academic studies.

In summarising the experience and academic learning of the 10 MDTs in the group, it can be seen that collectively they have 177 years of experience, three PhD's, seven MBA's, seven first degrees, and three diplomas. Also included in their ongoing study are two doctorates and two undergraduate degrees. In addition, it is reported that all but one of the secretarial staff working with these MDTs hold MBA's. Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest that these professionals are undertaking extensive learning themselves, are practically proficient (otherwise they would not continue to be employed in the organisation), and are viewed as technically competent in their own fields. This research focuses on how these MDTs link what they need to learn to what they apply in providing education, training, development and learning experiences; given the role they have been asked to play.

This research began with the assumption that these MDTs have a thorough understanding of the theories that underpin organisational and management development and learning, and in particular, adult learning (andragogical) principles (Knowles, 1990). This assumption is supported by the extensive qualifications held by the MDTs. Therefore, the literature reviewed initially included all these aspects of adult learning techniques, as well as those pertaining to the role and competencies required of the management trainer. Whilst it was found that there was an abundance of literature on learning styles and how managers learn, there was very little found on why, what, and how management development trainers actually

learn, and also very little on how management trainers put into practice what they learn. Consequently, this research explores the gap between what is espoused in the general literature on the subject and what happens in practice – through the experiences of participants in this study.

The research questions of this study were strongly influenced in three ways: The first was a response made by the Head of Group Human Resources during the first of the pilot interviews, to the question of how the MDT professionals develop themselves. The reply was, *"In order to develop themselves, they must first know how to develop others."* This statement is almost identical to that described by Thomson et al. (2001) who, when examining the changing patterns of management development, indicated that "managers can develop themselves by taking the responsibility for developing others" (p. 160). In pursuing this statement and asking how they would actually do this, the response from RB came back, "They would have learned how to do this a long time ago". This conversation formed the basis of the question of what it was that these professional learned in the past that enabled them to go on to develop themselves and others.

The second influence on this research study came in the form of the annual corporate Leadership Development Plan and the manner in which training and development needs were ascertained, designed and delivered. In most cases, project teams were arranged to review, design, formulate and deliver training and development interventions, which had to reflect the values and core competencies formulated by senior management. This practice is in line with the comments on the influence of corporate culture on training policies and practices by Cole (2002) who states that, "The approach to management development in an organisation will tend to reflect the dominant value system of the senior management" (p. 392). The core values of the organisation were shown in Figure 1 above, and when considered with the Group Managing Directors comments on continuous improvement, imply that 'change' will be an ongoing component in the EDD Leadership Development Plan. Whilst there is a wealth of literature on the topic of organisational and management development, it was felt to be important to compare what the MDT professionals actually did in their role with what was described in the literature. In essence, to compare the theory and its use in practice (Schon, 1983).

The third influence on this research arose after gauging the academic and experiential background of each MDT in accordance with their expected roles within the Department. In a PhD dissertation on management learning, Thorne (2002) describes formulaically how management learning can be expressed:

Management learning = Management education + management development

This formula indicates that management learning comprises a combination of academic input (management education), and management development practices. This equation fits well with Mintzberg's (2004) view of how and by whom, managers should be educated, trained, developed and provided with relevant managerial learning experiences. If this is the case for managers, it could apply equally to the MDTs in this research responsible for providing Educational, Training, Developmental, and Learning (ETDL) experiences.

In respect to the role of the management trainer, the Institute of Employment Studies in the UK (Hirsch & Carter, 2002) examined the practical challenges facing management development in major UK organisations, and, at a forum on the subject, asked attendees to consider the changing role of the training professional. Results revealed a preference to use external providers over internal resources. This information differs from responses given by participants used in this research, as RB Ltd utilises an equal combination of external and internal resources. In addition, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development responded to industry changes affecting training and development departments, with a major project investigating the trainer's changing role (Sloman, 2005). In Hong Kong, however, this type of research has not yet taken place. Consequently, this present study is being conducted at a very opportune time.

1.4   The Research Questions

The key research question in this study is "How do Management Development Trainers manage their own learning, <u>and </u>apply that learning in practice". This question can be divided into four specific research questions:

1. Why do adult MDTs need to learn?
2. What do adult MDTs need to learn?
3. How do adult MDTs learn?

4. How do adult MDTs apply their learning in practice?

1.5   The Significance and Expected Outcomes of the Research

This study aims to contribute an original theoretical typology expounding upon how management trainers manage their learning <u>and</u> how they apply this learning in practice within the organization; specifically within RB Ltd, a multi-national company in Hong Kong. In addition, this study aims to significantly contribute to the body of knowledge and theory about how management trainers handle their own learning <u>and</u> its practical application.

The new theory proposed by this research offers three additional benefits: To the organization, to the MDT personnel, and to additional staff at managerial and executive levels. The first benefit, specifically to the organisation in which the study was carried out, occurs from a comparison between existing policies, practices and roles with novel insight into possible changes that might enhance business performance and ensure continuous staff improvement. The second benefit of this research relates to the specific MDT professionals as they will be able to compare their roles, learning techniques and application preferences - at an individual level, with the described roles, learning techniques, and application preferences of their colleagues. This opportunity allows MDTs – those specifically interviewed, and MDT professionals in general – to reflect on their own practices and make informed decisions regarding personal and professional performance improvement. Finally, this research might benefit managers and executives of RB Ltd by providing an in-depth analysis of how education, training, development, and learning experiences are managed and delivered. Accordingly, existing policies and practices might be re-configured to enhance of the quality of programs and learning interventions in order to increase relevancy and applicability for the trainee within the organisation.

1.6   Outline of the Following Chapters

Chapter 2 - The Literature Review was reviewed in line with the aim of the research and the specific research questions. In accordance with Strauss & Corbin's (1998), grounded theory approach, literature review concepts are integrated with original pilot interviews provided a conceptual basis for further research. The interview questions in this study focused on the MDTs individual learning, their design and development of specific programmes within the EDD Development plan, and their preferred method in applying learning within their workplace. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature by focusing on the

MDTs role as influenced by organisational Education, Training, Development, and Learning (ETDL) requirements, managerial/ adult learning styles, and adult learning methods. Each section of this chapter conducts an ongoing critical review to explore the challenges presented by the literature as applicable to this research with RB Ltd and ends with a summary of the main points.

Chapter 3 - The Methodology, demonstrates why a qualitative case study method and grounded theory approach are optimal for this particular research question – namely, 'How do Management Development Trainers (MDTs) manage their own learning, and apply that learning in practice'. The chapter details the particular applicability of Strauss & Corbin's (1998) grounded theory approach to this research question, and describes the strengths and limitations of this approach. Chapter 3 also details each step in the grounded theory process with relevant examples. In effect, this chapter explains the researcher's methods for continuous data comparison, coding, and indexing organization, as outlined by grounded theory practices. This methodological background presents the matrix of categories and sub-categories with their respective typologies that resulted in the *Theory of Transferring Relevance*.

Chapter 4 - The 'Theory of Translating Relevance', explains the core category of this research to give a clearer perspective of the conceptual details and data interpretation described in the two subsequent chapters. In effect, Chapter 4 conceptually links the research design with the research findings.

Chapter 5 - The Concepts and Categories of the Theory of Translating Relevance, provides a detailed summary of current research findings as related to the original research aims and questions. This chapter describes the five main categories and processes within the framework of the learning approach and the application approach and their correlating sub-categories. The main categories are: analyzing, acquiring, delivering and evaluating, with the core category of adapting providing the link between such categories. Extensive support from the interviews is included in this chapter.

Chapter 6 - A Grounded Typology of How Management Development Trainers Manage and Apply their own Learning, illustrates a typology of MDT Learners and Trainers: the Academic-Educator, the Conceptualiser-Facilitator, and the Practitioner-Guide.

Chapter 7 - Discussion, Implications and Recommendations, examines the research findings against the proposed research questions described in Chapter 1.5, and compared with the relevant previous literature. This Chapter then discusses potential implications and recommendations resulting from this research study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The structure of the literature review was influenced by the aims of the research, the specific research questions, and during in-depth interviews of the participants in the research. This is in keeping with the grounded theory approach whereby emergent concepts can be explored (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It can be seen from the key research question that there are two focal points in regards to the MDTs – **How do Management Development Trainers manage their own learning, and apply that learning in practice.** These two aspects are framed within the substantive area of management development and training (MD&T). Consequently, it is necessary to gain an understanding both of the importance and influences of management training and development in organisations that operate within the business environment, and of the roles played by the MDTs. An understanding of these influences will place the learning <u>and</u> its application into context. The key research question has a direct bearing on the drivers or influences that impact adult (MDT) learning and its subsequent application. Therefore, four specific research questions were framed to give a focus to this research, which were:

1. Why do adult MDTs need to learn?
2. What do adult MDTs need to learn?
3. How do adult MDTs learn?
4. How do adult MDTs apply their learning in practice?

These research questions seek to answer the motivation behind MDT learning, the content of what needs to be learned, the manner in which learning is acquired, and how it is subsequently adapted and used in training sessions. At the time of writing there is very little relevant research that addresses these key issues; in Hong Kong. Therefore, the literature review should raise some interesting gaps that may be addressed by the outcomes of this research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). Consequently the literature review is divided into five sections to address the four specific research questions:

2.1   Organisational and Individual Factors Influencing MDTs to Learn;

2.2   Learning Experiences Required by MDTs in their Role;

2.3   Strategies for Learning by MDTs;

2.4   Strategies for Delivering Learning Experiences by MDTs;

2.5   Conclusions and Identification of Potential Gaps in the Literature.

The first section examines the importance of management training and development in organisations. This is arguably the primary driver for the existence of the MDT. It also attempts to address the first specific research question in terms of why MDTs need to learn. The main issue relates to 'survival'. Firstly, in terms of organisational survival through competitive advantage. Secondly, 'survival' for the MDT in ensuring they are qualified and competent in performing their roles. This sets the scene for the second section, which describes the learning experiences required by MDTs in their typical role(s). The chapter starts by explaining the terms Education, Training, Development, and Learning (ETDL). It outlines the various duties and responsibilities of MDTs and describes the functions they are required to perform to meet both organisational and individual managerial needs. The review of organisational and managerial needs provides the platform for section three which examines the different types of strategies for approaches to management/adult learning. The chapter goes on to state why management, training and development in organisations is believed to be important (including the rationale for linking management development and training to corporate effectiveness), and goes on to illustrate the problems of differentiating between the terms management education, training, development, and learning. In this section various forms of adult learning techniques are described, including what managers need to learn and how they learn; this includes the manner in which they learn, the styles they adopt, and the context in which the learning is gained. In the fourth section the strategies used in the application of learning is discussed. It includes techniques used to transfer learning, thereby enhancing the probability of relevance being achieved. Particular relevance is placed on the delivery of 'learning' and the role of the 'educator', 'trainer', 'developer', and 'facilitator' of management learning.

At the end of each section a short summary is given and an identification of some of the implications presented by the literature for this research. The final section gives an overview of the potential gaps in the literature that are to be addressed in this research.

2.1 Organisational and Individual Factors Influencing MDTs to Learn

This section describes why management development and training is important in an organisation. It gives a historical account of the absence of sound managerial practice in the UK and the steps taken to address this. It then indicates the influences on MDTs to continuously improve their own skills.

2.1.1   Why MD&T is Important in Organisations

In the 1960s in the UK, recognition of the importance of management development came from a series of research reports that uncovered the inadequacy of management education. These reports include those from the Manpower Services Commission, and reports submitted by Handy (1987), Constable (1987) and Mangham & Silver (1986). It was as a consequence of the report Handy compiled that prompted the development of the Management Charter Initiative and its own Code of Practice. This code highlights the importance of *'good management practice'* and that its responsibility lies in maximising the "potential of our most valuable resource: the people who work here" (Mumford, 1989, p. 13). The major findings were that the majority of British managers received little or no form of management training or development. As a consequence of the reports by Handy (1987) and Constable (1987) a set of initial managerial 'competencies' was formulated to try to stimulate interest and investment in the education and development of managers (Harrison, 1988).

The drive to improve organisational competitiveness through management training and development is not restricted to the UK. Canadian and North American organisations continue to strive to increase managerial skills and competences even though a recent 2009 Conference Board of Canada show that expenditure on training in Canadian organisations has been decreasing for some five years; thereby negatively impacting organisational competitiveness (Zinni et al., 2010).

The underlying philosophy to achieving a competitiveness advantage through managerial effectiveness appears to be developing managers who can carry out organisational strategies that enhance business performance and provide a sustainable competitive edge. Waterman (1995) devotes a chapter to the topic of "Sustainable Competitive Edge", and stresses that "strategists" must understand customers and markets and the relationships with employees, in a way that competitors find difficult to replicate (p. 170). A relevant question in this research is whether the MDTs undertake the role of 'strategist', in educating, training, and/or

developing managers in corporate strategy. Similarly, the question could also be asked as to how much managerial ETDL is received and required by managers in RB Ltd.

Drucker (1995) indicates that this "strategic" philosophy is implicit in what he terms every organisation's "theory of business" (p. 21). This theory takes account of three elements that impact the environment of the organisation: society and its structure, the marketplace, the customer and technological issues; assumptions regarding the mission of the organisation; and, assumptions relating to the 'core competencies' needed to achieve the organisation's mission. In a continuously changing world, these three elements must be understood by all employees and regular challenges made to demonstrate how the organisation operates, and how it can re-invent itself by 'purposely abandoning' policies, practices, services and products that may be stagnating. Drucker (1995, p. 30) goes on to make the following points: that assumptions about the environment, mission and core competencies must fit reality; that the theory of business must be known and understood throughout the organisation; and, the theory of business has to be tested constantly. The strategic relevance of embracing organisational change is not only cited in UK, the USA, but also Canada. Dessler et al. (2007) emphasized the importance of internal organisational consultants and strategic change agents to achieve optimal organisational effectiveness for Canadian organisations.

The implications for the MDTs suggest they must understand these three points, how they change, and how they can be practically applied. A part of their role could then be to align recognised business needs with the competencies and skills of managers in fulfilling organisational needs. This would include identifying and addressing management education, training, development, or learning 'gaps'. It is evident that in a constantly changing environment with the aim to remain competitive, the need for continuous education, training, development, and learning, in all forms, should be ever present. In this way, early identification of performance 'gaps' can be undertaken – usually by some form of internal (HRM) audit or training needs analysis. This could then enable broad based, immediate, future and more strategic needs to be identified and best addressed.

The requirement for MDTs to have internal assessment skills is recommended by Drucker (1995). He suggests the need for an early diagnosis of organisational problems by a constant review of organisational strategies and their link to its business objectives. In this way, he

suggests, such regular reviews become part of the culture and can defend against general complacency.

Thomson et al. (2001) reinforce the link between organisational strategy and management development polices and practices when they assert that, "the impact of management development is rated four times higher by client managers when management development is perceived to be closely linked to business strategy, and twice as high when the individual's line manager is closely involved" (p. 133). The inference is that any management development policies and practices must relate to organisational and business strategies. The North American view reinforces the relationships between "superior HRM and high productivity" and emphasises the importance of leveraging the organisational core competencies across global markets (Daniels et al., 2010). This comments link with the earlier comments of MDTs playing a highly strategic role within the organisation.

The literature, so far, infers that any management development policies and practices must be relevant to organisational strategies. The focus tends to be on ensuring that any deficiencies in a manager's performance are identified and training and development given to meet current and future needs (Schuler, 1987, p. 392). In this regard they must be aligned with business and organisational strategies to ensure the ongoing competitiveness of the company by designing education, training, development, and learning initiatives that will work for the organisation in question. Consequently, it is also necessary to determine the requirements and forms taken by each of the terms education, training, development, and learning so that they can be defined, managed and delivered effectively – by the most appropriate persons, and in the most efficient manner. In essence, a major reason why MDTs need to learn is to provide ETDL experiences that enhance organisational effectiveness.

2.1.2   *Why MDTs Need to Up-date Their Own Skills*

One major reason that MDTs need to up-date their own skills is to obtain gainful employment. Job positions for HR and Training professionals can be seen advertised in major publications in Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, and the UK. In many instances, such positions frequently require academic qualifications, professional membership and ongoing continuing professional development. The requirements for a Canadian HR professional are becoming stricter and require a knowledge component, and experience requirement, recertification every three years, and effective 1st January, 2011, applicants will require a degree to be

granted the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation (Dessler et al., 2007).

A review of job advertisements in Australia taken from an online recruitment organisation is shown at Appendix C. Titles vary but include 'Training and Development Manager', 'Learning & Development Advisor', and Human Resource Development (HRD) Specialist', to name but a few. These job titles reflect certain expectations of the employing organisation, and are accompanied with a specific job description and candidate requirements for the position/role in question. Often explicit, in this regard, is the issue of prior learning, qualifications and experience; in essence, the types of learning and experience required. The job positions shown are Learning & Development Manager, Learning and Development Specialist, and Training Manager. The column 'Experience' shows the importance of having the ability to work at either strategic level, or with change management experience, or having experience with all aspects of the training cycle. In terms of the attributes and skills required, these range from sound knowledge of adult learning theory to experience with negotiation and influencing skills. Similarly, when it comes to qualifications, a base degree in either adult education or human resource development is a pre-requisite. The comparative table also highlights the educational qualifications, specific technical and knowledge skills, and the practical experience at various levels, such as the strategic, change management, and training cycle elements of the role in question.

In the Appointments section of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK, many job advertisements specify that a successful candidate must have a basic degree in a related field, membership of certain professional institutions, and a minimum period of experience at certain levels of an organisation. It can be said there is an academic, professional, and practical element for many of the MDT roles that are advertised. In essence, the academic requirement, ongoing professional practice, and continuing professional educational requirements are all sound reasons as to why HR personnel and MDTs need to continuously learn.

2.1.3   Summary and Potential Implications

This section examines two issues in answering 'why' MDTs need to learn. The first part concentrates on the reasons why organisations need to adapt and 'learn' through their management ETDL initiatives. The second part examines reasons why HRM and MDT professionals need to up-date their own learning.

The literature states why it is important for organisations to recognise the strategic advantage of sound management education, training, development, and learning practices. It traces reports from the UK as early as the 1960's that reflect the inadequacies of existing managerial skills and 'management education', essentially in the UK but also applicable in North America. A key reason explaining why it is important for organisations to focus on management ETDL is to reinforce their organisational effectiveness, and competitive advantage; which in turn relates to corporate survival. The literature also recognises that any managerial education, training, development, or learning must be aligned with the business strategies. This is to ensure competitiveness and uniqueness in terms of the suggested core competencies required for the organisation to maintain its competitive edge. In this way, replication of the people skills and attributes would be difficult. It was evident that managerial ETDL was required to address the changes that surfaced as a result of the 'gaps' between managerial capability that was currently in place and what was required.

There was also a driving requirement for HRM and MDTs to up-grade their learning in the form of academic achievement, continuing professional development, and practical experience. These elements were required to enable the HRM and MDT professional to attain gainful employment and become professionally competent in their roles. Appendix C, D, and E give a sound indication of both the educational, professional and experiential requirements for individual seeking employment in the role of an MDT, and also in being trained for such a position.

This research will identify whether the reasons portrayed in the literature for both corporate and individual survival and are the same as those in RB Ltd. This will include the use of managerial ETDL to make a strategic difference in organisational effectiveness, and the competency training and the importance placed on MDT qualifications and experience.

2.2   Learning Experiences Required by MDTs in their Role

In this section the terms management, education, training and development are defined, and the typical MDT roles for leadership learning are explored. The MDT role plays a crucial part in determining what the MDT needs to learn or acquire in order transfer or apply that learning on to their trainees. It is pivotal to this research to place the terms "Management", "Education", "Training", "Development", and "Learning" into context, as the main aim of this research is to uncover a typology of MDT learning and application approaches. This research examines

'learning' and its 'application' within the confines of a business organisation. In this context MD&T includes 'management education', 'management training' 'management development', and 'management learning'. It can be seen that many definitions in the substantive area are open to interpretation, and that some can be used interchangeably or encompass other concepts that arise over time. Harrison (1988) illustrates the inter-relationship between 'development', 'education', and 'training' and also states that they are often used synonymously.

Similar treatment can be given to the terms 'management' and 'leadership', according to the CIPD Fact Sheet (2006) on the topic of management development. The Fact Sheet goes on to describe how 'Talent Management' and 'Leadership Talent' are now being used to describe the development of selected groups of management. These comments are important to this research, as the training and development delivered by EDD are targeted at managerial and executive grade staff, not all employees. It would also appear that there is not a unified agreement in defining 'management' 'development' and 'management training', nor the terms 'management education' and 'management learning'. In many cases, the authors of books on the subject provide their own definitions in order to offer an interpretation that allows their own perspective to come through. It is for this reason that such definitions need to be defined and explained by the authors or speakers (participants) in this research; as Humpty Dumpty said in *Through the Looking Glass*, "when I choose a word . . . it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less" (Lewis Carroll, 1871, p. 186). In essence, it is apparent that management development and management training are important, but difficult to define. In this regard the MDTs in this research will need to give their interpretation of the terms within an organisational context. In this way it would become clearer as to whether they are acquiring learning based on their perception of themselves as a management educator, trainer, developer, learning facilitator or something else?

Mullins (2005) adds to the debate by setting a cautionary scene for those attempting to discover a singular definition of management development by stating, "There is no single, agreed definition of management development . . . The best method for developing effective managers continues to be a subject for debate and there are a number of competing models of those who seek to improve management performance" (p. 942). Even the terms 'management development', 'management training' and 'management education', are open to interpretation and are sometimes used interchangeably (Fee, 2001, p. 13). Fee (2001) goes on to add that the term 'organisation development' is also being used in a loose tautological way (p. 13).

Fee (2001) takes the position that training is a subset of development, which is a subset of education, which in turn is a subset of learning. The idea of subsets may be one way of capturing the spirit of the terms, but it is by no means universal. For example Nadler & Nadler (1990) support the views of Blanchard & Thacker (1999), who prefer to define training as being related to skills for the current job, development being used for a future role, and that, "education is typically differentiated from training and development by the types of KSA's (knowledge, skills and attitudes) developed" and is "viewed as the development of job-specific KSA's, related (but not specifically tailored) to a person's career or job" (Nadler 1990, p. 18; Blanchard & Thacker, 1999, pp. 8-9).

It is important to explore each of the terms in slightly more depth in order to gain an understanding of their inter-relationship and what aspect of ETDL needs to be acquired by the MDT. Education, according to Harrison (1988) implies to "bring up so as to form habits, manners, intellectual and physical attributes" (p. 5). In respect to management education, there is an implication that it is broad based, non-specific, habit forming, and linked to provision by academic institutions (Mintzberg, 2004). Training, however, is often current-job specific and not broad-based. Saks & Haccoun (2007) define training as "the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities to improve performance in one's current job" (p. 6). This mirrors the here-and-now definition suggested by Blanchard & Thacker (1999) above. Therefore, management training could imply that the training relates to specifically defined managerial components (competencies) that specific organisations desire. In contrast to training, development, as defined by Saks & Haccoun (2007) is, "The acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform future job responsibilities" (p. 6). Clearly, development, in this interpretation, is future oriented. Similarly, management development should focus on building and developing individual potential (Harrison, 1988). In terms of learning, Saks & Haccoun (2007) indicate that it is "the process of acquiring knowledge and skills, and a change in individual behaviour as a result of some experience" (p.5). In essence, learning can only be seen through some form of change in behaviour, including cognitive, attitudinal, or intellectual ability (Gagne, 1984). Therefore, it can be viewed as an output rather than an input, which is in contrast to how education, training, and development may be viewed. These definitions provide a potential continuum along which management education, training, development, and learning may be placed in order to satisfy existing and future corporate needs.

To provide a possible framework for 'management development (and its components) a working model is given by Thomson et al. (2001). It is shown in Figure 2.2 below and highlights the arena in which management development operates. The implications of this model are that 'development' includes all forms of ETDL. The model illustrates the significance of organisational strategy as a central determinant towards management development policies, practices and measurement. As a consequence, those charged with responsibility for implementing management development policies and practices would need to be highly conversant with both external and internal organisational factors that any potential changes could make. This implies that corporate 'strategists' have an in-depth understanding of both the external business operating environment and the existing internal corporate culture and climate. It also outlines the probable influences on the role to be performed by the MDTs; which is covered in the next section.

Figure 2.2   *Model of Management Development*

- **A model of management development**

Source: Thomson, A., Mabey, C., Storey, J., Gray, C., and Iles, Paul (2001 *Changing Patterns of Management Development*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Oxford; p.6

2.2.1   The Duties and Responsibilities of MDTs in Organisations

In 1983 the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) identified some 15 key roles of training and development professions. Blanchard & Thacker (1999) report that these roles have remained fairly stable over time, and that, "Many of the skills and competencies required of training and development professionals are similar to the knowledge and skills required of managers in general" (p. 25). If this is the case, then much of the literature relating to how to train and develop managers should apply to this study of MDTs.

Blanchard & Thacker (1999) go on to qualify their statement that specialist trainers may only need expertise and learning in a limited number of the areas, with the claim that generalists must have "developed competence in all of these areas" (p. 25). The list of roles cited by the ASTD is quoted

by Bard et al. (1987, p. 21) in Figure 2.3. The list is reproduced below as several of the roles have been alluded to in previous sections of the literature review. These include, 'Evaluator', 'Needs Analyst', 'Strategist', and Theoretician'. It should be noted that these roles cover elements of management training and development involved with the administration, communication, design, pre-delivery, delivery, and post-delivery of such experiences.

Figure 2.3   Key Roles of Training and Development Professionals

1. Evaluator;
2. Group Facilitator;
3. Individual Development Counselor;
4. Instructional Writer;
5. Instructor;
6. Manager of Training and Development;
7. Marketer;
8. Media Specialist;
9. Needs Analyst;
10. Program Administrator;
11. Program Designer;
12. Strategist;
13. Task Analyst;
14. Theoretician;
15. Transfer Agent.

The attempt to adequately describe the roles and functions of the 'management trainer'
appear to be ongoing. Blanchard & Thacker (1999, p. 26) offer their own list that defines the
role of the trainer in terms of their technical, business or interpersonal orientation. Schwartz
et al. (2005) take the list provided by the ASTD and elaborate on the role of the 'Facilitator'
by breaking it into five separate functions.

It can be seen that the functions of the MDT are fairly comprehensive ranging from duties
including those of an administrative nature, as a designer/evaluator (providing relevance and
subsequent review), as an instructor (providing input), and a facilitator (providing a process).
It is also possible that MDTs adopt one or more of these roles depending on the
organisational demands and their own individual abilities/capabilities/comfort zone. In order

to explore what knowledge, skills, and abilities each organisation requires of its own MDTs, a review of such pre-requisites is required, and is covered next.

So far the literature in this section has examined the terminology that is pivotal to the vernacular of the MDTs, and of the types of role they are expected to undertake. This implies that they fully understand the subtle differences in the terms used, the competencies (attributes/skills/knowledge) that they need to acquire, and the organisational requirements needed to be a management trainer. However, it has not addressed what the management trainer should actually do. Sloman (1999) suggests that a possible reason for this could be due to the continuing debate over MDTs roles, especially in terms of a strategic 'facilitator' or as a deliverer of 'training':

> The role that the trainer should play is a subject of continuing discussion. Current practices demonstrate wide differences with respect to delivery of training. The main choice for the trainer lies between acting as a strategic-facilitator or as a deliverer. The former role must be filled somewhere in the organisation. Defining the relationship with the rest of the human resources function and contributing to their input to the strategic-planning process is of vital importance. Two perspectives on the trainers' task are considered. First, regardless of the role of the training manager, skills enhancement is perceived as the main justification for the existence of the training function. This activity must take place at the strategic, tactical and operational level. The second perspective comes from an analysis of modern systematic training, which can be viewed as a five-stage process and each stage presents its own problems (p. 231).

The implications for the MDTs in EDD are that they may be required to play multiple roles and have multiple skills to operate at different levels in the organisation, as the needs arise. This means that they have multiple learning requirements as well as multiple delivery requirements. Sloman's use of the terms strategic, tactical, and operational, in regards to the trainers' tasks, are significant, as they place a time-frame, hierarchical aspect, and contextual element to the role – all of which would be specific to the organisation in question. By 'strategic', based on the earlier authors (such as Drucker, 1995), is meant as being in line with business goals, broad environmental/customer/competitor (external) influences, and is future oriented. The term 'tactical' implies that the policies and practices adopted are in line with existing objectives

(predominantly internal influences). And lastly, the term 'operational' infers that the training activity meets current (day-to-day, general, potentially broad based) requirements.

Sloman (1999) goes on to mention that the skills required to be learned by the trainer include the following: "strategic awareness and understanding of business imperatives; diagnostic capacity and consultancy process skills, and technical expertise, which will increasingly involve the role of information technology" (p. 243). The skills that appear to typify what management trainers need to learn, and include strategic awareness, change responsiveness, and the management of particular skills within the administration and delivery arena. In this way, some authors have begun to classify training practitioners. Further support is given for these features by Harrison (1988), who combines typologies for training professionals in five ways. These typologies indicate, for example, that to be classified as a 'strategic facilitator, the training professional needs to have learned to be strategically aware, learned diagnostic skills, and learned how to influence others. The typology is shown in Figure 2.4 below.

Figure 2.4   Typology of Training Professionals (after Harrison, 1988)

- Strategic facilitator
  - Strategic awareness
  - Diagnostic ability
  - Influencing skills
- Organisational change agent
- Manager of HRD
- The Role in Transition
  - A combination of the above roles with changing emphasis
- Passive Provider
  - Reactive rather than proactive

Harrison's typology links with the earlier comments by Drucker (1995) regarding diagnostic ability and business understanding, as well as the profile indicated in the job advertisement requiring change management skills. Harrison also includes the 'Role in Transition' as this provides for a combination of roles and may take account of evolving changes.

There is considerable research into the changing role of the 'trainer' and the various attributes that can be sought. Darling et al. (1999) conducted a research project consisting of trainers who demonstrated an increasing shift from training to learning, "due to such concepts as organisational learning and the learning organisation, and knowledge management" (p. 373). The research examined roles that were actually played by trainers as opposed to alleged roles given by academics. The result was that key trainer roles could be grouped as: philosophical, that is, embracing strategic and advisory as well as consultancy; strategic; or operational. Other authors provide simpler definitions, but do not include how the process is planned or executed, or the context in which the education training, development or learning is provided. One such simplified statement comes from Thorne and Machray (2000), who state "training is about helping others to learn. Trainers have a key role in the creation of a learning environment" (p. 3). This statement will be examined in greater detail later, as it very closely resembles the thoughts of one particular trainer, and several who believe that the content (for them) is not the issue, rather the environmental learning environment (context) which better inspires or encourages learning.

Given that trainers have acquired a diversified range of skills, it may be useful to gain an insight as to how trainers can receive training, educationally. Two examples are given at Appendix C - Certificate in Advanced Training Management, and at Appendix D - Certificate in Train the Trainer. Both were conducted in Hong Kong during 2006. The major difference is that the first is directed to 'training management', whilst the second focuses on training delivery. A question for this research would be to uncover which elements a management trainer/developer needs in order to be termed efficient? In other words, educationally sound, trained for the current role, developmentally attuned, and able to shape learning experiences for oneself and one's audience.

2.2.2   *Summary and Potential Implications*

In essence, this section addresses 'what' the MDTs need to learn for their roles(s). This section has explored the key terms of education, training, development and learning, and suggested they need to be placed in context. The terms are important as they set the basic learning requirements for both the MDTs and their subsequent trainees. The second section discussed the role and competencies of the management trainer, as well as the individual educational, skills, and personal attributes that they need to acquire. The link between the terms ETDL and the role of the MDT professional are important. Education is seen as being

broad based, training focused on the here and now, development future oriented, and learning as being a condition of a change in behaviour as a result of an experience. The MDTs role can be focused on one or some of the ETDL elements. Consequently, this will dictate what the MDT needs to learn.

It can be seen from the list of key roles provided that there are numerous labels that could be given to the Management Trainer. The roles listed by the ASTD include those of designer, writer, needs analyst, strategist, theoretician, and facilitator. However, from the authors cited, the lists they provide and the advertised positions all indicate the need for qualifications, attributes/skills, and learning experience in various aspects of training and development. These are all issues that begin to address the research question regarding 'what' MDTs must learn (and possess) in order to fulfill the performance requirements in their roles. In addition, the typology of training professionals listed by Harrison (1988) will provide an opportunity to compare this list to that discovered in this research.

This research will be able to compare the educational qualifications, attributes/skills and learning experiences, and typology provided by Harrison (1988) with those currently held by the MDTs in this study.

2.3   Strategies for Learning by MDTs

This section examines two aspects of learning and attempts to answer the third research question, "How do adult MDTs learn?" The first section examines learning aimed at managers and the role they need to perform. It offers a suggestion as to how managers can combine academic learning with training and development to form a more rounded approach in management learning. In some regards this may be viewed potentially as a continuum of learning, with ongoing education, training, development and learning opportunities arising either as and when needed or on an ad hoc basis – depending on situational circumstances. The second section explores the field of adult learning, in general, and explores some of the more relevant approaches that face the adult learner today, including adult learning styles; which should apply equally to the MDTs in this research.

2.3.1   How Managers Learn

A very basic question is to ask what managers actually do. By understanding the answer to this question, it may be possible to train and develop managers in the skills and techniques

necessary. However, as with all the definitions offered so far, there is no single definition that can explain what managers do. Rather, there are suggestions as to how managers should perform, the areas in which they should be proficient, and approaches that organisations can undertake to give guidance to their managerial staff.

What managers need to learn to perform effectively and efficiently is also not simple to answer. The managerial role is both messy and highly complex. Badaracco (1997, p. x) suggests that there are both personal and professional decisions that a manager needs to make, and that many courses on managerial topics do not provide practical advice on the issues – as those all too often pose professional, moral and ethical dilemmas. Mintzberg (1989) provides strong support for this when he differentiates between folklore and fact in the role and job a manager undertakes. He states, "If you ask managers what they do, they will most likely tell you that they plan, organise, co-ordinate, and control. Then watch what they do. Don't be surprised if you can't relate what you see to those four words" (p. 9). Mintzberg (1989) describes the manager's job in terms of roles or behaviours. These roles are interpersonal, informational and decisional. The interpersonal roles include those of figurehead, leader and liaison. The informational roles include those of the monitor, disseminator, and spokesman. The decisional roles include those of the entrepreneur, the disturbance handler, the resource allocator, and the negotiator (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 15). Mintzberg also makes the point that the manager is also the leader, indicating that the terms are somewhat synonymous. Mumford (1989, p. 105) supports Mintzberg's view in this regard. From the comments of both Badaracco (1997) and Mintzberg's (1989) it can be concluded that they believe managerial effectiveness training should take account of both personal and professional issues.

A question that arises is what is a manager's job, and how can it be learned? Drucker (1986) suggests that the manager's job "should be based on a task to be performed in order to attain the company's objectives" (p. 137). He then goes on to suggest that developing managers should entail a threefold responsibility: to the company; to society; and to the individual. However, this does not uncover what needs to learned, or how and where it should be learned. Mintzberg (2004) suggests a combination of both academic and practical input. His view is that "Management is a practice that has to blend a good deal of craft (experience) with a certain amount of art (insight) and some science (analysis)" (p. 1). His reasoning is that he believes that management is neither a science nor a profession; rather, it is a craft. His

view is that, "Put together a good deal of craft with a certain amount of art and some science, and you end up with a job that is above all a practice. There is no 'one best way' to manage; it all depends on the situation (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 10). In this respect, if there is no one best way to manage, it would seem logical that there may be no one best way to learn, and that learning is potentially a continuum of phases of education, training, development, and learning episodes.

Mintzberg (2004, p. 198) attempts to map out the learning process by suggesting that the components of management education and development pass through three phases: management education, usually provided by scholarly institutions and business schools (including MBA studies); management training, (provided by trainers and consultants who usually instill their own combinations of techniques and skills); and management development, which is provided through the guidance of the organisation to use whatever they feel is appropriate to develop their own managers (usually through customization of development needs). He also suggests that the trainers and consultants (potentially the MDTs in this research) providing management training are the 'connectors' acting as "transmitters or cross pollinators, between the ideas of inquiry on one side and the needs of application on the other" (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 199). It is through these phases that both the student or trainee of 'management' and potentially the 'management facilitator' should pass. Figure 2.9 outlines the three phases and the 'actors' involved.

Figure 2.5   Map of Management Education and Development
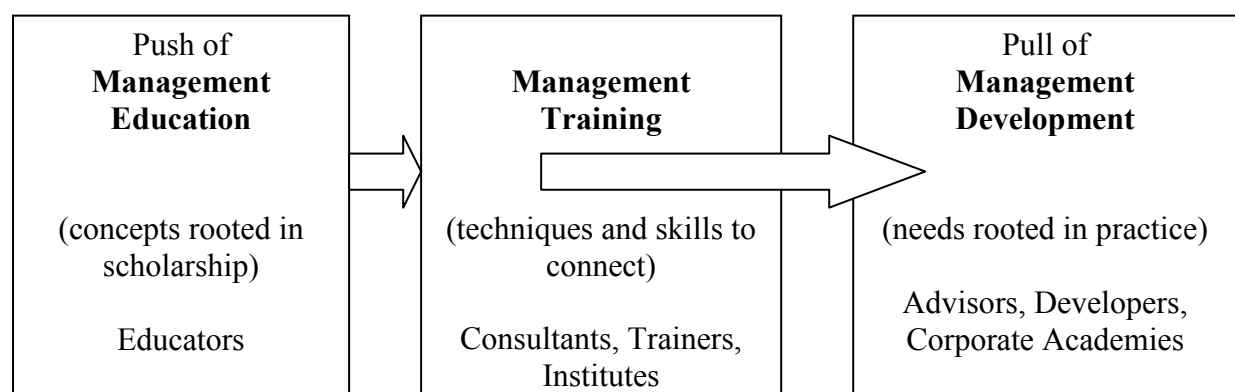
(Source: Mintzberg, 2004, p. 198)

From this 'map' it would appear that a manager could gain insights as to how to manage from a combination of education/knowledge and concepts derived through academia, then techniques and skills gained from consultants and trainers, and finally the practical application of both management education and training, as voiced by advisors and developers. The focus of such a 'rounded' approach is to enable the managers to become efficient, effective and competent in their role, thereby enhancing the organisation's performance. This particular model fits well with the earlier comments from authors that there needs to be a blend of academic management knowledge, technical managerial skills, and practical management ability that combine to form MDTs management competencies. In this way, a 'manager' can be molded to become more effective and efficient.

The focus on efficiency and 'competence' has already been mentioned as a tenet of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) and the occupational standards for managers that it produced (introduced into the UK in early 1980's). Whilst these standards have been criticised, it does, "provide a specification of competencies or abilities, which it is argued that managers in various roles and levels require" (CIPD Fact-Sheet, 2006). Mumford (1989) suggests that "…a competency approach [is] used with discretion by an organisation, [that is] adjusted and interpreted to suit that organisation's actual situation" (p. 103). The relevance of the use of competencies to this research is that the EDD in RB Ltd use the competency approach and Development Centres as core programmes for the training and development of managerial executives throughout the organisation. It can be seen that the potential continuum of 'managerial learning' varies depending on the role and levels of managers in the organisation at a particular point in time. This links with Mintzberg's 'Push' and 'Pull' of management education, through management training, to management development. The state of readiness of the 'manager' will be dependant on their own state of readiness and the complexity of the nature of the managerial role; current or future.

Given the complexities of the job of a manager, it is relevant to explore how managers actually learn; as this impacts a major facet of this research. Kolb (1984), Mumford (1989) and Mintzberg (1973) provide three managerial perspectives (each described below). Each of these perspectives has a direct impact on how a management trainer may adjust their own learning style/approach to fit audience requirements. These 'audiences' include both the organisation and the individual being taught. Kolb (1984) is seen as a major influence in exploring the ways adults learn. He argues that there are four elements in learning: concrete

experiences; reflective observation; abstract conceptualization; and active experimentation – all cyclical. Kolb (1976) suggests that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience. This has important 'educational' implications in that all learning could be called re-learning; as in the mind there is not just a blank sheet of paper waiting to be filled, but a refinement of what's gone before.

Mumford (1989) takes the work of Kolb (1984) further and indicates that the process by which people learn is important. In this way they tend to be different in the way in which they learn. The question he raises concerns the way in which managers should be developed to cope with potential individual managerial differences. Mumford (1989) re-words Kolb's four stage cycle as 'taking action', seeing results', 'thinking about the results', and 'planning for the next time' (p. 11). In this respect, Mumford indicates that managers have different preferred styles of learning, and whilst there is usually a preference of one or two styles, most people have a mix of all four. The styles are labeled 'Activist', 'Reflector', 'Theorist' and 'Pragmatist'. Participants can complete a learning style questionnaire to determine their own preferences and particular strength in each category.

Mumford (1989, p. 28) describes the learning cycle both in terms of the style that a person may adopt, and the process they would use when learning. The 'Activist' is described as 'having an experience', and is typified as seeking new experiences. The 'Reflector' is described as one who 'reviews the experience', and is portrayed by one who 'likes to stand back and review experiences from different perspectives'. The 'Theorist' is one who 'concludes from the experience', and is usually, 'keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking'. The 'Pragmatist' is one who 'plans the next step', and tends to be the person who 'positively searches for new ideas or techniques which might have practical application in their situation'. Mumford makes the point that managers may have different preferences, and that these preferences may change in different situations.

Mumford's descriptors of individual learning styles and their practical application have far reaching consequences for the MDT. The MDT understands their own preferred style, thereby balancing theoretical content, personal reflection, and the context in which they learn best. In addition, they must be aware of the differences that could apply to members of their audience and their own personal learning preferences. In terms of highlighting relevance for this research, it can be seen that there are potential parallels between the management

educator and Mumford's 'Theorist' (looking at content), his 'Reflector' (looking at context), and his 'Pragmatist' (looking at pure practical application).

Mumford's (2002) second stage, 'reflecting' involves the technique of getting participants to reflect on the possible learning involved in discussing the learning styles questionnaire. This idea links well with Schon's (1983) view of the reflective practitioner. Schon (1983, p. 308) makes a good point when he describes the researcher (facilitator) and the practitioner (participant) as living in different worlds; however, as he puts it they can co-exist:

> When we reject the traditional view of professional knowledge, recognizing that practitioners may become researchers in situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and conflict, we recast the relationship between research and practice.

The implications for this research are that the MDT is often both the researcher and the practitioner in their role. Therefore, an understanding of the duality is vital. Similarly, Schon (1983) recognises the need for 'research', which may be educational or theoretical (possibly uncovered through academic study or research), and its practical application in the work setting. Brookfield (1986) supports the comments on 'reflection' made earlier as he believes there is a pool of experiences as to how the adult views the world. He indicates,

> The development of critical reflection on experiences, along with the collaborative interpretation and exchange of such experiences, is proposed . . . is one of the most significant forms of adult learning in which individuals can engage (p.38).

This would suggest that all learning experiences, however, presented, need critical review and an interchange and interpretation of such experiences. Therefore, these episodes are not reviewed in isolation, nor necessarily, independently, for the learning to be most effective.

The provision of a link between theory and practice and the ability of management trainers to provide such links is crucial to this research. Mintzberg's map of education and development and Kolb and Mumford's view of the different but cyclical learning styles of managers, give a useful insight as to the knowledge and its transmission that need to be appreciated by potential management trainers; both for themselves and other adult managers/learners.

From what has been discussed so far, it would appear that Mumford's 'having an experience' and 'being able to reflect on it' is crucial to learning; and that they are not mutually exclusive. This also appears to be supported by a Honeywell study that found that 50% of the ways in which managers learn to manage came from challenging work experiences, 30% from relationships with others in the organisation and only 20% from training (Marsick, 1987, pp. 11-30). This has practical implications for the management trainer in terms of the way managers potentially learn best, for the line managers in providing the environment (context) and experiences for subordinates to learn, and in the design of activities (practical orientation).

All that has been said so far about managers applies to a certain extent to adults who are in the category of managers. Therefore, it is relevant to review the literature in this specific area, as follows.

2.3.2   Adult Learning

It can be said that management learning is a subset of adult learning. However, the field of 'adult learning' is becoming more prominent since many authors believe it is quite distinct from the learning approaches of children or those of formative years (Knowles, 1970). The literature on learning theory is abundant, as is learning in adulthood. Hill (1990) and Knowles (1990) provide an outline of most of the major proponents and interpreters of learning and adult learning theories. Merriam & Caffarella (1999) provide several definitions of the theories. It is useful to outline some of them here as it impacts on the manner in which each of the participants, in this research, manage their own learning and provide its delivery to their audiences.

Learning theories, in general, include: behaviourism; cognitive; humanist; constructivism; and social constructivism. Behaviourists define learning as a change in behaviour, and focus on behavioural changes when responding to changes in the environment. In this regard the learning can be seen as an 'outcome' or 'output', rather than an input – as in the case of education, training, or development. The cognitivists state that learning involves a reorganization of experiences so that learners can make sense of the changes in the environment – this includes flashes of insight. Behaviourism differs from cognitivism in the locus of control, that is, for the 'behaviourist' control centres within the environment, whilst for cognitivists' control is with the individual. This has particular relevance for the MDTs in

this research as their learning can be described as being 'controlled' by the context (for example in an academic environment), or where they chose how they interact within learning situations, for example, within an organisational setting.

Humanists approach learning from the point of view of the human potential for growth, and it is within this area that andragogical concepts are grounded. A constructivist stance holds that learning is a process of constructing meaning, and in this way they make sense of their experiences; social constructivist learning relies on building knowledge by getting individuals together to participate in dialogue about problems and tasks. In this way, building experience and reflecting on the events is vital for continuous learning.

The value of experience is crucial for Knowles (1990), who quotes Lindeman (1926), "the resource of highest value in adult education is the learner's experience" (p. 31). It is for this reason that Knowles (1990) suggests that, "Adults have a deep need to be self-directing; therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in a process of mutual enquiry with them rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it" (p. 31). Knowles goes on to quote Carl Rogers (1951, p. 132) who proposed a student-centred approach to education that incorporated five hypotheses. The first two state that, "We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate their learning, and, "A person learns significantly only those things which he perceives as being involved in the maintenance of, or enhancement of, the structure of self" (p. 132). This implies that the centre of attention is the learner, not the teacher, and highlights the importance of making learning relevant to the learner. The issue of focusing on the key person in the learning experience as being either the teacher (trainer) or the learner has wide-ranging implications for the MDT – both in terms of learning and its application. This will be explained further in the next section on how the adult MDTs apply their learning.

Knowles (1990) uses the term 'andragogy' to mean the "art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 54). It is within this term that Knowles places the role of the teacher (or trainer) and the learner. Whereas in a pedagogical model the teacher would be in control of what was taught, the andragogical model places the learning responsibility on the learner and how it is perceived to be relevant to them. Knowles expressly states that in adult learning you can only 'help' an adult learn. It is for the management trainer to understand when to use pedagogical approaches rather than andragogical. It may be that the decision would be influenced

according to the three phase map provided by Mintzberg, above, that is for management education (providing a base of managerial knowledge), a pedagogical approach may be more appropriate, whereas an andragogical approach could be better applied for the training of skills and techniques and subsequent managerial development.

Knowles' view of 'andragogy' does not go unchallenged. Merriam & Caffarella (1999) believe that the principles Knowles proposes are more in line, "with plain good practice than a proven theory" (p. 274). The authors provide a potential starting point for the management trainer by outlining Knox's Proficiency Theory. Knox (1986) indicates that 'proficiency' is determined as the discrepancy between the current and desired level of 'proficiency'. Therefore, one of the roles of the MDT would be to assess the perceived 'gap'. This should determine whether the 'gap' is one relating to managerial education, training, development, or general practical managerial learning.

2.3.3   Summary and Potential Implications

The issue of how managers learn has been the subject of much debate. Mintzberg's (1973) seminal work on what a manager does has created a flurry of discussions including how a manager's role can be described and taught. There are questions as to whether the role of the manager can be learned or whether it is founded on experience, a certain amount of art, and some science – especially in the form of analysis. Drucker (1986) suggests that the role of the manager should be a task linked to achieving the corporate objectives. In this way, the use of competencies that reflect corporate values and business goals may be one way to educate managers.

Another solution for providing learning experiences could be to provide education, training and development to the manager in different forms and phases. Mintzberg (2004) suggests the providers of each phase could be specialists in education, training, and development. Similarly, the context in which each type of 'learning' is delivered could be different, and would need to fit both the organisation and the individual managers' style. This type of approach closely resembles the current situation within RB Ltd as the composition of MDTs, how they are used, and the types of training and development programme adopted follow (to a certain extent) the 'Map of Management Education and Development' that Mintzberg offers. For example, it contains core management educational courses, specific training

courses to enhance current performance, and developmental courses/initiatives to prepare managers for more senior roles.

The learning styles proposed by Kolb (1976), and developed by Mumford indicate that individuals have a cycle of styles but often a preferred style is prevalent. This often strongly influences the manner and approach by the individual to embrace learning experiences. For example, a Theorist style emphasises learning based around logic, theories and objectivity, whereas a Pragmatist is more interested in learning through the practical application of the new knowledge.

Individual adult learning has also gained much attention with the concept of 'andragogy'. The discussion of pedagogical approaches versus andragogical approaches links with the individual learning preferences for individuals, and is an issue that MDTs need to be well aware of. They need to understand their own individual learning styles as well as the variety of styles that could be present in their own trainees. Major implications in andragogical approaches include the focus of control that is centred on the learner rather than the trainer, and the context in which training is delivered.

The implications of this section for the MDT lie in the expectations of the organisation, the preferred learning styles of the MDTs in this research, and in the preferred method of acquiring differing forms of learning; whether it be academic, practical, experiential, or some form of combination. The relevance of the learning for adults appears to be self-directed. Therefore the role of the teacher (trainer) would be to engage the trainee in a mutually beneficial form of enquiry.

2.4   Strategies for Delivering Learning Experiences by MDTs

The fundamental questions facing an organisation include how best to prepare their managers to face the challenges of business. This raises a very basic question as to what exactly is needed by the managers to be able to perform effectively. These needs must to be understood by the MDTs in order to provide such learning experiences. The starting point for many organisations in understanding where the management training and skills 'gaps' are often described in a five step process training and development. This section uses the framework provided by Dessler et al. (2007) to explore the steps whereby the delivery of learning experiences can be implemented.

The five steps are described as follows:

- Needs Analysis;

- Instructional Design;

- Validation;

- Implementation; and

- Evaluation and Follow-up.

2.4.1 Needs Analysis

The starting point when considering a needs analysis comes from an 'itch' or concern by the organisation (or executives) that managerial performance is not up to expectations (Saks & Haccoun, 2007, p.89). It may well be that 'training' is not the answer, however, an initial investigation of the issues at play will determine the extent of subsequent training needs analysis (Harrison, 1988, p.147). Once the importance of the 'gap' in performance requirements is determined there is a phase whereby organisational stakeholders should be consulted (Hall, 2003). Once an understanding of the stakeholder's wishes is obtained there is frequently a process of analyzing the organisation (in terms of its strategy and competitive competencies), an analysis of the various tasks to be undertaken by managers, and an analysis of personal requirements. These three elements lead to various outcomes including: performance gaps, solutions for performance gaps, where training is needed, the types of management training required, who needs to be trained, how the training and development should be designed and delivered, and how such training and development should be evaluated (Leopold & Harris, 2009). An understanding of the performance gaps uncovered leads to next phase of designing the instructional types of training and development to fit the organisational and audience needs.

2.4.2 Instructional Design

Instructional design refers to the collection and formation of learning objectives, methods of delivery, and preparation of the most appropriate media to relate to the audience (Dessler et al., 2007). This research specifically examines executive or management education, training, development, and learning experiences (ETDL). Mintzberg (2004) indicates that there needs to be a base of managerial education (knowledge - content), specific managerial skills to perform the day-to-day management operations – (current practice), and future managerial development relative to the potential level of the manager. These aspects are located in the

changing market environment (context), and the future business goals. Therefore, managerial input needs to be aligned with these corporate requirements.

This is in line with the changing views of how learning should be applied. For example, Ornstein & Levine (2007) indicate that traditional approaches to learning involved "filling up" the management learner with knowledge (p. 57). This is often referred to as the banking model of education and training. In essence, this approach focuses on providing 'content' for the managers. Ornstein and Levine (2007) also indicate that there has been a significant shift over the past decade from a "transmission-oriented pedagogy" to one that involves people as active participants "in the construction of knowledge and meaning" (p. 53). The rationale behind this is due to a general agreement that managers' learn primarily "through practical experience on the job" (Mailick & Stumpf, 1998, p. 2, and Marsick, 1987).

The more traditional approach in applying managerial learning to its audience appears to be 'content' driven. However, it is well known that a manager does not operate in isolation, and gains experience from colleagues (fellow managers and challenging experiences). This has been well documented in the work by Revans (1980) in Action Learning, whereby groups of staff come together to work on live projects and share experiences. Revans' work has been supported by Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell (2001), and Ornstein & Levine (2007), as the groups of managers provide a catalyst for further knowledge generation, experiential sharing, and enhanced problem solving. In this regard the 'tacit knowledge' gained through group interaction provides further insights and 'intuition' gained from the experience within the group and the management facilitator.

The idea of building on the knowledge and experience of other managers is not new. In essence, management development programmes now emphasise the importance of combining content, context and facilitation. Yeo (2006) uses Schein's term of 'double loop learning' to provide a three-way approach to problem solving. He indicates that,

> Acting (investigation), thinking, (reflection), and learning (knowledge sharing)…level…seek integration of new knowledge through a constructivist approach by focusing on contextual boundaries rather than conceptual limitation. In addition, they encourage openness and disagreements by capitalizing on peer coaching to enhance their motivation to learn. (Yeo, 2006, p. 406)

The search for providing meaningful executive development initiatives is highly relevant to Canadian organisations, according to Dessler et al. (2007). Typical programmes include the use of in-house management development centres, action learning, case study methods, and a focus on building core competencies. This framework of building on basic managerial knowledge, and then developing conceptual and human skills is in line with the 'skills' approach portrayed by Northouse (2010, p.41). Northouse (2010) indicates that the development of skills in each area changes over time as the executive reaches more senior positions. Initially, development of technical managerial skills is important, with less importance given to conceptual skills. However, this situation is reversed during the executive's ascension in the organisational ranks.

The design and delivery of executive or management development can be either in-house (as in the use of development centres or by taking executives off the job and using techniques like behaviour modeling or role playing, and using seminars coupled with the use of college/university programmes. The programmes used must be relevant to each organisation in developing its staff. Therefore, they must be validated.

2.4.3   Validation

Validation refers to the process whereby a pilot study is conducted with a representative audience. In this way minor adjustments can be made to ensure programme effectiveness and relevance (Dessler et al., 2007). This is a crucial aspect in this research as a key feature of all training and development is whether such training or learning can be transferred to the workplace. This aspect is also addressed during the Evaluations and Follow-up phase explained below.

2.4.4   Implementation

Implementation refers to the actual delivery with specific reference to the skills and abilities of the MDT in delivering the particular programme or initiative (Dessler et al., 2007).

2.4.5   Evaluation and Follow-up

Evaluation and follow-up refers to how the programme or learning experience is assessed for relevance. Dessler et al. (2007) indicates that there are typically four ways to assess training and development programmes. These include: Reactions of the trainees to the training conducted (usually held immediately after the training), Learning that can be measured post-

training, Behaviour changes observed by trainee's supervisors, and Results that can be quantified by the either improved performance or financial results.

2.4.6   Summary and Potential Implications

This section addresses how MDTs apply their learning. It uses the framework of Instructional Design to indicate the process of delivery of learning. This process starts with a Needs Analysis to identify existing gaps in managerial performance. It then moves to the second phase, delivery, and the choice of method adopted. This can be viewed from a traditional perspective, whereby the trainee is an entity to be filled with knowledge by the trainer, or where the trainee interacts with the trainer and other trainees in a process of action learning to share real-life experiences. Other methods of delivery include the use of Development Centres and the teaching of managerial skills of a technical, human, and conceptual nature. The third phase involves validating the delivery method used, often by a pilot study. The fourth phase involves full implementation of the training initiatives. The final phase involves evaluation and gaining feedback on the training given and its relevance in the workplace.

The implications for this research come in the form of a comparison between the framework provided and delivery styles adopted by the MDTs in this research.

2.5   Conclusions and Identification of Potential Gaps in the Literature

The literature review targeted providing answers for the four specific research questions in this research. The research questions were:

1. Why do adult MDTs need to learn?
2. What do adult MDTs need to learn?
3. How do adult MDTs learn?
4. How do adult MDTs apply their learning in practice?

The literature reviewed provided a backdrop of answers against which the actual findings of this research can be subsequently compared; as depicted in Chapter 7.

In terms of why they need to learn, this research will identify whether the reasons portrayed in the literature for both corporate and individual survival and are the same as those in RB Ltd. This will include the use of managerial ETDL to make a strategic difference in

organisational effectiveness, the types of competency training provided, and the importance placed on MDT qualifications and experience.

In terms of what they need to learn, this research will be able to compare the educational qualifications, attributes/skills and learning experiences, and typology provided by Harrison (1988) with those currently held by the MDTs in this study.

In terms of how they learn, the research will compare the expectations of the organisation, the preferred learning styles of the MDTs and the preferred method of acquiring differing forms of learning; whether it be academic, practical, experiential, or some form of combination.

In terms of how learning is applied in practice, the research will be able to compare the framework provided in Instructional Design and delivery styles adopted by the MDTs in this research.

The literature provides an estimate of what may be happening in terms of managerial learning and its application, but only by asking the MDTs will a clearer, factual account be revealed.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

This chapter revisits the research aims and questions and explains the research design including case study strategies and the researcher's stance. The preparation, sampling and selection of participants aim to contextualise the research. It also expounds on the grounded theory (GT) approach and explains why the particular set of procedures used by Strauss & Corbin (1998) was selected. Examples are also provided to demonstrate the directional development of this research. The remainder of the chapter examines practical issues relating to trustworthiness, access to participants and documentation, ethics, methodological aspects, and concludes with a brief overview of the developed typology. This chapter is divided into eight sections:

3.1   The Research Aims and Questions;

3.2   Research Design;

3.3   Preparation, Sampling, and Selection of Participants;

3.4   Using Grounded Theory;

3.5   Data Collection Methods and the Interview Process;

3.6   Data Analysis;

3.7   Achieving Trustworthiness;

3.8   Conclusions.

3.1   The Research Aims and Questions

This research aims to develop a theory about how a group of MDT professionals, working for a multinational corporation in Hong Kong, manage their own learning and apply that learning in practice. In order to achieve this aim the research has three goals:

1. To determine how MDT professionals 'manage' their learning.
2. To determine how these MDT professionals apply that learning in their everyday working role.
3. To develop a theory of MDT learning and application by identifying gaps between theoretical models of the MDTs role and the information gathered from research participants.

By conducting research into a particular organisation, focusing on this one case study and asking specific research questions, it was believed that a typology could be developed to potentially explain management trainer learning and application characteristics. The specific research questions formulated were:

1. Why do adult MDTs need to learn?
2. What do adult MDTs need to learn?
3. How do adult MDTs learn?
4. How do adult MDTs apply their learning in practice?

The selection of the organization had been determined, and the ten prospective participants (MDTs) were chosen from a group of twenty. The ten participants comprised the core team providing management training and development in RB Ltd and were an important component of the Leadership Development Plan. Consequently, an appropriate research design was formulated.

3.2   Research Design

Several factors influenced the research design. The initial decisions were heavily swayed by the particular area of interest (management learning), access to the organisation (and MDTs), and long standing professional relationship with the Group – over 20 years. Being an 'insider researcher', obtaining access to a small group of 10 management trainers working within a Department that provided management development and training for executives in a large multi-national organisation based in Hong Kong, bestowed both privileges and pitfalls; issues that will be discussed later.

The intention was to study one organisation in detail, and gain a deep understanding of how a group of MDTs in that organization manage and apply their learning. According to Gillham (2000) a 'case' can be an individual or group (such as the MDTs in this study). A 'case study' is one which investigates in order to answer specific research questions, and that provides 'boundaries that are placed in context' (p.1). An advantage of using a case study is that it allows the researcher the opportunity to address the numerous factors interacting within a unit of analysis – in this the organisation under study (Thomas, 2003).

The choice of a case study approach could be described as more a strategy than a method, but was deemed appropriate for this research (Punch, 2005, p. 144). A case study of this nature is what Stake terms (1994) an intrinsic case study, used "because the researcher wants a better understanding of this particular case." Given access to the multinational organisation, and since this type of research had not been conducted previously in RB Ltd provided an excellent opportunity to address the research questions posed within this bounded case.

In selecting a specific topic area Dey (1999, p. 3) advises beginning with a general (substantive) practical problem that requires an answer, as this then clarifies what and where to study. Vaus (2001, p. 1) builds on this concept by suggesting that the research design is improved after clarifying the research question. In other words, the research must be defined as either descriptive or explanatory research. This current research can be described as explanatory because the proposal is to, "facilitate in-depth understanding . . . the researcher might engage in intensive one-to-one interviewing . . . that allows the researcher to 'walk a mile' in the research subjects' shoes," producing qualitative data, which would, "best capture the research subjects' genuine experiences and understanding" (Ruane, 2005, p. 12).

In determining the nature of the research and investigation, Burrell and Morgan (1979) indicate that researchers will be affected by their methods for uncovering information, either from adopting the position that knowledge is absolute, objective and physical, or, relative, subjective and intangible. In this way, the researcher tends to adopt either a position in the camps of positivism or interpretivism. In assisting in making my decision, the researcher was mindful of Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1997, p. 33) remark that a researcher should be aware of their own background and basic beliefs. He then provides a very useful framework to determine whether a positivistic or interpretivistic approach should be considered. The suggested framework critically considers the researcher's involvement, the size of the sample, the purpose to test or generate theory, the methods of experimental design or fieldwork, and the objective to verify or falsify existing information. For this purpose, the respondents were perceived as 'participants' with a voice of their own (Coleman & Briggs, 2002, p. 8) rather than as generalized 'objects'. In this regard, the interviewees were approached as participants in this research (Siedman, 1998, p. 8).

Additionally, this research could be labeled as 'management research' of an educational nature where the participants represent a small and dedicated department that educates

individuals to train and develop their abilities as employees. Consequently, the search for a suitable approach involved getting close to the participants and gaining an understanding of their world. In this regard, Coleman & Briggs' (2002) discussion the role of the interpretivist were informative; "the core task is to view research participants as research subjects and to explore 'meaning' of events and phenomena from the subjects' perspective" (p. 122). Similarly, given that there is a general sentiment that in positivism, quantitative methods are used, and that in interpretivism, qualitative methods are used (although this is by no means exclusively the case), the researcher was strongly influenced to adopt an interpretivistic approach (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2002).

Qualitative research methods involve several 'approaches' or 'strategies' that can be adopted. Punch (2005) describes case studies, ethnographies and grounded theory, and iterates that, "There will often be an overlap between these three: any particular qualitative study will not necessarily be one thing or the other" (p. 142). He proceeds to mention that the case study approach can be termed more strategic than methodological. Similarly, the study of one specific group of dedicated individuals in this research favours the strategic case study approach that Punch describes. According to Lapan & Quartaroli (2009), the use of a case study with the goal of 'theory building' through grounded theory appears to be highly complimentary (p. 167). Therefore, the use of a case study integrating a grounded theory approach appears to be compatible with the aims in this specific research.

The final factor in selecting a preferred approach derived from the goal to generate a theory that would "close the gap between theory and research" by trying an alternative approach to produce a theory from data, rather than starting with a theory and trying to prove or disprove it (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 6). In this way, this research aims to reveal current gaps between existing theory and the actual practice discovered in this research. If the theory is built or developed from empirical data that accurately reflects what happens in practice, then it stands to reason that there should be no gap between theory and practice. Each would inform the other.

The researcher in this study felt an acknowledgment of personal orientation towards research methods should be reflected in the choice made (Gall et al., 2002). In examining approaches that appeared to fit with and address the research questions posed, constructivism, symbolic

interactionism and grounded theory seemed highly appropriate and suitable to achieve the goals, and personal interest.

The constructivist view is largely influenced by the belief that learning is a social process, and that we learn predominantly through our interaction with others (Foley, 2004, p. 81). Similarly, social constructivists feel that both culture and context have a major influence on the way we interpret the world, and the way we formulate knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987; and Gergen, 2001). This research involved gaining an understanding of the how the participants viewed the way they learnt and used that learning in practice. The emphasis would be placed on asking them to interpret the way they encountered experiences. Additionally, the centrality of meaning and its interpretation by the participants is what Blumer (1969, p. 3) describes as the methodological position of symbolic interactionism. This position influenced both Glaser & Strauss in their orientation towards grounded theory (Goulding, 2002, p.3).

The process of formulating a research design was instructive and with a preference to address the problem with an interpretive approach and using extensive (in-depth) interviews as the main source of data collection. Subsequently, research strategy incorporated specific case studies and a grounded theory approach.

The potential for role conflict and ambiguity in the research became a primary concern because this research stance could be described as an 'insider researcher'; this is because the researcher worked for RB Ltd on a consultancy basis. This position provides advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include having an understanding of the organisation, its culture, polices and practices, as well as access to documentation and personnel (Coghlan, 2005). Contrastingly, disadvantages include ethical issues, confidentiality and potential personal bias (Homan, 1991). The scene was set during the preliminary interview with RB Ltd's Group Human Resources Manager, *RB*, during which informal meetings were agreed to enable subsequent interviews to take place. During the preliminary meeting, the role as a social scientist engaged in applied research was described and agreed, with a potential goal being to improve work practices (Aguinis & Henle, 2002). To ensure that the MDTs fully understood it was their views that were being sought, each participant was informed about the purposes and structure of this research at the start of each interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.3   Preparation, Sampling and Selection of Participants

In preparing for this research, RB Ltd had already been identified as a prime case study subject and approval to conduct interviews obtained from the company's Group Human Resources Manager. RB Ltd is a multi-national Asian based conglomerate that has a diverse range of business companies operating on a global basis. These subsidiary businesses include companies that are leaders in various industries including engineering and construction, transport services, motor trading, property, retailing, restaurants, hotels, and insurance broking. RB Ltd currently employs around 260,000 people worldwide. In the Executive Development Department (EDD) there are 10 core management trainers who have specific responsibility for particular programmes or events, delivered at various times throughout the year. However, any amendments or changes that are required are usually channeled through the Head of Executive Development, reviewed, frequently trialed, and then delivered. Consequently, the timings of the interviews in this research were very much determined by course delivery timings and the availability of the participants. It was fortunate that all 10 were willing participants. This assisted in the logistical arrangements and aided the review of relevant documentation (Flick, 2006, p. 118).

The sampling had been determined by studying, in-depth, ten of the key group of twenty management trainers (some internal and other external consultants). In essence, these ten provided a sound case study to research (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 27), because they were the key group of MDTs involved in the Leadership Development Plan. As the interviews progressed, it was evident that these MDTs were the key personnel and became the target sample.

The determination and direction of the sampling was conducted in line with 'theoretical sampling' as illustrated by Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 45), and controlled by the emerging theory. A major determinant in the direction of interview questioning arose after the preliminary and pilot interviews, when attention focused on existing core values and programmes, and the individual profiles of the management trainers.

3.4   Using Grounded Theory

This section describes grounded theory as a research approach, indicates how it has developed when used in management research, and contains an overview of the research processes described by Strauss & Corbin (1998).

One of the reasons for using grounded theory is when "we have no satisfactory theory on the topic, and we do not understand enough about it to begin theorising" (Punch, 2005, p. 159). As a consequence, the researcher does not draw on existing data, rather, they draw on data collected and are constantly comparing and contrasting leading to further areas of exploration, thereby leading to "the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analysed in social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2).

Gall et al. (2002) defines grounded theory as, "An approach to theory development that involves deriving constructs directly from data that the researcher has collected rather than from drawing on existing theory" (p. 626). However, whilst grounded theory has become a widely accepted research approach, there is still some dispute as to exactly which version the researcher should follow. Goulding (2002) cites how some professions, such as nursing, require researchers to state which publication they are following, that is, "the original 1967 Glaser & Strauss version, the 1990 Strauss & Corbin rendition, or the 1978 or 1992 Glaser interpretation" (p. 47). The main differences between these versions of grounded theory involve a coding paradigm and the timing of use of literature in the topic area. Strauss & Corbin (2008) acknowledge that new ways of conducting research are evolving but that her new third edition still "presents a set of analytic techniques that can be used to make sense out of masses of qualitative data" (p. ix-x).

Goulding (2002) advises the researcher to be aware of the differences and to choose whichever method best suits the researcher's personality, research needs, and preferred methodological approach. With these regards, the framework and coding procedures offered by Strauss & Corbin (1998) provide a way of scaffolding information rather than allowing a virtually free 'emergence' of information (as Glaser would prefer). In addition, the use of a structure was preferred for the type of management research to be conducted in this study.

3.4.1   Grounded Theory in Management Research

It was evident from a review of the literature on the topic that the approach has been used extensively in management research. Marshall & Rossman (1989) state that, "grounded theory is important to management scientists because of its (a) broad applicability to many organisational issues and (b) sheer prevalence" (p. 38). Such an approach was cited as being used by Collins (2001) in his book *Good to Great*, where he explains how he developed concepts directly from the data, with the intention to, "build a theory from the ground up,

derived from the evidence" (p. 9). In addition, Locke (2001, p. 96) cites Partington (2000) who also supports the usefulness of grounded theory in providing the bridge between theory and practice, especially for managers wishing to implement organisational change initiatives – of which management development and training initiatives can frequently form a crucial part (Thorne & Machray, 2000, p. 146).

The possibility of providing a bridge between theory and practice was one of the fundamental aims of this particular research and one of the reasons that the research was allowed to be conducted with RB Ltd. In particular, RB Ltd was concerned with becoming stifled by old paradigms and management practices. Locke (2001) cited below, captures the spirit of potential complacency and the need to be proactive when addressing managerial functions and learning initiatives - especially in an ever changing global business environment (Salazar, 1995, p.10). According to Locke (2001):

> It has been some 30 years since Mintzberg (1973) conducted his landmark studies of managerial work. Since that time, our work organisations have been subject to several waves of change. Has the function of management shifted in any way? Is it time to revisit our understanding of the management function in a way that would allow us to conceptualise it differently, to identify those aspects of management that might have been left behind, to reinterpret aspects of the work that have changed, and to capture new areas of managerial attention and concern (p. 98).

In the researcher's view, and in line with the comments from Salazar above, managerial attention should now be directed, more than in the past, to ways of improving management learning and application methods. This alone provides a compelling justification for conducting this research specifically using an approach that is used in management practice. The next section considers the specific grounded theory approach used, namely the Strauss & Corbin (1998) model.

3.4.2   *Overview of the Strauss & Corbin (1998) Grounded Theory Model*
Strauss & Corbin's (1998) grounded theory version was selected for this research as most suitable to my personal background and interests, and for its particular applicability to the situation being researched. The best way to understand the situation facing the MDTs was by use of in-depth individual interviews and reference to corporate documentation. A

preliminary interview and four pilot interviews were conducted to provide initial areas of interest, and subsequent questions were designed. The interview data were analysed in close detail, open coded and compared. More categories were produced as further data were collected and compared. Additionally, a personal log was kept and memos prepared detailing the analysis and capturing the thought processes. The relationship between codes and categories was made in the form of axial codes (to indicate relationship between the codes), and the subsequent development of a selective code. Theoretical sampling techniques were used to inform the research and provide direction for further enquiry. The use of literature assisted in providing further questions during initial theoretical sampling stages and to explain concepts that the participants used (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 51). Once no new insights were obtained, and it was felt that the categories were 'saturated,' the research was concluded. The process used in each phase, and examples, are described in detail in the next section.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Interview Process

This section describes the data collection methods and interview process used in this research. It indicates the types of documentation that were examined, and provides examples from both the personal learning log and memos from the research process.

3.5.1   *Data Collection Methods Used*

In essence, the data were collected from the 10 participants using individual in-depth interviews, and examination of corporate documents including policy statements, management development and training course outlines and selected feedback forms. The interviews commenced with a preliminary interview with the Group Human Resources Manager and four pilot interviews. These initial interviews provided an opportunity to explore the research questions from a general perspective and informed the development of subsequent structured interviews.

The pilot interviews focused on how the participants personally handled the learning process, and the problems encountered in their professional learning (examples are given in section 3.5.2). As this research relied heavily on in-depth interviews, great care was taken to allow the participants latitude to express their thoughts and feelings, and the opportunity of explaining their points of view in detail. To cross check participant responses, management

training and development documentation and feedback forms were provided (Silverman, 2005).

Each participant was informed about the interview process before the interview commenced. This was felt to be good practice and in line with Spradley's (1979) details of interviewing techniques. In addition, it was requested that several interviews be conducted over time to allow for further in-depth enquiry (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 105). The structure of the questions was initially free ranging with open-ended questions, but later became more focused and probing (Ruane, 2005, p. 131).

The trail of questions for each participant enabled comparative questions to be asked. In many instances these questions involved asking the participants to give reasons driving their own learning and how their learning had been generated. This enabled the researcher to then compare the data. They were then asked to give instances of personal learning that had been personally successful and enjoyable and instances where they were less so. To add depth and dimensions to the data (and as part of the research questions), probing questions were used. The linking of both personal and professional education, training, development, and learning was revealing as it produced areas of considerable overlap, especially in terms of how they preferred to deliver subsequent training and development. The use of theoretical comparisons assisted the theoretical sampling as it provided direction for data exploration.

3.5.2 The Interview Process

The interviews were conducted in three phases. There were a total of 23 interviews with each participant being interviewed either two or three times. In the first phase were the preliminary plus four pilot interviews. The second phase consisted of 12 interviews. The final phase consisted of six interviews and examined questions that still needed exploration, and to ensure that the categories that developed were 'saturated'. A digital voice recorder was used for each interview. These interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes each. There was a total of 1288 recorded minutes of interviews. The three phases are discussed in greater detail below.

The preliminary interview, with the Group Human Resources Manager - was used to gain approvals to conduct the subsequent interviews, to obtain an understanding of how the MDTs addressed training and development 'gaps', and to set the scene for subsequent interviews.

RB, the Group HR Manager explained how he believed the MDTs approached gaps in their own knowledge and, as a result, organisational training and development gaps. At this stage, the questions related to adult learning and continuous improvement. These questions were adapted as the interviews progressed.

> The way they understand themselves is by understanding what others need, first. Because, and this is done through all various processes ranging from performance appraisals, to Development Centres, to discussions with managers. Because, as they begin to establish what other managers need, they then begin to understand what gaps they have in their capabilities to deliver that. (RB)

This interview highlighted potential individual and corporate learning gaps, and indicated the documentation and environments that were used to record such deficiencies. From an individual (MDT) perspective it raised the question as to how, through their role, they 'managed' their own learning, and the process by which they delivered an appropriate form of learning experience.

The remaining four pilot interviews in phase one also served to refine the topic area and prepare meaningful questions and direction for subsequent interviews. These early interviews were unstructured and had six broad questions as listed below:

- As a management trainer, how do you manage your own learning?
- In your current role what do you believe is important for you to learn?
- How do you go about learning what is important?
- What do you actually do in order to learn?
- What hinders you in the learning process, and what assists you? and,
- How do you apply your learning in your current role?

These initial interviews produced some early findings, such as common learning points that surface fairly quickly. For example, there appears to be a potential learning loop that the management trainers generally undertake in their role. This starts with a potentially identifiable educational/knowledge/skills/experience gap, a design phase, implementation/delivery, and then a review. Secondly, these interviews demonstrated that the background of the participants and their role within the organisation determines what they

need to learn, and how that learning should be applied. This initial interview phase generated a total of 166 memos and 12 theoretical memos. Examples of two theoretical memos (summarised with bullet points) are given at Appendix F. The first indicates the common references to the 'gaps' that need to be addressed, and the second indicates how informational relevance is translated between management development trainers and trainees. The cyclical nature of an MDTs role is mentioned at the last bullet point of the second memo, and relates to the sequence of individual learning, design and application, feedback and measurement, and a connects back to the MDTs individual learning. *RB* describes this process during the preliminary interview as 'Learning Status', 'Diagnosis of 'gap'', 'addressing the gap', 'feedback', and a return to the learning status.

Initial learning points regarding questioning came from the interview process. Firstly, the phrasing of questions needed to be carefully considered. For example, when asking participants how they managed their learning, there was always a long pause. It appeared that a context was needed to facilitate a response. In this regard, it was found that linking the question to a particular programme or upcoming programme provided the context for an answer. Secondly, it became apparent that transcription takes a huge amount of time, as does the subsequent analysis, and memo writing. Thirdly, it appeared beneficial to question a participant immediately before and then immediately after the delivery of a particular programme or event. This enabled learning prior to and learning after the event to be compared. Fourthly, it confirmed that the use of ongoing in-depth interviews and review of documentation would be the most realistic means of conducting the research. Whilst the use of participant learning logs and interview groups were considered, many of the participants are often based in different parts of the globe, as are some of the learning events, making the request impractical to supervise. Fifthly, the focus of the study was on the individual, each of whom had different learning opportunities and experiences, personally and professionally. However, what these MDTs have in common is that, when they apply learning experiences, these learning experiences must fit with the organisational values and core competencies. This is because organisational values and core competencies provide the framework for executive development within the company. This common value became evident in the course of the interviews.

In phase two, 12 interviews were conducted between March 2005 and September 2005. Two of the interviewees had already been interviewed once, whilst the subsequent 10 interviews

were with five new interviewees. The first of the interviews in this round was conducted with RB, the Head of Human Resources. Approval was gained for a continuation of the research and acceptance of the change in the focus of the research. The interview provided direction for subsequent interviews. An extract from my Personal Log (WJT = Researcher) states:

> RB's interview was useful in many ways. By focusing on one intervention, the DDI, enabled me to consider issues like the corporate reason for the intervention, the formulation of objectives, and how it is reviewed. Focusing on a particular programme for each interviewee may be a sound approach, especially in terms of being able to follow-up and RB's comment about 'having to re-invent ourselves'. This links with both continuous improvement and on-going learning and application techniques for all MDTs" (Dated 26.03.2005, WJT).

The research question was refined to state, *"How do Management Trainers manage their own learning and apply that learning in the workplace?"* To address this question the participants were told that the questions would fall into three categories. Firstly, how they manage their own learning. Secondly, how they use that learning when designing and developing learning programmes. Thirdly, how they apply that learning in the workplace in their role as a trainer. The participants then selected a programme or intervention that they had specific responsibility for, or were actively involved in all stages of design, delivery and review. These programmes were selected from the *Leadership Development Plan 2005/2006* and are outlined in Chapter 1 of this report. (NB. There is virtually no change in the core programmes and initiatives in the *Leadership Development Plan for 2010.)*

The researcher was constantly aware of striking, "a balance between asking significant questions and forcing a response" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 317). As a consequence, the researcher's style, the questions asked and the pace, were carefully considered. Similarly, when constantly comparing the data, caution was given to ensure theoretical sensitivity and not to force data into preconceived categories (Glaser, 1978). For category development, it was necessary to continually review earlier categories (and related data) to ensure they were representative of what was being described. This proved to be a crucial aspect as earlier categories that were framed around learning drivers relating to past, present, future and personal issues needed to be completely reorganized by interview 12. At this stage it was evident that three major categories had surfaced: addressing the 'gaps' in their own learning

that were required by the organisation; managing their 'role' within the organisation; and linking the learning they undertook to how they applied it in practice. By the end of interview 17 it was apparent that the core category was how each management trainer 'translated the relevance' of what they learned into practice. It was at this stage that it was possible to provide a provisional typology to categorise each of the management trainers, in terms of their learning and application approaches as the Academic-Educator (A-E), the Conceptualiser- Facilitator (C-F), and the Practitioner-Guide (P-G).

In the third phase, six interviews, with different MDTs each time, were conducted between October 2005 and November 2005, and were used to follow-up on the extensive number of memos completed, and to see if further categories could be developed. At the final interview (the 23rd) it was concluded that no new categories, nor meaningful data, were being collected. Consequently, it was felt that saturation point had been reached. Therefore further interviewing was deemed unnecessary.

3.6   Data Analysis

This section examines how the data were analysed in terms of the basic techniques used, how the data were coded and categorised, and how the emerging theory developed.

3.6.1   Basic Techniques

The basic techniques used in the analysis of the data involved asking questions, making theoretical comparisons, theoretical sampling, and memo writing. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. After transcription they were analysed and coded. An un-coded version was sent to the participant within several days to ascertain if it was an accurate account of the interview. The transcription represented the 'reality' presented by the participants and, where possible', in vivo codes were used to code the interview data (Flick, 2006, p. 83; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105).

The early questions in initial interviews focused on general topics. This quickly led to more specific questions that enabled the researcher to better understand participants' meanings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 77). These prompts led to more theoretical questions which examined the process behind how the management trainers learned. An example of a memo created for one of the participants (*SR)* is given in the Figure 3.1 below. This memo led to further questions of other MDTs on the importance of learning from the experience of others,

and how it could be shared. The format of the memo shows the comments from the interviewee, with "My Thoughts' given immediately afterwards.

These types of questions were particularly important when it came to focusing on a particular learning programme or intervention as it immediately gave the questions a "practical and structural nature" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 77). This structure provided both a guide to subsequent questions, and enabled an audit trail for review.

Figure 3.1   Example of a Theoretical Memo: Data Analysis

SR.1.7.2005

Most of my learning has been related to the job. I have learnt it from other people. My participants provide me with my greatest source of learning. They provide me with that in rich varieties because they change every time I teach. SR:

Researcher's thoughts:

Properties:

- This is an interesting variation on what has been said by other MDTs.
  Context:

- When asking the question, How do you learn?" the other respondents have given a variety of answers including books, theories, other consultants, the internet, etc., However, SR has clearly indicated his greatest source is the participants.

- A relevant question would be to ask how this has occurred. Other respondents indicate examining the 'gap' and then trying to fill it, but SR appears to learn about the 'gap' as he goes. This is a presumption here, as finance is a fairly technical subject. However, it would appear that participants changing every time means SR has to be constantly providing scenarios that fit their needs. *(WJT)*

The coding techniques used followed those given by Strauss & Corbin (1998). They were 'open coding', 'axial coding', and 'selective coding'. In 'open coding' the concern was to generate categories. In axial coding the concern was to systematically develop and relate the categories. In the selective coding the integration and refinement of the theory was conducted. In each of the coding phases memos were generated to capture the essence of each aspect. An example of the coding is shown in Appendix B, G and H. Appendix G and

Appendix H demonstrate open coding in the way roles are managed, and how translation of relevance is a crucial element.

It should be stated that the three forms of coding, open, axial, and selective are not necessarily done in sequence. They are likely to overlap and be performed concurrently (Punch, 2005). It can be seen from the examples above that 'open' coding fractures or 'opens' the data thereby providing substantive or conceptual codes. In axial coding theoretical codes are determined that connect these categories (Denzin, 1989) The term 'axial' is meant to present the idea of an axis which connects categories in open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 141).

In order to understand the dynamic nature of events, Strauss & Corbin (1998, p. 127) suggest the researcher examine both structure and process. To assist in this regards they offer a perspective referred to as 'the paradigm'. The paradigm model offers an approach to connect the phenomenon with causal conditions (which give rise to the phenomenon), intervening conditions (that which might mitigate or impact the causal conditions), and contextual conditions (those which set the circumstances to which a 'person' may respond. An example of an axial coding memo is given in Figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.2   Example of an Axial Coding Memo – Understanding Learning Needs

Causal Condition

       Participants had difficulty explaining/defining learning needs out of context.

Phenomenon

       Participants were asked what influenced their own learning needs.

Properties of the Problem and Specific dimensions

       Clarification/Detail required.

       Personal learningType (Academic – Workplace).

       Professional Learning Depth.

       Corporate Learning Level.

       Position in the OrganisationInternal vs. External (or both).

Context for the problem

       This aspect was clarified early in the first series of interviews. It opened a number of

       related questions that required placing the question in context, for example, what

influenced them to learn outside their current band of knowledge and skills that they needed both personally and as a result of working with RB Ltd?

Intervening conditions

The level of prior learning, as well as the desire to gain further qualifications, was a major factor. In addition, some felt that the only further learning worth gaining was from experience on the job or working with colleagues and staff, whereas others were set on gaining their PhD. However, all had an understanding that most of the organisational drivers came from appreciating the 'gaps' in current organisational knowledge – whatever the level.

In 'selective' coding, the process of integrating and refining categories is undertaken (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). It builds on the propositions developed from axial coding. The first step in the integration process is deciding on a central or core category. This core category represents the main theme of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). One of the methods used to assist in the identification of the core category is the writing of the storyline. In this research the storyline was written after a review of the hand sorted memos. The storyline was written and forms the basis of Chapter 4, demonstrating how the categories became integrated (Denzin, 1989).

3.7   Achieving Trustworthiness

The issue of trustworthiness is a major concern in qualitative research. Whereas Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate that trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability are criteria, Flick (2005) foregrounds trustworthiness as the main issue.

The suggestion is that getting the participants to check the interview data, then recording any changes needing to be made, and using an auditing technique to ensure the findings are grounded in the data, are all sound techniques in supporting the quality and rigour of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Flick, 2005; Huberman & Miles, 1998). In this research the participants checked the transcripts and very few changes needed to be made. Constant referral to previous interview transcripts allowed comparisons to be made of subsequent data from interviews.

3.7.1   Participant Checks

The participants were given full transcripts of the interviews within a few days of it being written (un-coded), and given the opportunity to correct, add, or alter anything they wished. This was in done in order to build both trust and to ensure the integrity of the data. Occasionally, the participants asked for some comments to be removed, and at other times they made additional comments to clarify their intention. An example of a typical request is taken from *JDG* during her first interview (Code: JDG: 24.03:2005), and shown in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3 Example of an Interview Request for Comments to be Extracted

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WJT: Last question. Is there anything you would like to add, amend, reflect on, question or say, as a result of this interview?

JDG: Yes. Perhaps my earlier reference to an individual on the Executive Development Programme. Can you not type it in?

W: Certainly.

Consequently, the review of the data by the participants and follow-up questions allowed the means to generate more probing questions, to develop further insight and direction that could potentially provide support for the data.

3.7.2   Triangulation

Support for the data was generated by theoretical sampling emanating from subsequent interviews, the related documentation, trainee evaluation forms, and recording of researcher thoughts in a personal journal. It was common for a participant to refer to a particular programme or intervention and describe the nuances relating to its delivery. This information could be checked with other MDTs involved in the same learning exercise. In this way the theoretical sampling was cumulative (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 203).This comes close to what Silverman refers to as combining 'multiple methods' (Silverman, 2005, p. 121), and what Flick (2006, p. 389) describes as 'data triangulation". Flick quotes Denzin (1989) and then Glaser & Strauss (1967) in terms of using triangulation by studying persons at different times on the same phenomena and by using theoretical sampling (exploring the emerging concepts).

The confirmation of transcripts was usually done within three days of each interview, and subsequent interviews explored concepts previously mentioned in the earlier round of interviewing. For example, the learning and application used by the individual MDTs depended on the type of training, development, or learning required by the particular Leadership Development programme being delivered. In instances where knowledge or skills were required to be taught for the current job, the term 'training' was often used. Contrastingly, when the event was described as an 'intervention', the management trainer frequently provided no input; rather, they facilitated the learning from the group and its interaction with the specific learning event. In this regard, there was a distinct use of 'pedagogical' or 'andragogical' methods depending on the learning outcomes required. These learning outcomes were described in the course documentation, and gave validity to the description offered by the individual management trainers.

3.7.3   Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an understanding by the researcher of their impact on the research situation and of their role in such a setting. Bloor & Wood (2006) state that a distinctive feature of reflexivity is that, "the research interview is a species of conversation, and that the interviewer is not a neutral information-gatherer, but rather is an active co-participant with the interviewee in the social construction of the research data" (p. 146). By acknowledging this position and appreciating that the researcher was part of the research and affecting its direction, the researcher was reminded to constantly reflect on potential influence in the process. Consequently, extensive notes were made both as memos and in a personal learning log (research diary) throughout the research process and being particularly mindful that personal reflections, observations and feelings could become, "data in their own right" (Flick, 2006, p. 16).

The process of personal reflection was continual throughout the entire doctoral study. The use of a personal log could be termed as an 'analytical tool', according to Strauss & Corbin (1998), as it assists the researcher in making comparisons and provides direction for further questioning during the coding process (p. 87). During the coding phase a significant number of memos were generated, however, these were constructed in bullet form and meant to capture the spirit of the MDT's responses (see 3.6.1. above). The personal log was maintained to provide an ongoing storyline of the emerging theory and typology, coupled with and building on the related corporate documentation - as it became relevant. It can be

said that the personal log provided an ongoing account of MDT's perspectives with insights as to their learning <u>and</u> application preferences co-constructed by this researcher.

An example of personal reflection and its potential influence can be seen from the following extract from the personal learning log:

> The focus on specific programmes has been interesting. I've just interviewed LK. Essentially, he has been involved in the DDI and BEI. What is striking is that the focus is on providing the learning context rather that the content. (WJT)

This particular reflection warranted a further examination of the course material and the espoused objectives and learning outcomes. These were then compared with responses from the participants as to the focus of specific programmes or interventions, and made reference to the Leadership Development Plan (documentation) critical.

Researchers that are mindful of their potential influence in a research setting make efforts to separate participants' voice and data from the researcher's interpretation. Being aware of one's own biases is helpful, but doing something about it can be quite another (Kuhn, 1996). This is one reason why the interviews were held at the interviewee's preferred location, and conducted in a one-on-one fashion.

3.7.4   *Generalisability of Findings*

It must be stated that the aim of this research was not to generalize its findings according to other organizations and management trainers. Rather, the aim was to establish a typology of management trainers and developers based on characteristics that relate to how they manage their own learning <u>and</u> apply that learning in practice. This research involved studying ten MDTs in one particular case organization and explored, in-depth, the beliefs and perspectives given by these individuals. The intention was not to provide any form of external validation by extrapolating the findings from this small group to a larger audience (Ruane, 2005). However, the findings may be used as the basis for other researchers to draw conclusions about how management trainers manage <u>and</u> apply their own learning within their specific roles and contexts. In this regard, there may be some transferability, where, for example, the organisational culture and context is similar to those in this research case.

3.7.5   Access to Participants and Documents

Access to interview participants was granted by the Head of Department following a preliminary interview conducted in July 2004. This set the scene for further interviews and documentary access over the following 18 months. It was determined that some of the programmes or interventions were conducted at a set time during the year, whereas others were conducted throughout the year. For example, one of the more senior programmes was actually spaced over a three- month time frame. On other occasions, it was evident that a particular event, like a Development Centre activity (which comprises three days of assessment and developmental activities) was being reviewed; in terms of its current relevance, the way it was conducted, and the particular core competencies to be used.

Therefore, the timing of conducting the interviews was often determined by the scheduled learning activities and experiences within the organization. Access to Course Evaluation Forms was useful when it came to cross-checking the practical relevance of programmes/initiatives from the trainees. The specific forms examined were those relating to the courses or initiatives described in the annual Leadership Development Plan – a 19 page document used in the subsequent interviewing of MDT's in this research.

3.7.6   Ethical Issues

In essence, ethics are guidelines for good professional practice (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 64). As a fellow colleague and friend of most of the participants, the researcher was mindful of both the time being taken and the sometimes sensitive position in which he was placing the interviewees. In several instances the participants asked for certain comments to be amended or removed. This was respected and comments were immediately amended. In addition, to protect the anonymity of the participants, it was agreed that only the participants' initials would be used.

This research was not sponsored and therefore funding issues did not present an issue. In addition, as a Fellow of both the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the Chartered Management Institute in the UK, the researcher is bound by certain codes of professional practice.

It should be stated that a request from the Head of Department was that a pseudonym be used to represent the organisation and only initials be used for the MDTs in this research.

Consequently, RB Ltd was coined. In addition, prior to the interviews, all the participants agreed to take part in the research. In regard to the use of material described in this research *RB* gave permission to use it. These comments indicate the genuine desire of RB Ltd to pursue continuous learning practices and the desire to sustain a competitive edge through their Management (Executive) Leadership Development programmes.

3.8 Conclusions

This chapter started by reiterating the aims and research questions. The research design was influenced by the researcher's own area of interest – management learning, and involved accessing a core group of management development trainers (MDTs) in a large multi-national organization based in Hong Kong. This provided an opportunity to study a case organisation, in depth, to build a theory about how MDTs manage and apply their own learning.

In determining the approach it was felt that using a case study strategy coupled with a grounded theory approach would best facilitate theory development; which was the aim of the research (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009). Grounded theory has been used extensively in management research, although there are several variations available for use. It was felt that the structure provided by Strauss & Corbin (1998), best matched this researcher's background and interests, and comfort zone.

The date collection methods made extensive use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, corporate documentation, and the researcher's personal memos and logs. There were a total of 10 core participants, and 23 interviews conducted. Most participants were interviewed either twice or three times. To analyse the data, all the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The data were then coded for initial category formation, and subsequent categories developed as axial coding revealed the relationships between categories. The categories were developed until saturation was attained and no further meaningful data obtained. In the next chapter an overview of the theory of the 'Transference of Relevance' is explained before presenting the actual research Findings.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEORY OF TRANSFERENCE OF RELEVANCE

</div>

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the theory of 'transference of relevance', which emerged after exhaustive rounds of data collection, analysis and comparison. The chapter has been inserted early as it presents the final story line, selective coding, and the core category. Presenting this overview early will give the reader a clearer perspective of the conceptual details and data interpretation described in the following chapters. It should be reiterated that the aim of this study is to develop a theory of how a group of MDT professionals, working for a multi-national organisation in Hong Kong manage their own learning and apply that learning in practice. Therefore, the main research question in this study is:

How do Management Development Trainers manage their own learning, <u>and</u> apply that learning in practice?

The research examines how this group of MDTs manages their own learning and how it will be applied in their working role. A specific goal includes developing a theory to identify the gaps between theoretical models of management learning and development, and their practical application; within the context of this research.

The theory is in three main parts. The first is the storyline, placing the theory into perspective. The second outlines the categories of learning and application approaches and their related sub-categories. The third gives an overview of the typology of MDTs in this research.

4.1   The Storyline of Transference of Relevance

Researching how MDTs manage their own learning <u>and</u> apply the learning in the workplace found that three distinct types emerged. There were some overlapping roles that MDTs played; three distinct types emerged from the extensive interviews conducted with the 10 core MDTs in RB Ltd. The data were supported by the literature review, bio-data obtained from the MDTs, and feedback given by trainees on Evaluation Forms (post course attendance).

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The categories that formed were generated through a rigorous process of systematic coding (open coding, axial coding, and selective coding) commonly used in grounded theory research. The initial concepts were generated from the raw data during the open coding process, subsequently classified and reduced to a manageable number of meaningful categories and sub-categories. The relationships and links between all categories and the sub-categories were further refined during the axial coding stage. The core category was discovered during the selective coding stage which led to the development of a tentative theory of Transferring Relevance. This led to the resulting typology of MDTs in this research.

It is also important to note that the 'labels' identifying the three types were chosen to best represent the description given by the participants, the classifications emanating from the data, and within the field of learning and development in a business context. It should be noted that RB Ltd requires managers who have proficiency and competency at a tactical, personal, and strategic level. The tactical level requires base or foundation managerial knowledge. The personal level requires the individual to have a solid understanding of their own competencies and business models that could enhance their own performance. The strategic level is used to provide scenarios or experiences that can potentially further develop managerial competence.

The three types could best be described in the way the participants learned and applied their learning within the business context of RB Ltd. In virtually all cases, the MDTs indicated that they had to make the application of learning as practical as possible. Therefore, one of their own objectives was to find learning, training, development or education that was relevant to the end user. The three types discovered were the Academic-Educator, the Conceptualiser-Facilitator, and the Practitioner-Guide.

In each of the learning-application categories, five sub-categories were evident: analyzing, acquiring, adapting, delivering, and evaluating. The main categories are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1   *Core Categories in the Theory of Transferring Relevance*
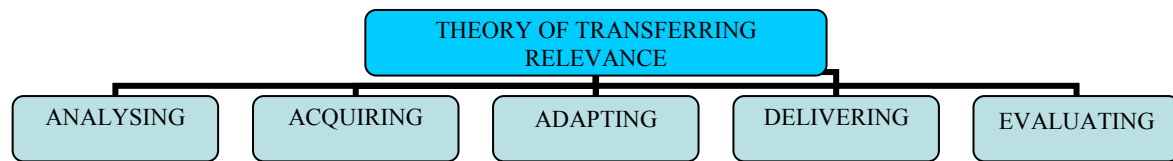
4.2   Categories and Sub-Categories within the Theory of Transferring Relevance

The categories and sub-categories that evolved during the research process formed the building blocks of the theory of transferring relevance. These are shown in Figure 4.1 above and each of the process is briefly described below.

4.2.1   Analysing

Analysing is essentially the starting point in the process of understanding the business needs of the organisation. It attempts to answer 'why' the organisation wishes to change. The three sub-categories in this process are: understanding, comparing, and personalizing. These processes attempt to explain business performance 'gaps', provide the MDTs with comparative knowledge within the RB Ltd Group (similar to benchmarking), and inform the MDT as to whether the 'training' required is within their own competence level. At this stage the MDT needs to assess what and how much learning they need to acquire, to design the event, and how to deliver the training required.

4.2.2   Acquiring

Acquiring is the process of obtaining knowledge, information, and learning as a 'learner'. It is made up of three sub-categories: individualizing, learning style, and selecting the setting. Individualising the learning involves the collection of information that the MDT believes would be relevant. It includes their motivation to learn, their individual life experiences, and the different sources from which they can acquire relevant learning. The learning style is a preferred way of learning; which is often a variety of theoretical, practical, and experiential activities. The setting in which they learn ranges from university style education, informal social interaction, to the workplace environment. The process of acquiring learning focuses predominantly on 'what', 'how,' and 'where' learning can take place.

4.2.3   *Adapting*

Adapting is the core category in the theory of transferring relevance. It is essentially the process of reducing theory learned into its practical application. This is done by simplifying the information or knowledge, and linking the adapted learning to anecdotal real-life practical examples for the trainees. The core process of adapting knowledge/learning was a central feature for all of the MDTs. They all indicated that they needed to make the learning experience both practical and relevant. Therefore, they had to ensure that the terminology used or the ideas presented were in a format that would be understood and usable for their trainees; thereby ensuring that they transferred learning relevance to the trainees.

4.2.4   *Delivering*

Delivering is the process of providing training as a 'trainer'. It almost mirrors the category of acquiring learning in its sub-categories. The sub-categories in the process of delivering are: designing, training styles, and the setting. The designing process determines whether there is specific content to be presented, whether it is conceptually driven, or whether there is no real content or ideas to be presented. The RB Ltd Leadership Development Plan discussed in Chapter 1 plays an important role in this category, as the Plan indicates 'what' type of learning needs to be provided; whether its a course, programme, or learning experience – each of which are designed and delivered differently. The training style adopted by the MDT illustrates 'how' they prefer to deliver the desired training. The styles tend to be in the form of that of a technical educator, a facilitative orchestrator, or a practical guide; depending on the learning experience being conducted. The setting in which training is conducted tends to fall into two types - formal (classroom) or workplace based.

4.2.5   *Evaluating*

Evaluating refers to the process of obtaining feedback. This is achieved by using personal judgment, obtaining feedback from the business units, or from the trainees by collecting course evaluation forms. In several initiatives formal feedback is not obtained at all. At other times feedback is part of an ongoing process that requires constant re-tuning of the learning experience to ensure it provides the best environment for a learning opportunity.

4.3   Typology of MDTs in this Research

There are three main types of MDT described in this section. The labeling of the MDTs was made by an examination of the categories mentioned above, the interviews of each of the

MDTs and an acknowledgement of the types of programmes/initiatives in which they are involved in RB Ltd.

The first type is the Academic-Educator (A-E). They generally provide base or foundation knowledge. As a 'learner' they have a sound grounding in their own professional subject, for example, finance. Their own learning comes essentially from gaining academic and professional qualifications. This may be in the form of an MBA or a Masters degree in 'Training', or accounting qualifications. The learning mode can best be described as 'academic'. This is further supported by the learning style they tend to adopt, which could best be described as a 'theorist' style (according to Honey & Mumford, 1996), as the intent is on gaining basic knowledge in its pure form. The context in which they learn is usually two-fold and included enrolment at a University and attending classroom based studies.

In terms of learning application they tend to adopt the role that could best be described as that of an 'educator'. In this respect they pass on base or foundation knowledge to their trainees. Control is very much centred with the tutor or trainer. In essence, they are delivering 'content', and this is most often conducted in a classroom type setting.

The Conceptualiser-Facilitator (C-F) generally provides conceptual knowledge for the individual and how, as individuals, they can best improve themselves. As a learner the Conceptualiser-Facilitator's learning mode tends to fall between learning gained from academic studies and theories and concepts that relate to individual and business learning models. The difference between the pure academic learner and the conceptualiser learner is that a qualification is not deemed to be that important. For example, the conceptualiser learner may spend time enhancing their own skills by attending business seminars, which may improve their professional practice. In this regard their own learning style can best be described as that of the 'reflector' using Honey & Mumford's (1996) learning styles inventory. The context or environment in which they learn tends to be in either University forums (as in academic learning), during the interaction whilst attending management seminars, or learning from other MDTs. They are actively engaged in trying to find concepts or techniques that will enhance their own professional practice or that can be used by their own participants to improve their own behaviour.

In terms of learning application they tend to adopt a role that is interactive. It can best be described as student-centred, in that it builds on the involvement of participants and their own contribution to the learning experience. The training style tends to be 'reflective' encouraging participants to explore concepts and techniques to discover whether they are useful to the participant. This differs from the Academic-Educator because there is not a minimum 'base' of managerial knowledge that is required. In the case of the C-F, the emphasis is placed on the encouragement and exploration of group experiences to share learning insights from other people's encounters. The backdrop of learning concepts and the facilitation is provided by the trainer. In terms of the context, the setting is either a classroom based facility or a specifically arranged venue where the learning environment is provided. A typical setting would be a Development Centre held at a hotel or off-site location.

The Practitioner-Guide (P-G) generally provides situations whereby the participant can experience behaviour or practice in a context that may be readily transferable back to their own workplace. As a learner, they are actively looking for situations that can form the basis for practical utilisation. In general, these learners are only interested in the practical application of knowledge. They could be described as 'innovators' as they are not inventing knowledge, but seeing how it is applied in one setting and then appreciating how it could possibly be used in other business settings. This type of learner differs from the other two types since they are not overly concerned with academic knowledge (base knowledge), or conceptual ideas. They are firmly grounded in practical application. Consequently, their style of learning can be said to be 'activist' oriented, as they want to experience, first hand, how things work; or at least experience the setting in which they work. The context is very much linked to the workplace.

In terms of learning application they see their role as a guide. In essence, this means that they focus on the setting (environment) in which a particular competence or behaviour is exhibited, and then guide participants who want to learn or experience the situation or behaviour to that location. A typical instance would be where strategic business thinking is required. The practical guide finds a company where strategic thinking is a prime concern, and then they would arrange a visit to the specific location, whether locally or more often overseas. The main responsibility for learning would then fall on the individual attendees to discover the learning and how it may apply in their circumstances; guided by the Practitioner-

Guide. Generally, the context for such learning is external to the participants' own organisation.

It should be expressed that the three types described do not represent a hierarchy of training and development. There are some very senior personnel who require 'base' information, for example, finance. Similarly, there are some very junior personnel who require first hand practical experience, which can be best delivered away from their own workplace.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of the storyline, categories, and sub-categories that form the theory of transferring relevance. It also provides an outline of the specific types of learner/trainer in the typology produced. The next chapter explains the actual findings in greater detail and the resultant typology is fully described in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS: THE CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES OF THE THEORY OF TRANSFERRING RELEVANCE

Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the theory of *Transferring Relevance* through a summary of its concepts and categories. It also gave an overview of the typology of management development trainers (MDTs) in a multinational company in Hong Kong. This chapter connects these concepts and categories to create *The Theory of Transferring Relevance* with reference to data collected from ten MDTs interviewed in this research. In addition, this chapter explores the fundamental socio-psychological processes by which the MDTs manage, apply (in the workplace), and translate their own learning for delivery to their trainees. To summarise, this chapter's structure includes seven main sections. The first five sections describe the major processes and sub-processes of the theory of *Transferring Relevance* for MDTs. The last two sections discuss *The Theory of Transferring Relevance*, and conclude this chapter.

5.1 Analysing;

5.2 Acquiring;

5.3 Adapting;

5.4 Delivering;

5.5 Evaluating;

5.6 The Theory of Transferring Relevance;

5.7 Conclusion.

Figure 1 (below) shows a diagram of the major categories and their linkage to the core theory of Transferring Relevance.

Fig. 5.1   The Core and Main Categories in the Theory of Transferring Relevance
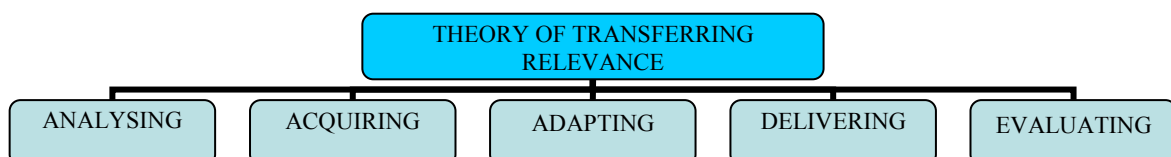
The study investigates how Management Development Trainers (MDTs) manage their learning and apply that learning in practice. The research is conducted within a multinational organization based in Hong Kong. The four specific research questions in this research have been addressed by the formulation of concepts and their clustering into categories, and sub-categories or processes, explained within the theory of *Transferring Relevance*:

a) Why do Management Development Trainers (MDTs) need to learn?

b) What do MDTs need to learn?

c) How do adult MDTs learn?

d) How do adult MDTs apply their learning?

The formation of categories in this chapter was generated through the process of systematic coding (open coding, axial coding and selective coding), used in grounded theory research. The raw data that were generated from the ten participant interviews and evaluation forms from attendees in past courses generated a total of 2,097 concepts during the open coding phase. Further conceptualization reduced these concepts into a more meaningful number of categories and sub-categories, each of which has their own properties and dimensions. The relationship between categories and sub-categories were then further investigated in the stage of axial coding. At this stage, the major categories of Analysing, Acquiring, Adapting, Delivering, and Evaluating were formed. Associated properties and dimensions were developed in depth and breadth. In addition, the relationships between the five categories were formed as depicted in Fig. 5.1. The core category of Adapting was determined during the selective coding stage. This core category serves as the pivotal explanatory category with the other major categories and sub-categories supporting and interacting with it in terms of their properties and dimensions. The integration of the core category with the other major categories resulted in the formulation of the theory of *Transferring Relevance.*

5.1 Analysing

Analysing refers to the initial stage of understanding the business needs. It is most often the starting point for a training and development change intervention. It attempts to answer the question "Why" the organization needs to change. The main category of Analysing relates to 'understanding' the business needs and any perceived 'gaps' in performance that may be filled through staff training and development. This process occurs while 'comparing' the

existing capabilities of the trainees with the types of training that needs to be delivered, and 'personalising' the information learned.

In essence, Analysing appears to be an internalizing by the trainer of the need to understand why the organization needs to change (inputs). It includes how the training function can support the changes through delivery (outputs), and the personalization of the changes in how it impacts the MDTs own comfort zone and preferred method of delivery.

5.1.1 *Understanding*

Understanding is the process that MDTs use to learn how the organization can improve performance levels. The MDT aims to understand the organisation's current performance level, any future goals, and the 'gaps' that may be covered through staff training and development. To address these training and development 'gaps' the MDT must know the company needs, the company's expectations, and the corporate problems being faced. In many instances these three aspects are not mutually exclusive, and indicate starting points for MDTs to engage in collaborative appreciation of the corporate need to change.

5.1.1.1 *Corporate Needs*

There appears to be a sequential process used to determine the company's organisational needs. These start from the macro level (corporate values), and work their way down to the micro level (the formulation of objectives to address trainees needs).

Company values include stated core values that address each individual business unit. These are described by RB as mandated core corporate values:

> Right People' with 'Enterprise', and 'Energy' and 'Performance' to achieve 'Pride in Performance'. Taken together, these four core values can promote positive change and lead to higher levels of performance. (RB)

As indicated in RB's statement above, there is an over-riding requirement that training and development cascades from the corporate values. The Head of RB Ltd indicates how the process of determining training and development is conducted – most frequently starting at the top of the organization. There is an examination of what the needs are, how training could

be delivered, and who is best to provide such training. RB indicates how the process usually commences:

> Well, you start at the top and say, 'What are the company needs'. Secondly, you say, 'What's the best way to deliver what it needs' and the people who are going to deliver it. This gives you a sense of what's needed at the macro level, what's needed at the operational level, and what's needed at the individual or micro level. (RB)

The focus on determining organisational needs involves being client-centric. A client-centric perspective can be achieved by assessing client needs and conversing with the key decision makers. RB, DB and JDG indicate their thought processes in gauging client needs:

> We have to understand what we're going to see the Chief Executive for . . . then we can understand what the needs actually are. (RB)

> We will analyse the task, in terms of what the client wants; that will drive it. (DB)

> You talk to the business head and say, 'Are you prepared to share a bit of the inside track about how you manage this business' (JDG)

Once the understanding of corporate needs is attained the process continues by formulating objectives. This formulation is done by committee prior to the course delivery, and is explained by DB:

> Objectives? I wordsmith them. I go back to RB and JDG, and say that we have two objectives for Finance for Non-Financial Managers: Understanding financial terms and jargon, and understanding financial management techniques that are used in the running of a business. Once agreed, we check with the client. (DB)

5.1.1.2   *Business Expectations*
Business expectations involve the client indicating an 'expectation' of desired achievement. This expectation is often triggered by a perceived 'gap' in existing training and development and requires an intervention to address the business' 'expectation'. This process is often initiated when a specific individual in the organisation raises corporate expectations to RB

Ltd. Next is a stage of checking expectations and approaches to be taken to ensure an understanding of these expectations; frequently resulting in site visits to the businesses. AON and SR indicate how such expectations were raised to them:

> The company said they would like to have a DDI type thing, but not with directors, but with the next level down. So, that's how it started. (AON)

> So, I want to know what they need to learn. What is expected? I want to hear what the CEO thinks they don't understand. (SR)

To facilitate the understanding of expectations MDTs frequently enter into a dialogue with the Business Unit heads or HR Departments to ensure they are on track. AON, DB, VC, DM, and RB indicate what they do in this regard:

> A lot of it was a discussive process. To try to understand what everyone's expectations were, what outputs, and then contributing to them and finding effective ways of facilitating these learning outcomes. (AON)

> I take his expectations. By that I mean he supplied all the input, I would write it up, he would review it and adjust it, so we knew it should meet their expectations. It was collaboration. (DB)

> Beatrice briefed me on their expectations on the roles of a coach. I took this and produced the objectives and slides, and Beatrice agreed them. (VC)

> We re-wrote the competencies based on what the business unit expected. We reviewed them with management and with some CEO's, and made some minor changes. We found that some still did not fit, and we've got a few more changes to make. This is not surprising as it's an ongoing process. (DM)

> So, if you go and try to do something at the Airport or Mandarin, there's an expectation to get it done in a third of the time, due to the mixed culture and experience with western forms of culture. (RB)

The process described above indicates a great degree of involvement with the client in addressing their expectations. It also shows the iterative nature of discussion to ensure both sides understand the expectations and are clear on what is required. To ensure clarity in its application there is often a need for either site visits or checking information detailed in performance appraisal systems. This is a means of triangulating the validity of such expectations. VC, AON, and CW describe how they cross-check corporate expectations:

> I had meetings with Beatrice and Adrian on the Eastpointe Team (HR Team). They helped organise some site visits to the trainees work location, so that I know their work and job nature. (VC)

> The next phase is to interview them. We find out in more depth what their expectations are. And then if there are companies they know of in South America they'd be particularly interested in visiting, we identify those, and then set the whole thing up. Set up the visits. (AON)

> They asked us to design a questionnaire. To see the expectations of their customers; the internal customer. We just revised it for new staff, and every year they go through their own system. (CW)

There appears to be a validation process used by MDTs in clarifying expectations. This involves both face-to-face discussions with senior business representatives as well as undertaking site visits or viewing related documentation to promote mutual understanding.

5.1.1.3   *Business Problems*

Business problems are identified as a starting point for a training and development intervention. The sequence appears to be in the form of problem identification, a diagnosis of the problem, ascertaining the underlying issues, identifying themes, and culminating in how to persuade clients as to the course of action to adopt. RB gives an example of this how this process commences within a business:

> I said, 'What's the biggest issue?' And he would say, 'X', and I would say, right, which of your executives are the ones that are going to fix it? There's a diagnosis of the problem. (RB)

In some instances the identification of the major concern or an isolation of the biggest problem focuses the mind of the MDT. The link is frequently made between the business problem and its performance related issue. VC describes how she links these two features when faced with a problem regarding an in-house coaching course:

> Talking about the qualities of a good coach, I would ask, 'What's the problem', and somehow link it with work. What's the performance problem you face? What's the biggest problem? (VC)

The focus for both RB and VC were on the identification of the problem. The diagnosis stage usually involves both MDT personnel and business unit heads. The use of both these groups of personnel is evident from RB and VC's comments below:

> The identification of business problems comes from the diagnostics. We may use, say, 12 interviews and try to find the over-riding theme. (RB)

> It's like working like an outside consultant. You need to go in, diagnose and make judgments. (VC)

The comments from both RB and VC indicate that considerable time and effort are placed in analyzing the problems. However, as indicated below, RB goes on to highlight the need to focus, simplify, and restrict the amount of analysis by concentrating on the most important issues. It is worth noting here that the theme of simplifying ideas or reducing material into simple terms becomes a major concern for all MDTs in the core category of 'Adapting'.

> . . . analysing more and more and more, and not knowing why they are doing it, half the time. And, the way they can learn better is simply by stopping and saying, 'Right, let's look at three issues. Concentrate on those. (RB)

It was apparent that the identification of business problems may come from both the business units and from the group of MDTs. This can be seen from one example of identifying that a problem with the core competencies used in the organisation. In this case, once the problem was identified both the MDTs and the business units were involved in solving the problem:

What was recognised here, particularly by JDG, was that the competencies had been running for several years, and weren't picking up on the newer things that have to look at. We're talking about innovation. We're talking about people being more proactive. We're talking about empowerment. So, we got together, three groups of CEO's and had a discussion with them about the new competencies that were needed for this time. What prompted it was that the old ones weren't quite making it as far as new requirements within the businesses were concerned. (DM)

The issue of core competencies is a major concern for the organisation as it underpins all the executive training and development courses/interventions in RB Ltd. Therefore, it is noted that at least two MDTs and three groups of CEO's are involved in the formulation of new competencies. The interpretation made here is that major players in the organisation must be involved to ensure practicality and relevance for the business units in solving problems using fundamental training and development interventions.

In order to give a reliable solution to a business problem there is a good deal of influence or persuasion that needs to be used by the MDTs. From the indications given by RB and JDG below, it is evident that cross-cultural awareness and work relevance are crucial to influencing the changing of behaviours of staff when tackling problems:

. . . they needed some way to break down the silos, which meant people needed to work across groups, and understand that they needed to pull it to bits; the silos. So, in order to do that we had to change the mindset of the people, because most people were Hong Kong focused. (RB)

So, you have to persuade people that you want to do just that. And then you talk to our business units in China and say, let's go and see what China Eastern Airlines do. (JDG)

It can be seen that the solutions for many business problems, for RB Ltd, need to have a practical relevance, and placed in the context of the work environment. The last example indicates that some of the solutions involve understanding the work environment outside of the existing organisation's arena.

5.1.2   Comparing

Comparing is one of the sub-processes whereby MDTs analyse information relating to understanding clients' needs, but with the focus on the end user – the trainees. It appears that understanding trainee's needs are not straightforward. VC gives an indication that occasionally both the trainees and even the various HR Departments are not sure what they want, nor fully understand their own corporate requirements. However, trying to understand their requirements appears to be an important feature:

> It's quite important because sometimes the trainees don't realise what they need in order to fit the company's requirements. I think it is crucial to know what the HR (Department) thinks, and also what the participant thinks. However, sometimes what the HR wants still does not give you the full picture.   (VC)

To address this problematic aspect SR tries to see a couple of trainees to get a feel for what is required. In his case, given his experience, he believes he can assess trainees needs based on his own judgment. He indicates this in the following way:

> The next question I ask is what do these guys need to learn? I would frequently see a couple of trainees to give me a feel for it. Seeing one gives you one point of view, seeing two enables you to kind of compare.   (SR)

5.1.3 Personalising

Personalising is a sub-process of analysing whereby the MDTs examine the nature of the problem/need/expectation, and this will dictate which MDT resource is to be utilised. Personalising appears to be very much a collaborative process whereby several of the MDTs are involved in the determination of best resources to manage a task. During the pilot interview RB expresses how he selects resources to manage tasks. He also indicates that individual MDT capabilities are very important in the selection of MDT for specific tasks:

> It depends on the nature of the problem. The strategic HR review of DF, for example, I had to do that. I wouldn't delegate that. (RB)

It appears that each business-related problem to be tackled by the MDTs is treated on a project by project basis. However, each project, early on, is not managed by an individual,

rather by a group of MDTs. AON gives an example, and refers to 'we' and 'us' when determining the scope of projects:

> Now we construct an outline, and are going to talk it through. So, again, I think mentally that helps to 'tune' each of us in to, you know, who's doing what and when. (AON)

The collaborative nature of the MDTs in RB Ltd is highly evident. JDG gives an example of how one of the major initiatives, the Business Enhancement Initiative (BEI), was designed by a committee of MDTs:

> Well, in this case we had a think tank. We sat three people in a room and said this is what we should do. (JDG)

One feature that became apparent during the analysis was the labels used to describe the learning experience, for example, an 'initiative' as compared to a 'programme'. This would imply that there are various elements of the learning experience that are dissimilar to general courses of instruction which are more programme or 'content' driven and trainer' led. JDG and AON indicate that this is the case as they both describe the processes of determining which MDT would be appropriate for various aspects of the 'initiative', depending on their comfort levels and areas of expertise. They both use the BEI (Business Enhancement Initiative) as an example. JDG states her view and it is then supported by AON:

> I took LK because of the stuff we used in SEP and DDI, and I picked AON because I know that his inter-personal skills are fine stronger than mine…Alan was brought in at a later stage, because I knew that LK could give it the strategic direction in that part of the business, as I couldn't. AON could also manage the process as LK wouldn't be so good at capturing the learning. So, there's a piece here about bringing in appropriate consultants for what you need; understanding that one consultant can't deliver everything. (JDG)

Obviously, JDG influences a great deal because she is the client in many of these projects. So, she will be saying to me, for example, that she met someone at breakfast

and said, 'I can't do this, I think you are the appropriate person. This is what we are looking at. Are you available on these dates? (AON)

In summary, 'Analysing' is a process whereby the MDTs attempt to gain an understanding of the business needs and expectations. They achieve this by acknowledging client requirements, appreciating what the client currently has in place, and filling the 'gap' between the two with suitable training/development/learning initiatives. Analysing also encompasses an appreciation of needs and abilities. Whilst attempts can be made to assess requirements it was found that sometimes even the HR Departments did not fully understand what they needed. Lastly, this section explored the personal aspects of Analysing. In this regard it was found that the MDTs use a highly collaborative (team) approach to analysing training and development type needs. In addition, there is a process of individual assessment in choosing which MDT would be the most suitable to deliver various aspects of a programme/initiative based on their level of experience and own comfort levels, and the extent to which the course is driven by its content.

5.2   Acquiring

The process that details how the MDTs collect new information in order to learn is termed 'Acquiring'. The process of Acquiring is usually prompted as a result of changes in the courses/ material that needs to be taught, or as a general lifelong process of learning. Through the process of axial coding, the means of collecting information about acquiring learning can be achieved through three distinct sub-processes – Individualising, Learning Style, and the Setting. These three processes can be active, passive or both, in that there can be either a conscious effort to acquire knowledge or it can be gained unconsciously. Table 5.1 (below) indicates the category of Acquiring, its sub-processes, and their related causal conditions. The major category of Acquiring refers to the Trainer as a Learner. The sub-categories of Personalizing, Learning Style and the Setting refer to the Trainer's ability to gather and adapt new information from differing contexts.

Table 5.1   The Category of Acquiring and its sub-categories

Core Process	**ACQUIRING**		
Active or Passive	*Individualizing*	*Learning Style*	*Setting*
	Motivation (What)	Interacting	Formal
	Life Experiences (Who)	Reflecting	Informal
	Sources (Where)	Real World	Workplace
		Researching	

5.2.1   Individualising

Individualising is the process whereby MDTs collect information that they believe may be relevant to themselves both as learners and as part of their training profession. It includes their motivation for learning, the life experiences and other sources that have influenced their learning. In essence, Personalizing addresses "Why" they need to learn, 'what' experiences they have learned from, and 'where' they obtained the information.

5.2.1.1   Motivation

The motivational factors influencing the need or desire to learn tended to fall into processes relating to time. All of the MDTs in the research gave specific instances whereby they were influenced by either the past, present or future desires to acquire learning. Past reasons included the need for qualification. Present needs included the need to learn to survive. And, for future needs, there was a desire for either continuous learning, the need to keep up-to-date in their field, or merely for personal interest.

It should be noted that at the time of the study only RB had a PhD, however, three others were studying for theirs, and two have since acquired the qualification. For some, the need for a qualification is highly desired, whereas others believe it makes little difference when training. For example, RB indicates the emphasis placed on acquiring at least a Masters degree when working for his company:

Everyone here, including the secretaries, are doing Masters Degrees - except one. (RB)

LK believes you need a higher degree to teach, but places little emphasis on its value when delivering. CW, however, believes that a PhD is taken for personal growth. These varying views suggest different perspectives on the need for such a qualification:

> I actually don't need the academic study to move forward. I've deliberately said that I don't place much value on it at this stage of my life. (LK)

> The PhD doesn't help me get my job or go further. I think a PhD is not something you do for your career. It's for personal growth. I'm actually studying to get it to be chic. (CW)

A strong motivational driver was the need to 'survive' or 'earn dollars' and continue to earn. In this regard many of the MDTs undertook further study, immersed themselves in learning and placed emphasis on performing to ensure repeat work. These drivers continue to affect the MDTs in terms of being able to survive. The statements from DB, RB and DM below indicate how learning/studying motivated them:

> I see the PhD as a catalyst. Ideally I would eventually like to be an adjunct professor at the University of Science and Technology on their entrepreneurial course. I want to continue earning, so I've always considered teaching at business schools. I see the PhD as an enabler for all those objectives. (DB)

> Hundreds, I've done hundreds of courses. I suppose I've had to survive. Like when I was at the Police Training School. Someone got kicked out, I became an Instructor so I had to put into action, immediately, what I had learned in order to survive. (RB)

> It's not easy to survive in this industry. I am cheap, and when you compare to me and buying a whole Development Centre from Saville and Holdsworth, there's no match. And, I need to keep it that way, so I learn to stay ahead. (DM)

The issue of 'survival' indicates a need to learn to earn. In some instances the belief is that a qualification is required. What is evident is the individual MDTs perspective on the importance of a higher degree and continuing to perform effectively. In this regard some have gained a higher degree and others are seeking it as a future goal.

The idea of life-long learning and keeping up-to-date with relevant knowledge is a feature for several of the MDTs. AON explains his pursuit of learning stems back to his early years.

> A lot of my learning is self-development. And, it's largely driven by my own internal commitment to life long learning, and that's something I've picked up when I was in my 20's. (AON)

The motivation to learn is obviously prompted by an inner desire. The need for qualifications has been discussed as has the need to 'survive'. An underlying aspect is the personal interest in learning of the MDT. The need for a strong purpose, of self interest, and of relevance is indicated by RB, JDG, and AON, which serve to summarise this section:

> What motivates me to learn? Relevance to what I'm doing. Personal interest. Need to know. Those three things. (RB)

> Sometimes it's a need. I just got to do it. But that can be quite motivating 'cos you know you got to deliver on it. You'd say, 'Ow, that's interesting, I'd like to know a bit more about that.' (JDG)

> For me the motivation is to understand complex things. It's a physical hunger and drive. That would be the key thing for me. (AON)

5.2.1.2   *Life Experiences*

Life experiences are the personal events and episodes that shape the MDTs learning. This process highlights the types of experience that the MDTs actually learn from. In this regard they fall into three main sub-categories, learning by trial and error, learning from negative experiences, and learning unconsciously.

There appears to be an underlying theme of learning by having a go. This is epitomized by the phrase of learning by trial and error. DB actually makes this statement in answer to the typical question 'How do you learn?'

> Oh, I think by trial and error. Yup. Trial and error. (DB)

CW goes on to support a similar comment by indicating that she is willing to have a go at new learning episodes and indicates that it's important to be able to remedy mistakes – indicating that learning can be derived from such mistakes.

> I use the pareto principle in decision making and believe that if you right 80% of the time, that's alright. (CW)

The willingness to try something new is a common theme in this area. In certain instances, the MDTs link their past experiences to those of the present and make changes accordingly. Both KC and LK indicate this aspect by referring to past learning at university and adapting the learning to fast track their learning. KC indicates how he used a more outspoken approach to teaching, whereas LK learned to fast track the learning once he realized he had a solid academic base. In both cases what was learned in the past became relevant later.

> At HK Polytechnic they used a didactic method of teaching. I never realized there was any other way. Now I have tried a more open approach and it works for me. (KC)

> I grew up with oils in and around my family business. By having a go using that academic knowledge from chemistry, I was able to fast track my learning in the business sense, and breeze straight through. (LK)

Several of the MDTs emphasised learning from negative experiences. The properties in this regard included learning from near disasters or enormous change (macro level), having bad experiences with other people (including teachers), the styles of teaching and how the subject matter was actually taught, and personal one-off instances (micro level). JDG describes how a major redundancy and first time running of a programme affected her:

> I suppose a major learning event for me was the redundancies in the UK in the early 80's. It was a time of enormous cutbacks. My role was in HR counseling. All this change, the redundancy piece was very strong, and I haven't forgotten that. The whole learning curve you go through, and I thought that was really good. (JDG)

For JDG it was a major event that struck home as a significant learning moment. For CW and KC it was the people with whom they were interacting that made a negative impression. In

these cases it shaped the MDTs approach of what not to do in certain circumstances. This highlights that they do not like the trainer-led style of instruction, or didactic methods of learning:

> My boss just did not take me seriously. I would produce a report and it would never get read. So, if I get a report, I will always read it and give feedback. (CW)

> I can always remember a HK Polytechnic instructor. He really had a major impact on me. I told him that his style of allowing a pupil to speak was an eye-opener for me. Usually, in the Hong Kong system you do as you're bloody told. Basically teachers control everything. I was told I was hopeless. But being asked to comment, argue, and getting feedback was unknown to me. So, yes, it really affected me. That's why I am so interactive with my class. (KC)

Many of the MDTs learned from isolated memorable incidents that stuck in their mind. In some cases, like DM, they provided stories for cases studies. The concept of 'storytelling' becomes a major feature in the delivery of training to be discussed later.

> I was at Hong Kong Airport at one of the snake lines that says, 'Wait here until called'. There are three service desks. I wait until I am next in line. The girl at the end finishes with a couple and they walk away. There's a guy behind me urging me to go to the desk. But the last time I did that the girl put up a 'Closed' sign, I was left mid-stream, and the next counter called the next in line and I was left stranded. I learned from that, now I wait until called. That's learning from experience! (DM)

The experiences described above all have a common feature of not being planned. Therefore, the events that add to learning can be described as both planned and unplanned. It appears to become learning once it is realized that the 'unconscious' learning is used. CW, LK, DM and JDG describe their experiences in this regard:

> When you ask how I learn, I suppose often it's an unconscious thing. People have a different way of showing their learning. Learning is very different for different people. I suppose I've learned once I use it. (CW)

I actually understood more about the chemistry of olives than most people, because I understood organic chemistry very well. But I didn't know I knew that much until I went back to university. That's when I realized I had learned it. I could recall it easily. (LK)

I suppose learning is like building up intelligence. Like military or criminal intelligence. You store it away, one tiny piece at a time, and you put the pieces together – like I have from this (interview). Then you eventually link it together. For example, I didn't realize that the style I like most was the style I most admired. Thanks for that. (DM)

It's interesting. Learning. I know more than I did yesterday. I'm not sure what I am going to learn. Like yesterday, I watched the Discovery Channel and learned about frogs. That was new. (JDG)

I've no idea what I am going to learn, sometimes. So, one should never cut out Happy Hour. I learn a lot from people in the bars. I really mean it. Not sure when I am going to use it, but that's not the point. My friends and I spend time in the bars. They come from different professions. Some make glass, decorative glass. Some sell motor bike parts, Some are in the funeral business. It's all about learning from how other people see things. You can learn so much from them. (KC)

The idea of unconscious or unplanned learning sits alongside the issue of planned learning. Planned learning would include having a goal of obtaining a degree, whereas the unplanned aspect implies gaining new experiences from everyday occurrences. The MDTs in this section imply that both these types of learning are necessary and expected.

5.2.1.3   Sources

The theme of 'Sources' refers to the place where the MDTs gain their learning. These sources vary but the majority of the MDTs indicate that they learn extensively from people (including self-critique), through their own businesses, and by conducting research. The MDTs in RB Ltd state there is a strong degree of learning from each other. It appears that there is a long history of association amongst the MDTs and that they actively participate in learning from each other – in order to self-improve and complement each other in the

programmes/initiatives offered. In addition, the MDTs learn from their experiences in their own business, and utilize these experiences when delivering in RB Ltd. At the time of writing there were only four full-time MDTs with RB Ltd. The remaining six are consultants utilized on a regular basis, but have other clients to service. The manner in which each conducts research varies from academic research to informal research, but heavy emphasis is placed on the use of the internet.

It is apparent that the MDTs place reliance on being self-critical and actively engage with the other MDTs to promote their own learning. AON gives a good example of the process when he states how he learns from watching others perform:

> I designed a programme, but didn't deliver it. I noticed the actual presenter had a 'tic', and I did a self-check to ensure I didn't have the same. So, I said to myself, 'Alan. Watch your mannerisms'. What am I doing and what am I not aware of. So, you know, I do a self-critique. (AON)

There appears to be a conscious effort to be aware of one's own styles and actual performances. In addition, the need to learn from one another is evident in the string of statements from AON, RB, KC, VC, JDG, and DB:

> I was watching AON the other day, and I saw a couple of things he did when facilitating that I thought were particularly helpful, like jumping in when someone was rambling on. I tend to let them ramble, but he did a lot of summarizing, and said things like, 'Did you mean…'. So that's one way to learn how to continuously improve. (RB)

> When I first started as a trainer I was not academic, so my first phase was learning from other trainers here. (KC)

> Sometimes I just sit in on the training and I listen to them and find the ideas inspiring. I listen to JDG as her ideas I find quite mixed but very inspiring. When I listen to LK on the SEP I find him serious when he talks about strategy, but this way I can learn from them. The same with RB. He is a really good storyteller. (VC)

I think another developmental piece is really to do with who you are working alongside. (JDG)

I think it's highly relevant to work with the other (RB Ltd) characters. As you know yourself, especially in the late 80's and early 90's we had some really strong characters to interact with. (DB)

DB highlights the idea of learning from other MDTs when he indicates how the process in this present research assisted his own thought process:

Just by discussing this I would say that by going through this, it's amazed me how much I've done and how much I know, and what a terrific process this is. (DB)

The learning gleaned from other MDTs is quite apparent. However, it was evident that certain personalities, including colleagues, highly regarded professionals, and successful businessmen had long-term influences on the MDTs. An example in each case is when KC was watching Tony Buzan and who did something unexpected that ended up being thought provoking for KC. Consequently, he used the basic idea. DB met the President of the Institute of Chartered Accounts, Neil Lothing, and was enthralled by his ability to tell relevant stories. This was placed into perspective when Neil Lothing indicated how he prepared for presentations:

I said to Neil that I had met him in 1976, and I was amazed at the stories he told us about the world. He turned to me and said, 'Oh, aye, 15 minutes before the lecture I read the front page of the Financial Times and then came down and told you about it! (DB)

LK goes on to indicate how learning can be random but needs to be connected by the individual and turned into something useful:

Take Steve Jobs. Never went to class, then sat in on a handwriting class; penmanship. Then started Adobe. You take random things and give them meaning in the context of things you are able to use. It's all about being able to make the connections. He said that life is about connecting the dots backwards. (LK)

It is apparent that much of the learning involves remembering stories that have an impact. The use of anecdotes becomes a continuing theme throughout this research – both when learning and delivering.

Another source of acquiring learning comes from linking one's own business to that of RB Ltd. This underpins the issue of providing relevance through understanding client needs. For AON his method was to take Sunday walks with RB and discuss business issues. For DM he describes the importance of talking to people in the business. In DB's case he continuously uses his own UK business as a bouncing board for ideas and benchmarks them against those used by RB Ltd; in this way he indicates he gets clarity of purpose. JDG utilizes the opinions from people in a variety of businesses in order to get the greatest contributions. Whereas for LK he terms some of his business learning 'fortuitous learning', and gives the following example:

> I happened to be flying into Singapore. At that time Singapore was making a major decision about going into the gambling industry. Stanley Ho was excluded, but I knew about Gentin Gerhad, but I didn't know the connections. I did a check with a friend of mine in South Africa who'd been to Sun City. Anyway, I found out that there are about a dozen characters who control the gambling industry around the world. I can make these links and use it in RB Ltd. (LK)

When it comes to forms of research ALL the MDTs have either a particular preference or utilize multiple forms to gain information. Typical research methods included reading books. For example 'Good to Great', reading newspapers, magazines and watching CNN and the news (for current information). In many instances an internet search was cited as a means of acquiring further information.

In most instances the research starts by being specific and then adapts for relevance. Whilst some of the research is relatively superficial other MDTs go to great lengths to provide workshop material. DM and DB give an example of the former instance, and LK gives an example of extensive research:

> I make it relevant by staying up to date with news, gossip, and business issues. I can make the mental links and translate them to the audience. (DM)

> I'll be lecturing in a hotel somewhere and I'll watch CNN or CNBC – the money programme. Then I'll go down and use that in my lecture. (DB)

> I started to do research on the gambling industry in the Philippines. This was for the BEI programmes. Then linked it to Macau and their casinos. After three days I knew it was enough when I could predict what I was going to find. I call it 'hunchability'. Then I stop and package it all. (LK)

What is apparent is that the types of programme/initiative being conducted have a bearing on the amount of research done. For example, the BEI (that LK refers to) is classified as a senior executive development initiative.

This section analysed the concepts included in the sub-category of 'Personalising'. It focused on the motivational drivers that influenced the MDT, the types of life experience that impacted their learning, and the various sources from which they acquire information. In personalizing the learning it was evident that the MDTs have a strong desire to 'survive' by either acquiring higher qualifications or seeking continuous learning. This appears to be a main feature in staying employed by RB Ltd. The MDTs learning world is shaped by life experiences that range from dealing with disasters to reflecting on negative experiences gained whilst in the classroom at University. As a consequence, these experiences profoundly affect their own training style. In terms of the sources from which the MDTs acquire information and knowledge, there is a strong reliance on learning from other MDTs, general reading and studying, and using the internet for research.

5.2.2   Learning Style

The process whereby MDTs learn and the method that they adopt in that learning is called their 'Learning Style'. In essence, this describes how MDT trainers adopt a particular approach to learning. Four distinct learning styles were discovered in this study. However, the styles are not mutually exclusive, as some MDTs adopt more than one role depending on the type of material that is being learned, and the context in which it is delivered. The four main styles uncovered were: Interacting, Reflecting, Practicing, and Researching. Each of these four learning styles is addressed in detail below.

5.2.2.1   Interacting

The process of learning by interacting embraces both the concepts of learning by teaching and learning by observing others. Each of these concepts involves a degree of interaction with other trainers who are teaching. MDTs who indicated a preference of learning by teaching implied that the context was in a classroom or formal setting. RB, LK, DB, and AON clearly state that this is one of their preferred methods of learning:

> You learn by teaching… I like to look at something, reflect on it, articulate it, and then learn by teaching it. (RB)

> I actually learned by going through the course I taught. I took the skeletal framework and developed it in a number of ways, adding, for example case studies. (LK)

> Training in facilitation? None whatsoever. So, I made it up as I went along. And the group said, 'That was fantastic. You should be doing this full time.' That's how I learned to facilitate. By actually teaching. (DB)

> I learn a lot when training by 'sparring'. I interact with the trainees, and thereby develop my own learning. (AON)

The interaction described above shows active participation in the classroom setting. The second process of learning came from a more passive approach – that of observing or watching other trainers or people and internalizing the relevant parts. AON, and VC specifically indicate learning from other trainers in a classroom context, whereas KC and SR go on to indicate learning from general observation of other people (in a more social setting):

> From a professional perspective I learn a lot from just watching JDG in her workshop role. Her style is very different from mine. We don't necessarily agree, but we bounce ideas off of each other. (AON)

> I can learn so much by just watching them. If I am coordinating a programme, I'll be there to sit and watch. I learn a lot just by doing that. (VC)

> Understanding people is not about studying. It's about observing people, then putting your observation into understanding. (KC)

> Oh, I learn by copying. I learn by watching what others do. I then sythesise that, and think whether I can do it, and whether it's appropriate to do it. (SR)

The interacting style of learning indicates a preference to socialize with both fellow MDTs and the trainees in either an active or passive manner.

5.2.2.2   Reflecting

The concept of reflecting appears to be best captured by a process of theorizing, reviewing past experiences, and of formally recording information for future recall. Whist interacting could be said to be a more active approach to learning, reflecting is a very personal, internal experience, which involves the MDTs own paradigms of learning and contemplation. RB indicates his thought process of learning, based on theoretical assumptions, and the depth he goes to when shaping material he has to learn:

> I think that everything's got to have a theory underpinning it. As you know, a theory is just a question. So you have to work through it…I have to reduce the stuff I need to learn into mind-maps. I then write about it. The models I use are dynamic, not static. In this way, like the history degree exams, I can refresh by reading the mind-maps I have done. This gives me reference points and gives me a start for the structure of an assignment. Then I write the assignment using the mind-map. For me, I always want a model; like that one there for the DDI. (RB)

The need for reflection and to capture a visual form is expressed by AON, SR, and CW who indicate their preferred methods:

> I use a lot of reflection skills taken from Peter Senge's work. I really like Senge's work on discourse, dialogue and reflective thought. Impressive and useful. I realize the importance of the 'Aha' or 'Eureka' moments. I also got into Chris Argyris's double loop learning.   (AON)

I always want to put my thoughts into bullet points. I can then produce for you a model, give you a scenario, and then a range of options. Keep it simple. (SR)

For me, I think very carefully about it. I like to visualize it all, then see how I feel about it. (CW)

The issue of keeping it simple and of gaining a picture image of what is required is evident in the statements of these MDTs. The process of reflection has a time dimension in that it indicates thoughtfully reviewing what has already occurred. AON and JDG state how they used past experiences to aid in reflection, and bring forward what could be relevant. At the time of the event in question the 'learning' was not revealed, but subsequently, when used, it became apparent:

I was thinking about what mannerisms I use. It's easy to do so, as one often reflects back from your own experiences. I'm always learning although it may not be in a conscious effort to extract information. (AON)

There's a moment when you realize you can learn from anything, but you don't know at the time. This bloke teaching me to windsurf would shout from the shore 'balance'. I was looking for a word in the senior executive programme, and I thought' Ah, balance. The experience came back and the word was spot on. (JDG)

For some MDTs there is a reflective or visualization process, whereas others make use of a 'log' or record which they utilize to reflect on their learning. RB and DM indicate their need to record what they have already visualized:

I will keep a log. At the end of a day I will go back and review what I have done, and say what was I supposed to do that I haven't. I reflect on it. And I put in an action point. So it's a continual review. (RB)

Learning means knowledge. It means storing useful information. I learn from the notes I've taken and I revise from them because I have a lot of faith in those notes. (DM)

The MDTs in this section have shown a desire to reflect on events or situations with a view to making sense of the occurrences. In this regard, they could be classified more as thinkers than doers.

5.2.2.3   Real World Learning

Real world learning is a style that is adopted to make practical sense of learning experiences. The MDTs showing a preference for this category like to learn through the experience of everyday events; most often within a business context. Whereas the interacting style was indicative of learning through social interaction with people, the preference for real world learning suggests actually having an experience in the workplace or workplace environment in order to learn from it. The importance of this type of learning is highlighted through the examples given by the MDTs. In the majority of cases the client, or customers are the ones giving feedback on performance, therefore the issue of relevancy becomes a priority. SR sets the scene in this section by explaining just how important the customer is in shaping one's own learning:

> My teaching has been the development of my own style, very much driven by the review processes that are inherent in executive education, in that virtually every performance that you do is reviewed by your customers. In the theoretical way you talk about life and choices, but in the real world those choices are simply not available to you. Therefore, there are other choices that you can make. (SR)

The links of learning through the business appear to be crucial to the MDTs. All of the MDTs indicated the importance of this aspect of learning. JDG, VC, and CW typify the responses from other MDTs:

> I think learning and development come from working alongside the business…I mean, in reality, most people learn on the job. (JDG)

> I learn when I am with the business. For example, the training in the Mandarin is quite different from the training here. We were more operational in the Mandarin. Not so much here. So, I need to keep learning and being stretched. (VC)

> As our boss said, 'Is there a better way of doing it?' You have to go to the business to see what they are doing now, and then adapt. You learn what to do differently by seeing what happens in practice. (CW)

The MDTs in this section place great relevance on the practical application of their learning from a business context. In essence, they are grounded in the practicalities of their world. Therefore, it is understandable that these MDTs favour this style of learning.

5.2.2.4 Researching

Researching involves using the internet, reading books or visiting libraries, or in most cases a combination of these research methods. Eight of the MDTs explicitly indicated using the internet as a means of research. Others indicated researching through their own institute magazines, or reading widely in and around the subject matter to understand the topic. Table 5.2 below gives an overview of the research method, the number of MDTs who use the specific type of research method shown, and an example for illustration purposes.

Table 5.2   *Research Methods used by MDTs to acquire learning*

Research Method	No. of MDTs	Example
Internet Search	8	*To get basic information, I do an internet search. So that's a bit of preparing. (AON)* *I would make my notes, go to the web and search and complete my analysis. The web is an immensely useful and powerful tool. (SR)*
Reading	6	*Once I've got a project where I felt uncomfortable with my knowledge or expertise level, I'll do my research in libraries or readings, or whatever is appropriate. (KC)* *Besides using the internet, I'll read institute magazines because that keeps me current.* *I've read, over the years, very widely because it's always been an area of interest. (AON)*
Combination	10	*I like reading the news, learning management theories, learning how different companies run their business. All sorts of ways. (VC)* *I think you have to have a certain degree of hunger to learn new things. You can learn from reading, internet searching, talking to people. For example, "History," what I'm studying. You could ask "what use is it to anyone in his job". However, it broadens me. It gives me more ability to talk about things. It helps me indirectly or obliquely because I can develop a relationship and through that relationship learn about business. (RB)*

In summary, the different styles depicted under "Learning Style" included Interacting, Reflecting, Real-World, and Researching. In essence, they represent a preference to learn through socializing, theorizing, practicing and reading, respectively. It was apparent that these styles were not mutually exclusive and that all of the MDTs practiced at least two of the styles depending on their circumstances. What was evident throughout was the need for business world relevancy and application.

5.2.3 Setting

The environment from which the MDTs gather information is termed the Setting. The Setting denotes "Where" the MDT trainer learnt. The three categories within this context are Academic, Informal (of a social nature), and the Workplace (which includes the MDTs own business arena).

5.2.3.1 Academic

The Academic context includes study at an academic or business institution with the intention of gaining a degree or higher degree. Six of the MDTs indicate the extent of influence that academic study has had on their own learning and its subsequent application. Table 5.3 below portrays the process of academic study and the culmination in the award of a degree or higher degree, and how it has impacted the particular MDTs approach to learning.

Table 5.3   The MDTs own learning influence from University study

Process Formalized (Academic)	Properties Type of Degree	Dimensions Extent of Learning
University	MBA, PhD	*I talk to people, particularly at university. My own style is one of querying, digging and reading. I would say I've learned largely through my academic studies. I've been learning greatly since I started the MBA and now, through my own PhD studies and my own supervisor; I'm learning a lot from them. (AON)*
	PhD	*I did an MBA at Cranfield in England. Now, that's very relevant. Therefore the MBA was a great learning influence without a doubt. And on my PhD program, last November, was the most stimulating learning I've had for a while. As I said, I wanted to do the PhD as an enabler to get me into business school teaching. (DB) I've always been able to make the*

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	PhD	*links between academic study and practice. I went to a good university, which is even more important than what I did. Academic study has given me two things, a formal way of doing research and an understanding of what's relevant in practice. I hope I never stop making the links. (LK)*
	PhD	*To answer your question, managing my own learning is simple, I just continue to enroll myself in different courses, like my PhD. (CW)*

The MDTs referred to in the above Table highlight the extent of the influence that formal study has had on each individual. It is evident this has shaped the way they learn, the need for relevance, and the importance of ongoing academic study.

5.2.3.2   Informal

In contrast to the academic setting, many of the MDTs indicate that much of their learning is gained through informal means. AON and DM indicate the importance of informal learning and how it affects their own delivery.

> I suppose much of my learning and consequently the training I give has been from an informal source. It's watching other people deliver, communicating with others, listening to different lecturers talk on various aspects of the business and learning very quickly those that were effective, engaging, and being able to transfer information in a meaningful way. (AON)

> I think it's very important to learn from informal arrangements. For example, there are people who hate the formal classroom setup and prefer to play games and have a good time. I think you can learn a lot better that way and I think it's a part of life too. (DM)

It was apparent that both types of learning were important and relevant. It can be seen that AON described the importance of both academic and informal learning from his statements above.

5.2.3.3   Workplace

The majority of the MDTs stress the importance of learning within the business environment. This includes one's own business and related businesses. A representative example is given by JDG and KC below.

> I actually don't think that most of the formal input that I've had in various courses have actually been of enormous value. I actually think more about working with the businesses whereas my education, I think, in my case, has come from actually working with RB Ltd businesses rather than a formal education. (JDG)

> I have to learn about the business, first of all. I was very frustrated when I first started training because I'm an honest person. For me, the starting point is the business. I don't learn in a vacuum, I have to learn from somewhere so for me that's the business themselves like the cashiers, the accounting managers etc. (KC)

5.2.4   Summary

In summary, 'Acquiring' learning looks at how learning is obtained by personalizing the subject matter, using preferred learning styles, and the setting or environment from or in which the learning took place. Motivation was a major influence in personalizing the learning, and this was akin to surviving in the business world. The learning style comprised four major styles which are not mutually exclusive and indicates how people prefer to learn. The learning style included learning: from other people, through self-reflection, through practical experience, or from various types of research. In terms of the setting, many of the MDTs place specific emphasis on learning obtained whilst at university as well as from higher degrees, and also included the importance of balancing this with informal learning, i.e. that in a more social context, together with making the learning relevant by going to the businesses themselves.

5.3   Adapting

Adapting is the core process whereby the MDT modifies the theories and learning experiences for use in their business world. The core category of Adapting became apparent during the selective coding phase. It was evident that the learning acquiring phase and the delivering phase were shaped during a process of adaptation. This gave the learning purpose and direction. Consequently, all the main categories interact with the process of adapting.

The section consists of four elements involved in adapting theory into practice, thereby simplifying the content or concepts, providing life links to the business to make it relevant, and assessing how they should adapt themselves in the provision of training. In essence, this core category examines "How" the MDT adapts or translates information, turning theory into practice by simplifying the subject matter, and using life experiences and personal anecdotes to make it relevant for their trainees.

5.3.1   Theory- Practice

This section examines the processes whereby the MDTs adapt theory into practice thereby taking what they've learned and making it relevant, by simplifying the learning to make it more digestible and relevant to the MDTs and by drawing links between what was learned and that which is useful in business. AON, LK, DB, and DM highlight the links between adapting theories and making them relevant to their trainees.

> There's a set of core competence which I draw a lot from. These core competencies are theoretical in nature and do not reflect actual application, therefore I need to turn the theoretical components into practical relevance and make them understand how they are actually applied. (AON)

> So I took information about the gambling industry in Macau and I had to use this in the SEP program to make it contemporary and relevant. My teaching is always followed by marketing and that's done by the guys from IMD so I need to link what I teach to his. I'm only satisfied when I actually understand what practically would be relevant. (LK)

> With the components of finance programs, I must make sure I speak to the finance people in the business. I ask what they want, this gives you credibility and you can make it relevant to their practice. (DB)

> When the SEP came up, we had a whole slew of material. It wasn't quite right, so I took the original material, which was a very basic level for management trainees, and added stuff like the joint venture agreement and built in what I thought was relevant. Simpler, but relevant. (DM)

KC and LK further illustrate how they review the theory or go back to basics and then adapt it to make it more user-friendly for their trainees.

> I have to learn about the things I'm going to teach. When the expert explained it to me, I didn't understand it, so I simplified it for the trainees. (KC)

> I have the advantage of being able to translate real life experience about the theory, for people. I wander and I explore, my learning style is exploratory. My learning style is peripatetic – derived from the Greek word, 'peri pateo' which is 'walking around'. (LK)

5.3.2   Simplifying

Simplifying is the process whereby the MDTs take an original experience, interesting article, or some form of learning, and transfer it into something simpler and easily understood by the trainees. It appears that all the MDTs use this means of adaption to ensure relevance. Examples of this process are given from AON, KC, LK, RB, DB and SR.

> Let me give you an example of handouts. I will take articles from magazines and simplify the terminology…. I must use a language that is in common use and use examples that are related and relevant to a member of the training group. (AON)

> I have to be able to transfer something that can be very complex to something simple for people to understand. (KC)

> When it comes to the core syllabus, I redevelop it, simplify it and prepare it for delivery. (LK)

> I will start with a model, usually somebody else's model, and adapt it for the people I will be delivering it to. That is why I like mind-maps. I will use it to brief people because they are much simpler. (RB)

> I was popular because I broke down what was complex and mysterious into basic blocks which were digestible and understood. (DB)

> As I said, I learnt by watching what others do. I synthesize, simplify, and turn it into day to day usage. (SR)

The MDTs take the original material and then translate it in simpler more meaningful language specifically for their needs. The shaping by simplification is obviously a major part of the MDTs role in turning learning into a relevant deliverable.

5.3.3   Life - Links to Business

This section examines the process whereby the MDTs couple their personal experience to the business in which they are delivering the learning. In this way, it provides a link, usually by means of a business story, to make a transfer of learning relevant. Eight of the MDTs use a similar approach by understanding the business needs and then using either past experience or researching for relevance, thereby simplifying and adapting related business examples to be used in the work place. JDG and SR give an example of using related industry experience to enhance their approach:

> I looked at the business that was easiest to learn, which is why I chose the Mandarin, and I needed examples for construction, so I took something I understood and molded for use in construction. (JDG)

> If I was teaching how to finance a business I would look at how those businesses were financed, then I would synthesize what was appropriate for those businesses and prepare it for delivery. (SR)

In some instances the MDTs use past experience and knowledge (prior to joining RB Ltd) in order to translate relevance to their current trainees. AON and LK state how they use such past experience and knowledge in their approaches:

> I think one of the things that has influenced me is my fourteen year association with RB Limited. I know their values, so for example, when I had MacDonald's as a client for the Hardy Group, I can take what I learnt from that relationship, and make it fit for RB Limited. (AON)

> When people ask me things like Global Strategy, I actually have an understanding of the olive industry, and I can bring to them a whole set of knowledge of business that goes way beyond their realm of experience. (LK)

A very good example of turning previous experience into specific learning is given by DB who combines his own experience in auditing with that in a specific business for RB Ltd.

> The case study I did for RB Limited was made up. It is called RB MacDonald and it is a whiskey. I audited Glenmorangie when I was an auditor, so I knew about the whiskey industry in Scotland, therefore I was able to connect the suppliers of whiskey with retailers and make it relevant to RB Ltd's wine and spirits division. (DB)

These examples typify the way the MDTs convert their prior knowledge or related learning experiences into relevant learning stories for their trainees.

5.3.4 *Summary*

The translation of theory into practice, reducing complexity to simplicity, and linking of ones own experiences to making learning relevant - underpin all of the MDTs approaches to adapting learning for delivery. It is evident that their extensive background, both academic (theoretical) and life related (practical) - enable the MDTs to adapt and translate prior learning into practical usage. This section addressed the question as to 'How' the MDTs translate learning into relevant practical application.

5.4 Delivering

Delivering focuses on the trainer as a teacher/facilitator. Delivering is the process whereby the MDT 'Designs' the program, adopts a 'Training Style' for the delivery, and indicates the 'Setting' where the learning/training is to take place. It should be noted that these sub-categories closely reflect the categories of the trainer as a learner (depicted under 5.1 "Acquiring"). The style of the MDT, as a learner and as a deliverer, is combined when forming the typology of MDTs, and is further discussed in the next chapter. The 'Delivering' sub-categories are shown in Table 5.4 (below).

Table 5.4   The Category of Delivering, its Sub-categories and Processes

DELIVERING		
Designing *(Process Driver)*	*Training Styles* *(Role Played)*	*Setting* *(Context)*
Content Driven Conceptually Driven Practically Driven	Educator Facilitator Coordinator	Classroom Classroom/Workplace (Local) Workplace (Overseas)

It should be noted that the design of all the courses/initiatives offered in RB Ltd are for executive development. In essence, there are four types of learning experiences described in the overall executive development plan. It is useful to review the executive development plan as it gives an indication as to the types of content and the context in which certain courses or programmes are offered. In addition, the terminology used to describe the course of programme appears to have significance, as they are described by the MDTs quite distinctly throughout this section.

The lower level supervisory courses are referred to as follows: Basic Finance Workshop (2 days); Business Law Essentials (2 days); and Core Management Skills (3 days). The next level up is for 'Management' and has two components, an Emerging Leaders Programme (ELP – 3 days), and an Executive Development Programme (EDP – 5 days). The supervisors and managers can also attend a Development Centre (3 days) to gain an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. There are two more senior courses for General Management and are referred to as the Business Enhancement Initiative (BEI – 13 days) and the Senior Executive Programme (SEP – 16 days.) The most senior courses are for Directorate level staff and comprise the Director Development Initiative (DDI - 14 days), and courses run by Harvard/Insead/London Business School and typically focus on HR, strategy or business leadership (of varying duration).

The courses and initiatives focus on basic managerial skills and can be classroom taught to those of a more strategic nature, whereby MDTs visit businesses in several other countries to see how they operate. The design of all the programmes comes from a combination of input from the HR Team at RB Ltd together with diagnosed needs and desires from the varying business units.

5.4.1 Designing

The design stage examines "What" is to be delivered. Three components determine how the Design is influenced. For example, by its contents, by the concepts being taught, or by using a practical approach. Whilst it was evident from the analysis that these sub-categories fit the flow of information from the MDTs, it was not surprising. This is because the courses/initiatives described above lend themselves to these sub-categories. However, this was not realized until after the analysis had been completed.

Table 5.5 shows which MDT focuses on content, concepts, or takes a pragmatic approach to delivery. It can be seen that the MDTs have one or some of the other styles (types) depending on their level of expertise.

Table 5.5   List of MDTs that utilise a style for delivery of courses/initiatives

Content Driven	Conceptually Drive	Practically Driven
DB, VC, KC, CW, SR	RB, JDG, AON, DB, DM, and LK,	RB, JDG, AON, and LK

5.4.1.1   Content Driven

The classification of a content driven design indicates that it is the content that drives the programme. The content refers to specific material that is used in the design of the course that needs to be learned by the MDTs. The typical programmes that fell into this category were the Basic Finance Workshop, the Core Management Skills, and certain parts of the Executive Development Programme. These programmes provided fundamental management education for the trainees. DB, VC, and SR indicate how they design and approach the delivery of their courses:

> In the usual Basic Finance Workshop the content doesn't really change. It's not like someone brought out a new paper on the way to put together a balance sheet. The design is pretty much fixed, at this level. (DB)

> I work with KC on the EDP. I would focus on the content, like including stuff from Maslow, and give basic factual information. Sometimes I would build on this

information, but I mainly make sure the information to be absorbed is structured in a logical way. (VC)

I teach specific finance programmes which help those without a finance background become equal to the more qualified accounting people. My tack is to introduce them to jargon in a layered way. Don't forget my main targets are those that don't know anything about finance. (SR)

It is evident that the more junior programmes tend to be more content driven as there is a need for input in the form of basic information. In addition, the role of the MDT is to provide basic educational knowledge in the form of technical knowledge. In this regard the programmes/courses are essentially didactic in that they are trainer-driven.

5.4.1.2   *Conceptually Driven.*

A conceptually driven course refers to a programme whereby the ideas being presented require more interaction that in a pure content driven programme. In many instances this requires 'facilitation' by the MDT and not just knowledge input. LK indicates the move away from 'traditional' programmes when he expresses the requirements desired by JDG (for the formulation of the BEI):

She said we don't want the traditional programme. We respect the ability of senior managers to learn. Your job, LK and AON, is to act as coaches and facilitators in their learning, not to teach them. (LK)

The ability to generate ideas and use them in a training context is apparent in the case of DM. His main role is writing scenarios for the Development Centre. He indicates how he creates such ideas based on his own observations:

All we need to do is generate a crisis situation that requires an instant response. In many instances I just make them up. Let me clarify that. I like to think I take an interest in practically everything, so I watch, and then I might see something and say, 'That's interesting', and then I just write down the idea. I use them in my scenarios. (DM)

For some of the more senior programmes there is a drive to facilitate senior managers to think more strategically. In this way the interaction between the MDT and the trainees is much more interactive. AON makes this point apparent when he describes how he sets the scene with MDTs on the BEI:

> These people are technically confident senior managers. We say to them, 'You've got to think like a GM or CEO. You have to look at the value chain; look at the whole'. Let them push back, challenge, and then you'll get them to look more strategically at the business. (AON)

The theme described by AON concerns getting the trainees to think about situations, to generate debate or question and challenge, and to raise new ideas. In essence, it appears to be far more active or participative in format than the content driven programmes. The role of the MDT appears to be more facilitative in nature and not trainer driven.

5.4.1.3   Practically Driven

The practically driven initiatives appear to have little or no input from the MDTs, and they have been designed with this in mind. There is little facilitation as the setting for the learning is outside of the workplace, often overseas, and based on the learners identifying and creating their own learning. RB, JDG, AON, and LK described their experiences in the design of these types of learning initiative:

> In order to change the mindset (particularly of the Hong Kong Directors) we decided to take them out of their comfort zone and stick them with Chief Executives all over the world. And so, the net effect to that was that they saw the CEO's being successful and then basically said, 'Ah ha.' They got the 'Ah ha!' It can be done. It is possible to look at things in a different way. (RB)

> I would neither describe this as a programme, nor an intervention. It's an initiative. There are no lectures. At the start we say, 'Welcome to the brief. This is not a programme.' This is not a management development programme as you understand it. This is about you as learners. (JDG)

So, my role in this process when we were talking about the design was actually to contribute ideas on how we might be able to create a learning environment for this to take place. (AON)

Right, the experience of JDG, the experience of Alan and my experience combined means that we have already a philosophy which underpins the program, which is that this is not about theoretical learning, this is about experiential learning…The spirit of learning by looking at other companies was there. (LK)

This section examined the process of design of programmes/initiatives and uncovered three distinct types: those which relied heavily on content, others which were conceptually driven, and a third type, for the more senior programmes which were totally pragmatic in that there was virtually no input from the MDTs (as their role appeared to be more of a guide and a facilitator of the learning experience).

5.4.2 Training Styles

This section closely aligns with that of the MDTs learning style mentioned earlier. Together, these two sections heavily influence the typology of MDTs which will be discussed in the next Chapter. After an analysis of the styles of training it was apparent that there were three main types of trainer. These types provided a sub-type for the developing typology of MDTs with the focus on the application of the actual training. They can be referred to as: the Educator, the Facilitator, and the Co-ordinator or Guide. These styles are not mutually exclusive, and indicate the approach or style adopted by the trainer in determining how best to provide instruction and/or the learning experience in the programme/initiative being delivered. In essence, this section examines 'how' the trainers prefer to deliver the learning experience.

5.4.2.1 The Educator

The 'Educator' trainer has been labeled as such as they impart knowledge usually by utilizing a style of delivery based on providing fundamental technical knowledge, for example finance. The 'Educator' has extensive knowledge in the subject matter and has responsibility to impart that knowledge to the trainee. The basic material is delivered followed by a simplification of the subject matter, and giving real-life examples to support the material being delivered. KC, DB and SR indicate their role as an educator by linking the way they prefer to train.

There are parts where you have to be a trainer. You have to do and tell them. People from research said, so and so, so and so, and I believe in this. Okay, now let's do some activity. Most of the time you need some sort of theory input, in which case I am the trainer, or I am that lecturer, whatever you call it. (KC)

With RB Ltd I am a trainer. Trainer, teacher because of the technical side. (DB)

I believe I am developing them by training them. So my role is to explain the technical jargon to them. (SR)

In order to get the technical aspects across to the trainees, the MDTs simplify the material by either using visuals, or layering the information in ways to make it more digestible to the trainees. VC and SR give examples of how they approach this aspect.

Let me give you an idea. There's one on cost-structure. Cost-structure is very difficult to describe for non-financial people to understand, but I use lots of visuals and props and daily things for illustration. (VC)

I think I've developed a talent over the years of communicating financials in simple terms. The key is simplification and giving a number of examples. My tack is to introduce them to jargon and concepts in a layered way. So, mention it, bring in some examples or anecdotes which reinforces it. (SR)

The Educator trainer appears to be charged with having a certain amount of knowledge or expertise which they need to transmit. In most cases, this comes from their background and the types of material that they are comfortable teaching. DB and VC give an indication of this by illustrating their own professional background and their personal beliefs of trainees' expectations.

I'm employed as an accounting lecturer. So I try and think of ways to make it easy for non-accountants to learn. I break it up, draw pictures and use analogies. (DB)

My group is often made up of Chinese people, so they are less likely to have discussion first, and without any concepts would not come to a conclusion. They would prefer to be told that this is the conclusion, and have the details explained. I teach this way maybe because I am Chinese. I prefer structure and regard myself as a 'reflector'. (VC)

Educator trainers are highly proficient in their own technical knowledge but also call upon real life examples to make the material being delivered relevant. All of the MDTs within this category use real life examples to support their delivery. DM, SR and DB give instances of practical examples being used.

It's really the practical examples that I'm giving. (DM)

My whole approach to teaching finance is that it's integral within the business. Therefore, I will use day to day examples – even from the Financial Times – to support what I say. (SR)

I use a lot of anecdotes, I have a structure and I walk the structure. Let me give you an example, I knew that RB had bought a property and used that as an example – all knew the story because it was quite a famous purchase. This was a practical example I used. (DB)

In summary, the MDTs in this category have shown the need for expert knowledge, coupled with an ability to simplify the material and link it to real-life examples. In this way, the trainees should begin to understand the relevance of what's being taught and its practical application.

5.4.2.2   *Facilitator*

The 'Facilitator' type focuses on engaging the trainees in activities that utilize their learning as part of the input. The facilitation process is similar in structure to that used by the 'educator', in that they also simplify, use concepts of adult learning in delivery, and utilize real life examples to add the practical relevance to their style of delivery. AON, JDG, and LK are quite specific in the style they adopt by indicating the 'facilitation' type of role"

My role is to facilitate the learning of the group. So, my role is not so much about the content. It's to enable them to challenge, with enough knowledge not to feel foolish or inadequate, but to probe. I then seek feedback from the group about the relevance of what we're doing. (AON)

My job is to help them. We can't help them with content. We assist in their learning. AON is there to guide them. It's their input. (JDG)

I'm facilitating their learning. To be more precise, I wasn't teaching things. I would take charge at certain points in time and hand it back across to them. (LK)

The 'facilitator' also expresses a desire to keep things simple, both in the way they present, and in how they encourage them to learn. For RB there is a strong need to reduce all issues down to three major themes or ideas. This tends to permeate his approach. For JDG the emphasis is being on straightforward and simple. LK also emphasizes simplicity to make his points concise and easily understandable for the trainees:

I use the Mckinsey approach: Do it in threes - every overhead should have only three messages. Use three colours. Divide things into three's. When I talk I will start by saying, 'I'm gong to talk about three things…bang, bang, bang… (RB)

My rule is not to make it complicated. 'Keep it simple stupid'. I think one needs to be sincere, and I also think it's critical to keep it simple. (JDG)
I use very simple models which have to be obvious in context. Some of them are like Porter's Five Forces Model. Some are two by two matrices. That's as complex as I ever want them to be. Anything more complex than that, they forget. (LK)

The facilitative role builds on the knowledge of the individual and adds to it by the MDT giving their own experiences to reinforce the learning. This aspect of the training tends to be a common feature throughout all forms of delivery – giving practical, relevant examples. RB and AON indicate how they impart their own experiences:

I always try to give a practical analogy, which means an example, a real one, from my own experience with different companies throughout the years. (RB)

> I give experience from companies I have worked with. This makes it interesting and relevant. It enables them to relate it to their own experiences and generates questions. We then discuss experiences and the ideas behind them. (AON)

The major difference between the educator training style and the facilitative training style involves whether the emphasis is on the input of content and how much of this input is explored by the group - or assisting by the facilitator. There is still an emphasis on keeping things simple and of providing real life examples

5.4.2.3   Coordinator

The 'co-coordinator' type relies on a delivery mode that moves away from any form of content input, and also from providing learning emanating from group discussion. The role appears to take the form of a 'guide' or provider of the environment for a learning experience to take place. This appears to be a very hands-off approach, and links heavily with the next section on 'setting', as it is felt that the business environment shapes learning in a far more practical way than content-driven or conceptually driven approaches. JDG and LK explain how this works when they play this role:

> I am often told, 'Oh, you're a teacher'. I say, 'No. I don't teach anything.' 'I'm just helping people to learn.' All you're doing is creating an environment where, suddenly they're running around doing it, and you get them to stop and think…then they're learning. (JDG)

> There is a massive difference between the way we run the DDI and the BEI to traditional programmes. We are not there to teach them. We are there to facilitate their learning. To help them use their knowledge and to point them in the right direction. To provide directional guidance based on our consulting experience – remember AON and I are consultants as well. (LK)

The role of the MDT is clearly affected by the design element mentioned above. In this regard many of the comments that are applicable under one section are also relevant in other sections. For example, AON indicated above (under 'Design – 'Pragmatic) how the DDI and BEI initiatives have no content. He also indicates his role, which could be described in this section as a co-ordination or guiding role. AON stated his role as follows:

So, my role in this process when we were talking about the design was actually to contribute ideas on how we might be able to create a learning environment for this to take place. (AON)

5.4.3   Setting

The Setting indicates the physical environment in which the training is delivered. In essence, there are two types of Setting; the first is a classroom setting (albeit held in a hotel conference room or in-house training room), the second is workplace oriented (either within a company associated with RB Ltd or other business organization).

The literature presented by RB Ltd on all the Executive Development programmes indicates where and how the programmes/initiatives will be delivered. For the more junior programmes they are almost wholly classroom based. The middle management programme includes a number of site visits to businesses. And for the two most senior programmes there is almost no classroom input, and the learning takes place from the experience in visiting the business and seeing how the business, and its executives, operate in practice.

5.4.3.1   Classroom

The three supervisory courses described above are all held in the in-house training centre at RB Ltd. The Managerial courses are most often held in the conference or training rooms at major hotels in the South East Asian region. The Senior Executive Programme (in the General Management section) is also held at a local hotel.

5.4.3.2   Workplace

The BEI and the DDI involve various phases and are heavily reliant on action learning experiences. The setting includes visits to home country industries and visits to several countries across the globe. The extent to which RB Ltd tries to provide practical relevance within the context of business is apparent from the comments from both RB and AON. The major driver for providing such workplace learning is often to change the mindsets of senior staff. RB goes on to specify that all such learning has to be place in the context of business organizations.

In order to change the mindset (particularly of the Hong Kong Directors) we decided to take them out of their comfort zone and stick them with Chief Executives all over the world. And so, the net effect to that was that they saw the CEO's being successful

and then basically said, 'Ah ha.' They got the 'Ah ha!' It can be done. It is possible to look at things in a different way. (RB)

It can be seen that the co-ordination role is very much 'hands off' in terms of training input. The emphasis is placed on providing the learning environment from which the trainees can learn. The role of the coordinator appears to be that of a guide in these situations.

5.4.3.3   Summary

The process of 'Delivering' encompasses the design, training styles and contextual setting in which the training is actually delivered. The design aspect is heavily influenced by the either the amount of content to be introduced, or the facilitation of ideas that are generated from the trainees in the group. In addition, there is an important element present in the most senior programmes of the provision of no content, rather the design of the learning experience to be dependant on the setting in which it is provided. The typical styles that are undertaken by the MDTs fall into three main categories: the 'educator', the facilitator, and the co-ordinator (or guide). However, it is also noticeable that some MDTs play in one, some or all of the roles, depending on their own level of expertise in these roles, and their own comfort zone. The setting relates to the contextual environment in which the training or learning experience is provided. The setting can either be classroom oriented or workplace oriented. In some cases the delivery is made in venues that include in-house training facilities (including in the conference facilities in hotels) or in a workplace setting both in the country of origin or in other workplace environments in businesses across the globe. The emphasis throughout this section was on providing a base of knowledge that could be built up, using simple tools, and with a major focus on business related practical relevancy.

5.5 Evaluating

Evaluating is the process whereby feedback is often derived from the courses delivered and the various sources from which feedback is obtained. There are two components to this section. The first covers informal evaluation, using self-judgment, verbal feedback, and reasons why evaluation is occasionally not done. The second component examines the formal types of feedback mechanisms which are essentially Evaluation Forms. The Evaluation Forms were a means of triangulating the effectiveness of the training/learning experiences delivered by the MDTs to ascertain whether the learning experiences were relevant to the trainees.

5.5.1   Informal Evaluation

There are several means by which the MDTs obtain feedback on the courses they deliver. During the analysis the main mechanisms for judging performance came from either making a self-judgment as to how the trainees were performing, communicating with existing trainees, those from previous courses, or by contacting the business unit receiving the 'trained' participant.

The main feature in using self-judgment comes from observing changes in attitude and behaviour. The MDTs using this evaluation were looking for changes in the trainees that could be seen, rather than from what they were saying. The MDTs were confident that they knew that learning was taking place, often based on their years of experience in conducting the learning activities and observing performance. LK, KC, JDG, and SR all give similar self-judgment statements in answer to the question, 'How do you know the trainees are learning?'

> Changes in behaviour. I'm usually on the ball. I can usually tell you person by person how much they have learned. (LK)

> You see the changes in behaviour. I call it attitudinal change, behavioural change. (KC)

> You can visibly see their attitudes change. How you measure it is just impossible, but you can visibly see them learning. (JDG)

> I have now done this teaching role for 20 years. So, I am very able to judge how they are doing. I'm 56 so I have wisdom and a lot of practical experience. (SR)

The responses indicate an intuitive way of determining learning, based on extensive previous experience in delivering learning experiences. In these statements it is apparent that the focus is on seeing how people behave whilst attending the learning experience. On occasions, as with the senior programmes, the evaluation of performance is done by several MDTs observing the same group. AON and LK indicate how this is carried out on the BEI programme:

> After every day on the BEI we have a debrief. So we do a 'take' on what's happened during the day and whether we felt there was a progression of learning and understanding. (AON)

> We talk to each other. When you've got two trainers in the room the feedback is immediate, because the other trainer is also observing. Then we discuss it at the evening debrief. (LK)

These responses indicate that the trainees are a passive party in the self-judgment evaluation process. However, it can be seen that such evaluations are done either by the MDTs individually or collectively.

A second dimension to obtaining feedback is from the trainees' comments. All of the MDTs indicate that they gauge the progress of the course or initiative by frequently checking with the trainees as to how they believe they are benefiting from the learning experience. The checking is done at various stages but includes an early check of participant expectations against the course objectives, an ongoing 'review' during the session, and a review at the end of the course. These are the typical stages of review. An example of each is given by VC, AON, and KC, respectively:

> I always ask about their own objectives at the start of the programme. It's an expectation check. (VC)

> I monitor as I am going along. One of the key theories of feedback I have is how it engages people, and how they can relate it to whatever they are working on. That to me is a gauge of effectiveness. (AON)

> I check at the end of the day. I will also check the next morning to see how much they remember, and then move on from there. (KC)

Other forms of feedback and evaluation came from comments made by trainees on previous courses, from clients, and from peers. An example, in each of these instances, is given by DB, VC, and JDG:

> Some of the best feedback I got was from people who had been on the course previously. (AON)

> I met with the client, Phil, and ask what feedback he had from the trainees and how we could improve next time. (VC)

> We knew the finale didn't work so we all sat down, AON, RB, LK, and myself and discussed how it would work better. (JDG)

The MDTs acknowledged that it was often very difficult to assess relevance and gauge the actual learning undertaken by the trainees – due to the subjective nature of the course/learning experience. LK highlights the complication when he describes that it's what the learner actually does with the information after the course/experience is over that counts:

> It's not what they taken out of the room. It's what they do after to continue the process of learning that to me is a key marker of success. (LK)

The importance of informal feedback is made when RB describes it as an important part of how he evaluates courses and learning experiences in RB Ltd.

> I'm more interested in the feedback you get, informal feedback, as opposed to formal feedback, on how well it's going. (RB)

5.5.2   *Formal Evaluation*

Formal mechanisms of evaluation are done by using a dedicated form for trainees to comment on the courses/programmes. These are termed as 'happiness sheets' by VC and SR. It was apparent that not all the courses have such a form. All the junior and mid-management trainees had an evaluation form, however, those on the DDI and the BEI did not; in these cases the learning was obtained by the participant without input from the MDTs.

A major feature in the research was the ability of the MDTs to transfer relevance from the learning delivered to the participant – in practical terms. Table 5.6 shows the summary of comments given by trainees in the courses listed in terms of whether the course/programme held from 2005 to 2009 was 'Relevant to Your Needs':

Table 5.6 Summary of Relevance of Subject Matter Taught on Various Courses

Course Title	Rating for Relevance (Out of 6)	Sample size of (Courses/Trainees)	Summary of Comments (Most relevant aspects)
SEP	5.2	5 / 68	The practical examples. Great sharing experience. Learning from each other.
DC	5.8	5 / 60	Excellent diagnostic on oneself. Understanding corporate expectations and core values.
EDP	5.5	5 / 80	Use of management 'tools'. Use of TOSIDPAR (for problem solving).
CMS	5.0	5 / 59	Learning of 'technical' skills Learning core competencies.
Basic Finance	5.3	5 / 45	Very practical for the non-professional. Great basic understanding of the fundamentals of finance.

It is clear that the ratings obtained indicate a high degree of relevancy for the participant. Specific questions on the evaluation form included statements of 'Relevance in the workplace', and 'Practical application', which are key components in this research as they underpin the theory of transference of relevance.

This section analysed the methods that the MDTs in this research conduct evaluation of their programmes'/initiatives. It is evident that they rely on both informal and formal evaluation for these learning experiences. Whilst there may be a greater emphasis placed on the informal approaches, especially for the most senior programmes, it can be seen that there are various types of feedback/evaluation methods that are used to continually ensure relevance.

5.6   The Theory of Transferring Relevance

This section shows how all the categories described so far integrate to form the theory of transferring relevance. The core category in this research is labeled 'adapting'. The other main categories of 'analysing', 'acquiring', 'delivering', and 'evaluating' are interlinked with it in all its important aspects and indicate a process influencing the MDT. The process of 'adapting' implies that the MDTs in this study shape their own learning with a view to translating it to fit with their respective trainees. Whilst the process of adaption applies to all MDTs each MDT will have a slightly different approach in the way they manage their own learning. This will be dependant on the types of programme/learning experience on which

they are engaged. Therefore, the concept of transferring relevance is created from the core category of 'adapting' and best captures the MDTs approach in turning learning into practical relevance. The diagram portrayed at Figure 5.2 illustrates the theory of translating relevance with respect to the core category and the other main categories.

Figure 5.2   The theory of transferring relevance depicting the category of 'adapting' as the core category.
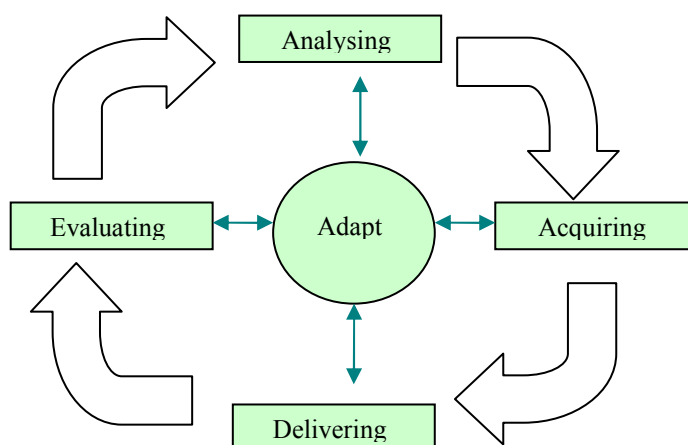
The theory of transferring relevance commences with the process of analyzing. This is essentially the starting point for the MDTs. At this stage the MDTs examine the business in order to understand what is needed. They also diagnose the problems facing the organization in order to appreciate the 'gaps' between where the organization is currently situated (from a performance perspective), and where it wants to go. The MDTs then decide whether they have the ability to address the gaps, and fulfill corporate needs. Once an analysis is made of the learning requirements the MDTs go through a process of acquiring knowledge or skills in order to address the deficiencies uncovered. The learning tends to be very personal, as it is contingent upon each MDTs own motivation for learning, their preferred learning style, and the setting in which they prefer to obtain the learning. It is evident that a great deal of emphasis is place on learning of both and academic and practical nature. The MDTs take the learning acquired and translate it for use in their practical settings.

After the learning has been acquired, the MDTs go through a process of applying the learning for their trainees. This aspect is called 'delivering', and consists of a design phase, a selection of training styles to determine how best to present the learning experience, as well as the setting in which the learning would be best received. The final process of evaluating comprises of an ongoing process of review to see if the learning acquired and delivered fits

with expectations. In this way the process of adapting learning to make its transfer to the workplace relevant, is constantly in play.

In summary, the process in the core category of adapting can be seen as the hub around which the other main categories circle and link. Collectively, the interaction of all the categories, produce the theory of transferring relevance.

5.7   Conclusion

This chapter described all of the categories, sub-categories and processes in the theory of *Transferring Relevance*. In addition, the emergence of the core category of adapting is explained. The integration of all the categories and their interrelationship to the core category is illustrated in terms of how it creates the theory of *Transferring Relevance*. A major outcome that arises from this research is the development of a typology of MDTs in regards to how they manage their learning <u>and</u> apply that learning through the process of adaption in accordance with the theory of *Transferring Relevance*. This typology is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

A GROUNDED TYPOLOGY OF HOW MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT TRAINERS MANAGE AND APPLY THEIR OWN LEARNING

Introduction

A major outcome of this study is the development of a typology of MDTs in addressing the key research questions, *"How do MDTs manage their own learning? And how do they apply that learning in practice?'* The typology is based on the preferences made by the MDTs in response to the interview questions and from the major categories that evolved from the process of analyzing, acquiring, adapting, delivering, and evaluating in the Theory of Transferring Relevance. Consequently, the MDTs can be broadly classified into three broad types of learner/trainer: the Academic-Educator (A-E), the Conceptualiser-Facilitator (C-F), and the Practitioner-Guide (P-G). The table below indicates the best fit classification for the distinct types of learner/trainer for the MDTs in this study.

Table 6.1 The MDTs classified into the 'best fit' for their learner/training typology

	Academic-Educator	Conceptualiser-Facilitator	Practitioner-Guide
1.	CW	LK	RB
2.	VC	DM	JDG
3.	SR	AON	
4.	DB	KC	

Each of the types has a two-fold dimension. The first is the activity of learning which includes both the type of learning and the context in which it is delivered. It addresses what they need to learn, how they actually learn, and where they obtain their learning. The second influence is the delivery of training which examines what it is that they deliver, how they actually deliver the training, and where such training in delivered. The pivotal category of 'adapting' provides the link between learning and application and stresses the importance of simplifying material for the end user, reinforcing ideas with practical examples, and highlighting how content or concepts are relevant for each trainee. Each of the categories produced an underlying set of factors that impacted each of the MDTs in a slightly different way. These shaped and determined the types of role that they played when working for RB

Ltd. Table 6.2 below gives an overview of the predominant factors influencing the formation of the typology, together with a brief example of specific areas that impact the category mentioned.

Table 6.2   Overview of predominant factors in the formation of the typology

Analysing	**Acquiring**	**Adapting**	**Delivering**	**Evaluating** (Sources)
• Corporate Values e.g. Identifying the corporate 'gaps' or needs	• Motivation e.g. Drivers being personal 'survival' and pursuit of ongoing learning	• Simplifying e.g. reduction to simplicity by reducing the complex to the simple	• Using content Versus Concepts e.g. Favouring either a content-driven style over a more conceptually driven, interactive style, of delivery	• Self e.g. Using one's own ability to evaluate trainees
• Business Needs and 'Gaps' e.g. Understanding the expectations of the various stakeholders	• Internal Preferences e.g. Exploring reasons to obtain further qualifications Vs experience	• Translating Theory to Practice e.g. Adapting theoretical content by putting it into a practical workplace related context	• Training style e.g. Displaying a preference for a style as an educator, c-ordinator or guide in the learning process	• Business e.g. Using both informal and formal measures to gauge feedback
• Personal Competence e.g. Understanding one's own abilities and those of other MDTs	• Academic Versus Practical Input e.g. Determining the extent to which theoretical Vs practical input is needed	• Using anecdotes e.g. Using personal stories linking experiences gained within the organisation or from a relevant personal database	• Training Context e.g. Using a context that is classroom-based, off-site, or completely out of the normal workplace environment (overseas)	• Audience e.g. Using audience participation at the time of delivery and post-delivery (sometimes years after)

In the first part of this chapter a description of the typology of management learning approaches and their application is given. This is followed by an illustrative account of each of

the three types: the Academic–Educator (A-E), Conceptual–Facilitator (C-F), and the Practitioner–Guide (P-G). The third section gives an account of the assembly of the categories and how they link to each of three main 'types' portrayed.

6.1 The Typology of Management Learning and Application Approaches

6.1.1 Overview

In conducting the research into the management learning approaches and their subsequent delivery methods, it was found that three distinct types could be described. Whilst it was found that there was some overlap in each of the categories (in the way certain management trainers acted), the three types closely followed the ways in which the 'types' were formulated.

The three types could be described as representing the 'learning' and 'application' approaches of each MDT. These were the Academic – Educator (A-E), the Conceptualiser-Facilitator (C-F), and the Practitioner – Guide (P-G). It may be useful to view these approaches as preferences, not to emphasise importance but to show how each approach was influenced. For example, the A-E type tended to focus on content learning, tended to use pedagogical methods in delivery, and was mainly 'classroom' oriented. The C-F tended to use learning based on 'concepts' or ideas, used essentially andragogical methods of delivery, and frequently arranged training environments to facilitate learning. The P-G used minimal content and concepts, preferring to place the learning within a 'business context'. The P-G also used mainly andragogical methods to achieve aims, and tended to use off-site locations to both enhance their own learning and its subsequent application.

A major influence in determining the approach used by each MDT was the strength of both the corporate and personal role expectations placed on each MDT in order to transfer relevance to the learner. Some of the MDTs were expected to provide lower level management training and development and instill the appropriate core competencies for that level. Other MDTs were expected to provide experiential learning that utilised other participant knowledge and experience or to provide learning. In some instances this required traveling to a location where such workplace learning could be observed. A model is shown in Figure 6.1 to portray the management learning approaches and influences on method of application to training situation. These are explained in detail in the subsequent sections.

6.1.2   The Academic – Educator (A-E) Type

The Academic – Educator places major emphasis on learning and 'education' that has its base in academia or professional qualifications. The learning stems from a source of education that gives a qualification or recognised status with a professional institution. The qualification represents both knowledge and professional expertise. For example, this would include the fields of teaching/training or finance. There is a belief that learning is gained by obtaining recognised qualifications. The focus tends to be on the 'content' of what is learned with a view to extracting fundamental principles for use in transference to the business workplace.

Figure 6.1   Management Learning Approaches and Application Influences
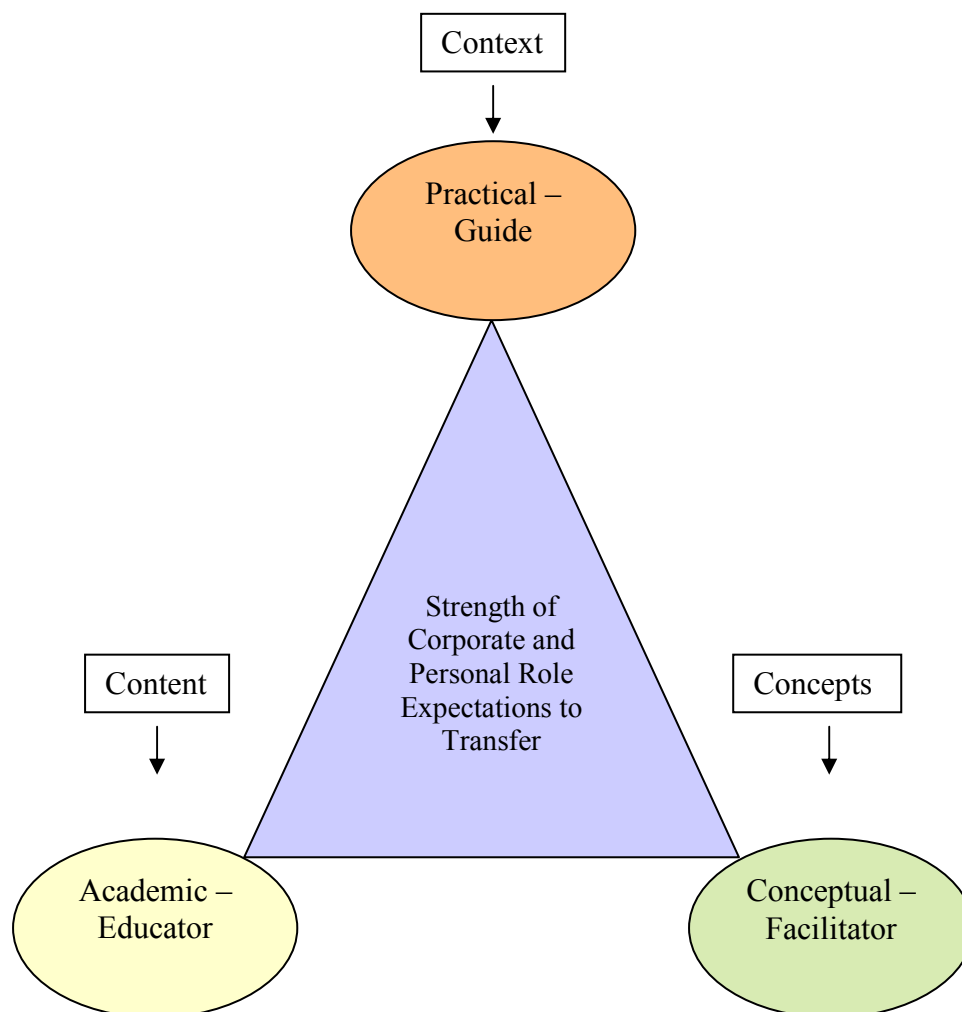
The transference of relevance is usually achieved by use of the qualifications and knowledge gained predominantly within the realms of its discipline. The authority figure in the learning relationship is the MDT. The A-E holds the expert knowledge and adopts an educational role. The application of the approach tends to be akin to a traditional classroom, with an emphasis

on delivering appropriate 'content' within the framework of the trainee's business. This was particularly apparent in basic 'Finance' oriented courses.

6.1.3 The Conceptualiser – Facilitator (C-F) Type

The C-F type places major learning in the form of 'tools', 'concepts' and managerial ideas to make sense of the learning being undertaken. In addition, learning was also gained from other trainees, rather than predominantly from the trainer. Unlike the 'Academic' learner described above, the qualification is not regarded as being that important. The importance lies in the ideas, techniques, or skills that may come from academic study or pursuit that can equip the management trainer with the means to subsequently transfer relevance to their audience.

The transference of relevance is usually achieved by the management trainer 'exploring' the concept or using the 'tools' with the group of participants and placing more emphasis on andragogical methods to achieve their aim than the 'Educator' described above. The 'content' is not as important as the 'concepts' which the trainees rely on to explore and develop the ideas within their own frames of reference. There is also no authority figure as in the role of the Educational role of the A-E, as the group share and explore the input. The 'Facilitator', however, develops and shapes the ideas. Typical conceptual areas include those discussed in middle level programmes.

6.1.4 The Practitioner-Guide (P-G) Type

The P-G type places major emphasis on learning in a very practical way. The emphasis is not on the academic issues, nor the concepts or ideas behind theories, but on how things actually work in practice. The 'Practitioner' type of learner is highly likely to go to a particular business and find out how a particular activity is performed in their work context, before trying to translate or apply it in another specific setting. This type of learning includes 'situational learning' where the management trainer is constantly looking for, or recalls, workplace incidents that can be used in 'teaching' style situations in the future. The transference of relevance tends to be framed in either a demonstrative fashion or be anecdotal in nature. In this regard, both the 'content' of specific learning is addressed, and the 'context' in which it is used. In addition, the context in which the new learning is derived is used by the 'Guide' to draw parallels as to how such learning may be transferred back to the learner's workplace.

The Practitioner-Guide is always seeking learning links between what RB. Ltd requires, the existing level of knowledge of the participants, and the contextual situations or existing workplace practices from which learning can be extracted. Typical programmes or 'interventions' that incorporate these practices include the Business Enhancement and the Director Development Initiatives.

6.2   Illustrative Accounts of the Three Typological Approaches and Discussion

In the previous section an overview of the main characteristics of the three types of managerial learning and application approaches were given. In this section illustrative accounts of each typology are given. Each distinct typology is presented and the discussed. The three accounts include direct quotes where possible.

6.1.1   Type A - The Academic- Educator (A-E) Type

The essential characteristics of the A-E type are the reliance and importance of 'academic' or 'professional' education/learning. To achieve this aim the 'content' of the learning is all important, with the role of the MDT being that of the expert. Close links are made between the academic or professional base of knowledge of the MDT with what are seen as the 'correct' practices to be used.

The typical A-E learner manages their own learning by furthering their own qualifications or obtaining and maintaining their own professional knowledge. In the question and answer session below 'W' refers to me as the researcher, and CW is one of the MDTs.

> W: How do you manage your own learning? I mean, do you have a plan?
> CW: My plan is quite simple. I just continue to enroll myself in different courses...
> Like, basically, all my other degrees are MBA's and the Master of Education and
> Psychology, it's all distance learning, part-time; it's not really full-time learning.

Whilst the MDT, in this instance, appears to place emphasis on the recognition of qualifications, the same applies to the MDT who has a focus on specific programmes, such as financial topics. In this way, knowledge of the content is of paramount importance when teaching or instruction is in 'content' related subjects.

> W: Question: How do you prepare for learning events which you will need to deliver?

> SR: Always have a body of knowledge which is greater than you're going to teach. So, if you're teaching this much, you have this much. So, know the outside edge of it. So, your working within the circle, know the bits that are around it. So, for example, if you're dealing with a company, an international company, which sells in different currencies, then know enough about currency management. You are the expert and need to provide the input. This is expected from your audience.

This illustrates the role of the MDT as the 'authority' figure and provider of knowledge. To ensure that 'expert' and relevant knowledge is obtained, the MDT usually gleans the potential management education/knowledge 'gap' from internal experts. In some cases, these may be senior managerial staff that can identify the corporate training needs within their field of expertise. In this way, relevance of what is transferred or taught should be achieved. SR goes on to illustrate these points.

> W: How do you discover what the participant needs to learn?
> SR: I want to know what they need to learn. I want to hear what the CEO thinks they don't. What the CFO thinks they don't understand. He gets that often from management meetings, but frequently again, with my population they don't have the knowledge to fight back. So, they accept the judgment without being able necessarily to do it. And one of my roles in training is undoubtedly to build the confidence level, to enable them to challenge, with enough knowledge not to feel foolish or inadequate, but to probe. And as they get used to this they find a little more information each time. So, I prepare them to challenge something, there's an answer that comes back. That answer means that they have got one step further. Then they have another go, and I answer that. So, their knowledge builds on confidence, and that's part of what I would do.

The MDT provides the transition from learning to application by using a 'building block' or layered approach in delivering or applying knowledge. The reason for this is to provide the participants with basic information, or basic principles, and then increase the complexity without losing the audience's understanding. For SR this could be classified as an educational approach.

W: How would you classify yourself, as an educator, trainer or developer? I notice you say you, run training courses. Could you explain?

SR: Um, that's because that's what we call them, really. Education has a much broader perspective. I am very firm in my need to be broad and bring in functions and relate it to, say, the margins in the business because that's a marketing decision about pricing, but that has implications for the amount you can pay in dividends. So, I am very firm in this approach of linking together, and you cannot ignore that, that link, you just can't do it. So, education to me is creating awareness and is what I would say, I do frequently, and getting rid of jargon and explanations.

The broadness of the A-E approach shows itself in the need to link theory to practice, in a general educational sense. The links are made to the organisation, but the importance lies in enabling the audience to understand basic principles. SR highlights how he links theory to practice.

W: How do you apply the techniques you have learned for your audience?

SR: "I have developed my skills in two ways, in this regard. One is to make everything simple, and then build up the complexity as you need it. But I am not training accountants to be accountants. I am training people of other disciplines within the business, to understand accounting information and how it relates to them. The fact that I have done an MBA has given me the grounding in many subjects. CIMA exams, actually, and I'm going back now 30 years, when I did a similar thing. I would always maintain contact with business, usually through training, through consultancy routes, so they have fed me with what happens.

6.2.2 Discussion

The Academic–Educator approach is typified by a learner who prefers to focus on gaining input, content and broad basic educational principles. This could be similar to a learner described by Honey & Mumford (1996) in their Learning Styles Inventory, as preferring a 'theorist' approach to learning; an approach which favours a logical theoretical stance to addressing problems.

The provision of sharing content is greatly driven by the organisation's requirement that a base of management education or knowledge is provided. Therefore, this type of MDT is selected for their strength in providing such knowledge. This is evident in the core

competencies and financial programmes that are central to the organisation's management training and development policies. They provide the fundamental competencies which drive the organisation.

As a consequence of organisational needs the Academic–Educator adopts an 'educational' mainly didactic approach, to impart knowledge to the audience. In this respect the management role adopted by the MDT more closely resembles that of a teacher, educator, or instructor, in the traditional sense. In this way, according to Barbazette (2006) they can control the learner's participation, and therefore regulate the input according to the participant's understanding.

The focus on 'education' for the MDT using this approach closely resembles Mintzberg's (2004, p. 198) first phase of the learning process of managers. He suggests that managers and MDTs should pass through each of three phases; the first phase being management education, which has its roots in scholarship.

6.2.3   Type B: The Conceptualiser–Facilitator (C-F) Type

The essential characteristic of the C-F type of MT is that they address the gaps in their own knowledge by constantly reflecting on their own learning activities. A central influence on their own learning is learning from other MDTs, trainers, and consultants, and the ways they 'facilitate' learning. They attempt to address their trainees' knowledge and the need to link learning by providing concepts in the form of business 'tools', 'skills' or 'techniques' that they believe are both simple and useful. They achieve this by adopting a facilitative role and engaging the trainees in the learning process. The belief is that the learning comes as much from the audience as it does from the facilitator. In this respect, the facilitator tries not to position themselves as the authority figure, but rather as a catalyst for learning to take place. In making the links from theory to practice the C-F type uses mainly andragogical learning methods, and discusses/explores business related concepts for use in the workplace.

The C-F type adopts a more interpersonal stance to engaging learning experiences, as the focus tends not to be so much on content, but rather on the process of learning. To improve their delivery, the MDTs observe other presenters to glean techniques they may be able to use. And, whilst observing or attending courses themselves, they pick up an array of individual exploratory techniques they can use in order to manage their own learning.

W: How do you learn?

AON: My own learning style is one of, 'keeping it simple', 'querying', 'challenging' and' questioning'. I finished my MBA and my course leader said to me, "What's the key thing you're walking away with on this? I said, "You've taught me, and this whole programme, and you in particular, Professor Light, have taught me how to be a positive cynic." This is true, because, 'positive' means I'm not there to knock, but at the same time I want to challenge. I want to query. I want to question. And, I actually think that's where it is, and probably, my learning, the learning is actually, and we might come up to it a bit later on, putting ideas out to a group of people and gauging their response, and how they push back on it.

The C-F type learner is constantly looking for ways to improve the ways they apply their learning. In some instances, the learning comes from watching in-house MDTs, and others, such as external presenters. In comparison to the A-E learner the emphasis is on techniques, style, or delivery strategies rather than being content-driven.

W: You said you liked to be 'inspired' by other trainers. Could you explain what you mean?

DM:Yes, like Janelle Barlow when she gave the Time Management course. Her style and delivery really impressed me. Very engaging with her stories. Not only did she know her stuff, but she put it into practical context to use on a day to day basis.

The C-F type tends to respond to questions on how they learned by describing training they had received and the influences this had on them. The comments made were often about how the presenters were communicating and its effectiveness.

W: How have you learned from training you have received?

AON:Well, I guess most of the training, I have to say, a lot of it would be informal. It's watching other people deliver, and communication with others. In my early career I was a training manager with Alders. They were like, Farmers, as it was before Alders bought it. Going off on a three week training programme listening to different lecturers talk on various aspects of business. Learning very quickly those who were effective, and engaging, and those able to have an ability to transfer information in a

meaningful way, and those who were just downright boring. You learn very quickly, don't be like that person. They're not communicating. They're not making sense.

It can be seen from the comments above that observing other presenters and extracting good delivery techniques is a priority learning source for the C-F type. In this way it shapes the role they are expected to play within the organisation. The development of one's role comes from working with other MDTs, and positioning oneself as a facilitator of learning. In several instances the role can be directed by the type of course or 'intervention' needed to facilitate learning, and the beliefs of how learning can be created.

The C-F type tends to refer to their role as one of 'facilitative' in nature. The content, if any, is provided by the trainee and then discussed by the group. The emphasis is on 'leading' not directing the group. In this regard the trainee is given equal status as the facilitator in providing potential learning.

> W: How would you describe your role when dealing with a group of participants?
> KC: Galileo. You can't train anybody. You can only help them to learn. That's what I'm doing. I always try to help people to learn. So, by facilitation, by leading them in the right direction, by asking them questions, asking them to think.

This type of role fits well with the organisational distinction between some of the programmes or 'interventions' delivered. The distinction is made at the start to several senior managerial 'events' to prepare participants accordingly.

> W: How do you set the scene for participants at the senior level 'events'?
> AON: Right up front. Right up front we say, "Welcome to the brief. This is not a programme. This is not management development in the sense that you understand it. This is about you learners. You can always learn from just looking, watching. We talk about using all their senses, and not being closed to listening, and always to think about, 'Is this similar or different to your business?' and, 'Why'?

The C-F type tends to make the links from theory to practice by keeping things simple, and using selected managerial concepts and toolkits to underpin theory and practice. However, the reduction to simplicity and relevance appears to take priority. RB and JDG comment below on how simplicity is important as well as engaging for the trainees:

RB: So, teaching is not just necessarily standing up. It's actually 'coaching' as well. And, by coaching people, it sort of helps me clarify my own thinking. Cos, by making it, putting it in a way that's simple, so that other people understand, makes you understand it better yourself.

JDG: So, to my mind, in some sense, the technology has not helped. It has because it's easier to create images and pictures for people which mean something to them. But it's not as good as you or me standing there with a group of people with a flip-chart or piece of paper or a whiteboard and actually having a relationship. So, the training tips I've learned is don't over-complicate it. Don't make it too complicated. Don't have too complex a business model.

The C-F type tends to have several preferential business concepts or techniques that they favoured. These were either described or offered in the form of a tool-kit to the participants.

W: How have you used learning from managerial concepts in your own delivery?

AON: I got into Chris Argyris's double loop learning, and then Senge's work on the difference between discourse and dialogue, and reflective thought. I started bringing some of these concepts in, started to apply it to participants. I'd say, "Let's look at the mental models you use to put your ideas forward.

The models or toolkits that are used by the MDT are either designed by the MDT or come from managerial concepts that they have learned in the past. The reason for their use is to assist trainee understanding with a view to use in the workplace.

W: What type of 'models' do you use personally?

LK: I use very simple models which have to be obvious in context. Some of them are things like Porter's Five Forces model. Some of them are two by two matrices. That's as complex as I ever want them to be. Because I want people to be able to remember the diagrams. Anything more complex than that, they forget.

W: What about 'toolkits? You mentioned you use toolkits.

LK:These toolkits don't solve the problem. They give you insight and understanding and then allow you to come to decisions on how to solve them.

The MDT will tend to play to their own strengths in their role and make practical links wherever possible.

> W: Could you explain a bit more about your role and the way you handle it?
> LK: I have discovered that I need to play to my strengths. My strengths are that I am not very good at merely presenting theory. I need to show how it relates to practice, cos that's a very fundamental part of my being.

6.2.4 Discussion

The Conceptual-Facilitator approach is typified by a learner who tends to focus on the process and concepts of learning, rather than the content itself. In understanding the process, the C-F types manage their own learning by understanding how the process affects them, and then uses techniques or concepts they believe to be appropriate for use with their participants. The C-F type manages their own learning by seeking out appropriate ways to better manage learning. This is usually undertaken by observing other MDTs, consultants, teachers or trainers, reflecting on the process, and copying suitable traits, tools or techniques. This type of learning style is similar to that of the 'reflector' in Honey & Mumford's (1996) Learning Styles Inventory. 'Reflectors' learn best when they can *"stand back, listen and observe"* (Mumford & Gold, 2004, p. 98).

The C-F type encourages the participants to be equal shareholders in the learning process, and believe that each person's experience can make a valuable contribution to other participants learning. To achieve this goal, the C-F encourages the participants to question their own paradigms and reflect on how they have learnt previously. The idea of reflection and questioning is central to the C-F's style, and is in line with the work of Schon (1983), and the reflective practitioner. The reason the MDT does this, is because it is similar to the role they themselves are adopting. This critical reflection on one's own learning process is in line with the work of the manager as a critically reflective practitioner (Meizrow, 1990). Similarly, the type of learning that is encouraged fits with what Meizrow (2006, p. 26) terms as 'transformative learning', in that it provides a process whereby participants can transform existing frames of reference to their own understandings, which in turn may challenge existing beliefs and enable better decision making to take place.

The application of knowledge comes from the introduction of ideas, concepts, techniques, skills and models that can be used by the management learner. Typical skills include those of questioning, inquiring and debating the way they view learning and the way they have previously tried to manage it – like double loop learning (Argyris, 1993). The management learners being taught by the C-F type are actively encouraged to challenge their own perceptions and to examine problems or learning experiences through questioning eyes.

This phase of management learning is referred to by Mintzberg (2004, p. 198) as within the realm of 'management training' (the second phase after management education), and deals with techniques and skills. The MDTs within this realm need to have skills to facilitate learning within the group of participants. They are not the authority figure, but rather the 'facilitator,' of learning.

6.2.5   Type C: The Practitioner–Guide (P-G) Type

The Practitioner – Guide type places critical importance on learning having a practical use or application. To achieve this goal, the MDT strives to find 'contexts' in which required learning applies. The P-G learner differs from the A-E type learner in that there is no preconceived content. They are looking for practical situations which they can later apply for the participants or trainees.

The P-G type adopts a role of 'practical facilitator' in that they are frequently looking for scenarios or business contexts where the potential learning gap can be addressed by first hand observation and discussion. The role includes designing 'events' or 'interventions' which include practical visits made to businesses or workplaces that can provide relevant learning opportunities.

The links between the learning and its practical application are made by the learner, and assisted (where appropriate) by the P-G, who 'guides' the learner through the learning experience. In several instances, the P-G relates instances where they have used the learning in their own situations, and discussed the outcomes with the participants.

For the P-G there is a strong sentiment that much of workplace learning is achieved on- the-job. And, with this in mind, their own learning is achieved whilst conducting and applying their learning, or using it in their own roles. *JDG* highlights the significance of learning on the job and clarifies her role as more akin to a provider of learning experiences.

JDG: Cos, the reality is that most people learn on the job.

W: How do you differentiate between teaching and helping people to learn?

JDG: Sometimes they do it themselves. And . . . when people say, "Oh, you're a teacher." I say, "No, I don't teach anything." You're just helping people to learn, because all you're doing is creating an environment where, suddenly they're running around doing it, and you get them to stop and think.

The essence of the P-G approach is to make the training or development as real as possible. Whether it is the written material for a Development Centre or for a programme on Customer Service, or even a top level Directors programme.

W: What is your main concern for the provision of training and development in your Department?

JDG: Making it as 'live' as possible. Getting them out, doing something they actually are part of. So, if you want to understand about 'Customer Service', don't talk to them in a room about it, go out, get them to go out and test Customer Service in a restaurant, a garage, wherever it is, and do it that way. You're taking people out and letting them see for themselves; be involved.

The work-based 'context' in which the learning takes place appears to be of utmost importance. Whilst the context is arranged by the MDT, the learning is very much dependant on the learners' extracting learning points and sharing them with both their colleagues and the MDTs. In this way the learning can be utilised and linked to each participant's own circumstances. In some interventions the participants are taken to other businesses where they can see first hand how other successful learning practices are performed.

The role of the P-G type could be described as one of a 'facilitative practitioner.' They orchestrate practical learning events or interventions and guide the participants through the events. The preparation for such an event can be quite time consuming and complex, as *RB* indicates:

W: Can you give me an idea of how you intend to prepare for the Directors Development Initiative (DDI)?

RB: Well, I'm meeting the Consular Generals of Chile and Argentina, to get, um, begin to draw on all our contacts, who may know something about Argentina and Chile. We know from experience, we're going to have to give it plenty of lead time, so we started nine months before we even begin.

W: And what is the business gap being addressed?

RB: How to address risk in emerging economies.

W: How do you arrange for a suitable learning event outside of a participant's own organisation?

RB: Well, because most of the people were Hong Kong focused, and in order to change the mindset, particularly of Hong Kong directors, we decided to take them out of their comfort zone and stick them with Chief Executives all over the world. And so, the net effect was that they saw how these Chief Executives were being successful and then basically said, "Ah haa!" They got the 'Ah haa' "It can be done. It is possible to look at things in a different way.

The links of relevance are made from practice to practice. Not from theory to practice, as in the earlier two types of MDT. The learners can see for themselves how a specific managerial concern or practice is conducted, and then they draw the relevance and potential practical application themselves, guided by the P-G. For the P-G, the context of the learning is a prime concern.

W: Why do you think that the provision of 'context' is so important, especially in the more senior programmes?

JDG: I think, coming back to the DDI, that's why it works. You're taking people out and letting them see for themselves. Be involved. Be part of it. So, anything that is realistic. If you're taking them into a 'training' environment rather then on the job training, then you've got to make it as real as possible, cos otherwise you've got a disconnect which they can see that doesn't translate back. And, I suppose the most damaging feedback you can get is the piece that says, that wasn't relevant to my job. Derrr, that's it. Wasted: two days, three days, five days.

6.2.6 Discussion

The P-G type of learner tends to favour practical learning experiences. In this regard, they most closely resemble the learning style of the 'pragmatist' in Honey & Mumford's (1996)

Learning Styles Inventory. The pragmatist is described as learning "*…best when there is an obvious link between the subject matter and the problem or opportunity on the job.*" (Mumford & Gold (2004. p. 98).

They address their own learning needs by addressing the gap between organisational and individual participant requirements by proving suitable learning workplaces, or contexts that are conducive to such learning experiences. An underpinning element for the P-G learner is that most of managerial learning is achieved on the job. Therefore, the workplace either their own, or other suitable workplaces, are sought to provide sites of learning. This belief is very much in line with that of Burns (2002, p. 313) who recognises the changes in the provision of learning and the influence of both experiential and incidental learning. Burns (2002) also recognises the need for a shift in the role of the MDT from that of 'trainer' to facilitator, as they need to "establish a learning environment replete with support and resources" (p. 313). To make the links between existing practice and required practice, the P-G type designs and orchestrates a learning 'intervention' that places the learning within a context. This context is a real-world context, and attempts to transfer learning from one work-based context to another. The emphasis is on the practical application of new learning. For some authors the terms 'situated learning' and 'context-based learning represent such learning experiences derived from real-world contexts (Mackeracher, 2004, p. 14; Hansman, 2001).

The P-G type guides the participants to and through organisations where the knowledge and skills that are sought can be observed and potentially learned. It is the learner that plays the major role in making learning connections between the context and the learner's own workplace requirements. Macheracher (2004) indicates that the learner's motivation to learn is in response to their own roles and the immediate application to their own activities. To this extent, the P-G type role includes extending the 'Activist' learning style to the participant. As in Kolb's (1976) learning cycle, learning begins with an experience and ends with what could be termed as a newly shaped experience. To reinforce learning the P-G type uses various methods that can put learning into perspective. McLellan (1996, p. 7) includes the telling of 'stories' that enable the participant to readily identify with the new learning and how it relates to their role.

The focus on the practical aspects of this style resembles Minztberg's (2004, p. 198) third phase of what he terms 'management development', and has its roots firmly planted in

practice. Mintzberg (2004, p. 198) suggests that this phase is more of a 'pull' for managers as the organisation looks to ways of 'real customisation' of its managers.

It should be noted that Mintzberg's (2004) phases of management education and development, in terms of management education, management training, and management development bear strong resemblance to the typological characteristics of the MDTs in this research. This will be raised in Chapter 7.

A description of the typology of management learning and application approaches, and the categories that relate to them is given in the next section.

6.3 Categories from which the Typology Emerged

The development of the core category and its sub-categories and dimensions provided a framework that led to the discovery of the three management learning and application approaches (the typology) typically adopted by the MDTs in this research – as described in Figure 6.1.

The significance of the theory of 'transference of relevance' are underpinned by the sub-processes of analyzing the 'gaps' in knowledge and skills, managing their own role, and linking the learning to practice. These manifest themselves in the differences between each of the three approaches described in the typology. Central to each of the approaches is the process by which the MDT analyses the 'gaps' facing the business in terms of learning needs, the role that is expected of the MDT, and the way in which relevance is linked and transferred into practice. These three aspects form the basis of the three subsequent sections in this chapter. A comparative analysis can be seen from Table 6.3, showing the distinguishing features of each approach when referenced to each of the main categories.

The main differentiators in the typology of MDTs can be seen along each dimension. The A-E type prefers to address the gaps in learning by focusing on acquiring 'content'. Their role is more in line with that of an educator in the provision of base knowledge, typically in the form of core competencies and essential basic courses, for example, finance. Their links to learning are usually made from either academic or professional knowledge, in which they could be termed as an 'expert'. The C-F type addresses gaps in learning by providing concepts and learning tools. They tend to facilitate learning rather than providing 'content' or subject

matter. Their role is to capitalize on the experiences within the group and facilitate learning experiences for the benefit of the group. The links to practice usually take the form of practical or relevant examples given by either the group or the facilitator. The P-G addresses gaps in learning by providing business 'contexts'. Their role is to provide environments where practical examples can be experienced and links made to their own working practices.

Table 6.3   Typology of Management Learning and Application Approaches

Transferring Relevance By Category	Academic – Educator	Conceptualiser – Facilitator	Practitioner – Guide
Learning Profile	To gain an 'Education'	To understand the 'Concepts'	To know the 'Practical' application
Analysing	By focusing on corporate values and corporate core competencies	By explaining concepts and discussing applicability in general business settings	By placing the learning into context across business units (within the Group)
Acquiring	By obtaining **content** from a baseline of corporate 'educational' knowledge	By obtaining **concepts** in the form of managerial learning 'tools', 'skills' and 'techniques	By understanding the business **'context'** to promote managerial learning
	By focusing on participant knowledge in the area of learning – individual participant focused	By gauging audience reaction and use of 'tools', etc usually within a small group setting – being able to react to changes in participant needs	By providing working examples of real life experience that is relevant to the participant
Acquiring – Learning Style	To be an authority figure and 'expert' knowledge provider and deliverer	To be a –co-participant in the learning process. Providing a platform for participants to add experience and learning	To be able to be comfortable to 'demonstrate' and discuss relevant work-life situations
Training Profile	As a **'Trainer'/'Educator'**	As a **'Learning Facilitator'**	As a **'Relater to Practice'**
Delivering	The trainer provides the knowledge	The facilitator 'steers; the participants	The facilitative practitioner shows how 'performance' works in practice
Designing	By using a very broad base of sound academic or professional knowledge	By utilising 'facilitative skills rather than expert knowledge	By providing both facilitative competence and practical settings
Adapting	Using **academic/professional** links Giving personal examples of how basic principles apply	Using **conceptual** links Giving personal experiences of linking theory to practice	Using **practical** links Giving personal account of depth of business comparisons
Adapting	Using basic principles and building on them	Extracting business related concepts for use in the workplace	Using practical examples whenever possible – going to other businesses - globally
Training Styles	Using pedagogical methods at first – building blocks of progression	Using andragogical methods – Using business case studies, anecdotes, etc	Using andragogical methods – practical demonstration, experiential learning links with other businesses

It should be noted that whilst there are three distinct types, it is not easy to assign all the MDTs to a specific approach. The reason for this is due to the overlap in some programmes or interventions, or where a particular MDT is required to undertake a role that requires another particular approach or a hybrid role. The typology is predicated on MDTs' natural and preferred strategies.

6.3.1   Analysing Business 'Gaps'

This aspect could be described as the starting point for learning to take place. All training and development delivered in the organisation results from a diagnosis and assessment of training and development needs. This includes consideration of organisational values, needs and wants, as well as reactions to competitive forces. Consequently, the major influence stems from the organisation and its need to be competitive.

For the A-E type of MDT the focus in on the provision of core competencies and fundamental managerial programmes. To this extent, the content is all important. An understanding of both corporate and individual needs is usually already known, except when new basic principles (or revisions to competencies) are introduced. The A-E must maintain a credible baseline of qualifications and knowledge in order to retain both credibility and breadth of base knowledge. In this respect, they are experts in their field, and adopt a somewhat authoritative presence when delivering the subject matter.

Learning, for the A-E type, requires both breadth and depth to cover trainees' requirements. In this regard, they need to equip themselves with sufficient examples to provide a platform for subsequent learning. In terms of having control of their own learning, the same conditions or features apply very strongly for the A-E type.

The C-F type is less concerned with content but focuses on the process of learning, or learning of managerial concepts. The C-F type is similar to A-E and the P-G, in that they also conduct a diagnostic assessment of learning needs. This diagnostic assessment is conducted to introduce concepts to the participants and to get them to utilise the tools, skills or knowledge that they contain. These tools, skills and knowledge must dovetail with business needs and the fundamental competencies covered in programmes conducted by the A-E type. Unlike the A-E type, the C-F type utilises the experiences of the group of trainees to provide

a backdrop for learning. The C-F type sees themselves as co-trainees rather than authoritative figures in the process.

The learning process for the C-F type focuses more on the actual 'process' of learning and discovering new ideas and techniques that can be utilised by the trainees. There is a search for simple ideas that have practical application. Part of their learning process is managing their own learning from other MDTs, whether from internal or external sources. It is their own learning process, and concepts that they believe work, that they share with participants and thereby foster discussion. In terms of control over the learning process, this is shared by the trainee and the MDT.

The P-G type addresses management learning gaps by looking for situations that could provide potential learning; both for themselves and their participants. The 'context' that provides the learning is usually not classroom based, but work-based or organization-based, irrespective of its location. The learning gap may not be quantifiable, but there is a hope that an understanding of the problem and how it is addressed may come from practical exposure to personnel currently addressing the managerial or business concern.

The P-G type needs to be comfortable with their own ability to seek out and construct a learning intervention to address participant learning needs. To this extent, they are a guide through the process. In terms of the control of the learning, this rests strongly with the participants, with guidance and orchestration from the MDT.

6.3.2 Managing their Role

The role adopted by the MDT is largely dictated by the types of programmes or interventions required. For the broad based delivery needed from the A-E type, the role is more closely aligned to that of a teacher or educator. In this regard, the A-E closely follows the criteria laid down in the learning outcomes required to align with the core values, core competencies and specialist programmes, such as, the Finance in Action and the pursuit of CIMA qualifications.

It can be said that these are heavily company driven, especially in terms of course content. It is the responsibility of the A-E, and an expectation of the company (for the A-E) to 'educate' the participants. In this respect, 'education' can be defined as being broad based but linked to corporate practices wherever possible. The emphasis is on instilling fundamental

corporate beliefs and principles that can form the basis of corporate performance. The scope for the MDT is somewhat limited in delivery as it must be underpinned by recognizable and relevant content. In addition, the content delivery lends itself to an MDT who uses essentially a classroom-based environment, as the participants can adopt a more passive approach to learning.

The C-F type adopts the role of a facilitator. They facilitate the management learning process by engaging the participants as equals. They are co-learners in the programme or intervention. If the A-E type has a role of instilling basic knowledge, then the role of the C-F type is to shape the participants' thinking. Their own skills are honed by watching other MDTs or consultants and trainers, and they copy appropriate behaviour and techniques for their own use. These skills form the basis of the techniques, concepts and ideas they wish to impart to their audience. The shift in role is away from a 'teacher' of a subject, to a 'facilitator' enabling a person to better understand themselves and the way they think.

RB Ltd places a great deal of trust in the competence of these types of MDTs, especially in terms of encouraging participants to looks at problems and experiences in new ways. The task of this type of MDT is very much linked to questioning one's own mental models, and providing opportunities for discussing, focusing, and challenging ideas.

The role of the P-G type is to provide very little content, but requires the participant to examine the processes and performances they observe within the context of a real-life work-based setting. Their role is to provide opportunities for participants to experience managers in action and draw their own conclusions. The time frame is very much the here-and-now, and how they can possibly use what they have observed.

The role takes the MDT out of the classroom and firmly positions them in the work-place. The location of the learning event is crucial, provided it enables the participants to experience real-life behaviour. What is unimportant is the physical location. It could be in any part of the globe, provided the MDT can orchestrate the learning activity within a country in which the organisation providing the potential learning operates. The role is one that is practically oriented and incorporates the MDT as a guide. In most instances the P-G will have conducted a reconnaissance to the organisation, in order to set the scene for the learning events to take place.

6.3.3 Linking Learning to Practice

The move from theory to practice takes three steps. Firstly, how theory actually works in practice, as with the A-E. Secondly, how concepts can be used in practice, as for the C-F type. Thirdly, how practice can inform future practice, as with the P-G type.

The A-E is looking to use examples from within the organisation to link theoretical or professional content with practice. The platform for such information usually comes from senior professionals within the organisation, and is then simplified, adapted, and delivered in a layered approach to build difficulty and subsequent practical use.

The C-F type is constantly exploring concepts and ideas that can be used to engage the audience. Their goal is to get the audience to participate in a dialogue that brings their own examples into the arena of where questioning and discourse can take place. The C-F often uses concepts that they themselves have used in their own practice, or can find examples of where they have been used with impact. The learning tends to come from participants reflecting on practical examples against the backdrop of other participants' experiences within a similar problem area.

The P-G type is always looking for managerial practice to further inform managerial performance and practice. They are often seeking work-based practices that may be applicable to their participants. The goal, in essence, is innovation, in that they are fostering a learning environment whereby what is used in one arena may be utilised in yet another.

6.3.4 Summary

This section has described the categories of how MDTs transfer relevance from their own learning experiences. The characteristics described have led to the discovery of a typology of the management learning and application approaches that can best describe the MDTs in this research. There appear to be three aspects in the profile of each MDT. The Academic-Educator appears to focus on providing an educational base for the audience. This is in line with corporate requirements that all managerial staff have a fundamental understanding of the core values and competencies espoused by the organisation. To achieve this goal the 'educator' relies on providing knowledge or content that needs to be acquired by the learning manager. In achieving this goal practical examples are given from the experiences of the MDT.

The Conceptualiser-Facilitator shifts the focus from subject matter to be learned to a focus on how the individual manager learns and how this can be improved. If one were to link the contributions of all three types, it could be said that the MDT introduces concepts, tools, and techniques that can be used by the audience or trainees. It could be said that the C-F builds on the learning taught by the A-E, and prepares trainees for further development.

The Practitioner - Guides are essentially an orchestrator of learning events. They focus on providing environments where the audience can observe managerial performance and extrapolate potential learning practices back to their work place. The P-G is not so much concerned with either subject matter or concepts, but rather the practical application of successful work practices to other work sites.

Although there is a degree of overlap in each area, the three types of MDT have a tendency to learn in a similar way to that in which they practice. This is due to both organisational expectations and personal style.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter consists of four main sections. The first section provides a summary of the main conclusions drawn in regards to the phenomenon of management learning <u>and</u> its application by the MDTs in this study. These conclusions are discussed in relations to the literature review conducted in Chapter Two, with additional literature and research conducted in light of the findings of the study. These are included to provide a more comprehensive discussion. The second section discusses the implications for MDT professionals. Thirdly, recommendations are made to potentially improve the management of MDTs learning and its application, thereby benefiting the organisation, the MDTs and their trainees. The final part covers personal reflection which gives an overview of the major learning points for this researcher. In essence, the chapter is structured as follows:

7.1 Discussion;

7.2 Implications;

7.3 Recommendations; and

7.4 Personal Reflections.

7.1 Discussion

This section provides a summary of the key reasons for this study, the investigative process adopted, and the outcomes discussed in relation to the literature review and the specific research questions. This section is made up of three sub-sections:

7.1.1 Reasons for the Study;

7.1.2 Investigative Process Adopted in the Study;

7.1.3 Outcomes of the Study research.

7.1.1 Reasons for the Study

The reason for this study arose from both the researcher's experience as an MDT coupled with a keen interest in management learning and its application taken from the perspective of other MDTs within a large multi-national organisation based in Hong Kong. It was noticed that there were a variety of different delivery styles used by the MDTs who had varying

backgrounds in both academic and work-based practical experience. The main question to be explored was how do these MDTs manage their learning and then apply that learning in practice. Therefore, the key research aim was to develop a tentative theory around the main research question, which was:

How do adult MDTs manage their learning and apply that learning in practice?

A search of the literature in Hong Kong indicated that no such research had been conducted prior to this study. Therefore, given the researcher' relationship with RB Ltd, the study provided an excellent opportunity to explore this substantive topic at doctoral level.

7.1.2   *Investigative Process Adopted in the Study*

The research was guided by the main research question and sought to study and analyse the MDTs perspective in the management of their learning whilst adopting their specific role in RB Ltd. The research does not endeavour to uncover the causal relationships between influencing variables in management learning and differing training styles adopted by MDTs. Since this research is based on MDT perspectives the study uses the interpretive research paradigm as the philosophical base for the investigative process adopted.

A symbolic interactionist perspective was used as this enables life experiences of the MDTs to be used. A grounded theory approach was utilized as this was considered most suitable for the study. Not only did it fit the researcher's needs and profile (Goulding, 2002), but also allowed theory to be built from the emerging data. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). A further factor in using grounded theory was its extensive use in management research (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Goulding, 2002). In addition, grounded theory provides for the generation of a theory as well as a typology – all of which were felt to be most appropriate for doctoral research of this nature.

The data were gained from several sources including successive interviews with 10 key MDTs, evaluation forms completed by trainees on the various internal programmes/initiatives and an ongoing journal kept by the researcher. The sampling of MDTs was conducted in line with theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and theoretical saturation achieved once it was felt that the categories were saturated. Other sources of data included corporate brochures, bio-data on the MDTs, and the Leadership Development Plan (outlining core

courses/initiatives used in RB Ltd). The data was analysed using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The processes outlined by Strauss & Corbin (1998) were adopted throughout the research, namely open, axial, and selective coding.

7.1.3   Outcomes of the Research

The outcomes of this research address the four specific research questions listed below:

     a.   Why do adult MDTs need to learn?

     b.   What do adult MDTs need to learn?

     c.   How do adult MDTs learn?

     d.   How do adult MDTs apply their learning in practice?

An analysis of the data generated through the grounded theory approach resulted in the formation of the Theory of Transferring Relevance. This theory explains how the group of MDTs, in this research, manage and apply their own learning in the workplace. The full details are explained in Chapter 5 – Findings). The core category and the other main categories each impact the four specific research questions shown above. Each of these specific research questions are addressed below, as are the related outcomes.

7.1.3.1   Specific Research Question 1

The first specific research question asked, **"Why do adult MDTs need to learn?"** The main category that addresses this question in the theory of transferring relevance is that of **Analysing.** In the process of analyzing the MDTs seek to understand the business needs and expectations. They achieve this by means of a 'gap' analysis, whereby they learn what is in place at present, what is required for the future, and an appreciation of how best to fill the gap with ETDL initiatives. These 'gaps' give an indication of the changes that are required to be made by the organisation, the executive trainees, and also the MDTs. In regards to the MDTs they need to gauge whether delivery of such ETDL initiatives are within their own area of skill or expertise. The process of understanding the 'gaps' is highly collaborative, and frequently involves several members of RB Ltd's core team of MDTs together with the CEO's or HR Departments. The major driver for change comes from their own stated core values, which invoke a set of core competencies that drive ETDL initiatives through the organisation. This in turn impacts their Leadership Development Plan which is modified annually to fit internal customer needs.

In the literature reviewed there was a clear indication that the influences driving MDTs to learn were both organisational and generated by the MDT. Many organisations recognise the strategic advantage of sound management education, training, development and learning practices. The inadequacies of managerial skills and managerial training, in all forms, have been recognised in the UK since the early 1960's. Over time, it has been recognised that many managerial ETDL must be aligned with business strategies. In this way the drive to achieve a competitive advantage and to ensure 'survival' can be enhanced. The literature indicates that organisations in North America have also recognised the need to continue to adapt and change their practices to gain Organisational competitiveness (Zinni et al., 2010). One way of enhancing corporate competitiveness was through the formation of organisational core competencies (Daniels et al., 2010). It was evident that managerial ETDL was required to address strategic changes that surfaced as a result of the 'gaps' between actual managerial performance and desired managerial competence.

In summary, the major difference between actual practice and the literature came in the process by which MDTs understand and begin to address the 'gaps'. The literature made mention of the processes by which such gaps could be addressed, whereas the MDTs specifically indicated a highly collaborative (internal) approach coupled with an individual assessment as to who would be the most suitable MDT to deliver the ETDL required (based on type of ETDL initiative and individual areas or competence).

7.1.3.2 *Specific Research Question 2*

The second specific research question asked, **"What do adult MDTs need to learn?"** The main category that addresses this question in the theory of transferring relevance is that of **Acquiring.** In the process of acquiring the MDTs indicated that 'survival' was a major driver for acquiring further learning. By surviving it was indicated that they wanted to remain gainfully employed. A major driver in terms of what it was that they needed to learn was reliant on the role they were expected to play. The types of MDT roles included those whose responsibility was to provide basic managerial knowledge (content driven, as in executive finance courses), courses that placed an emphasis on learning from each other as well as the MDTs (highly interactive courses), and those that were heavily experientially driven (and virtually no content provided, as in the most senior initiatives). The types of roles greatly influenced what was required to be learned, the types of learning needed, and the context in which it was acquired. The range of learning modes included academic learning (gained from

university courses), learning from fellow MDTs and other consultants, and learning from life's experiences. It can be seen from Appendix A that the bio-data on the MDTs shows academic qualifications ranging from nil to PhD, an array of professional qualifications, and a combined depth of experience of some 177 years - with RB Ltd. What was evident from the Leadership Development Plan and the modes of learning indicated above was that MDTs were required to provide educational, training, developmental or managerial learning experiences for their trainees. Therefore, they needed to be highly proficient in acquiring and delivering these ETDL experiences.

The literature reviewed examined the use of the terms education, training, development, and learning and defined them in relation to executive ETDL. Whilst some authors used the terms synonymously (Harrison, 1988), others differentiate each (Fee, 2001). The importance of the distinction between terms affects the way that the MDTs may define themselves and their role. For example, as a management educator the role is defined as being broad based and often linked to academic institutions (Mintzberg, 2004). Training tends to focus on the here and now, development is targeted towards future performance, and learning as being seen as a change in behaviour (potentially as a result of activities from the other three terms). A focus on these terms impacts the role to be played by the MDT professional and the types of learning required. An examination of the changing role of the trainer was timely as it was the focus of a study by the CIPD in the UK in 2006, and building on the work of Sloman (2003) who emphasizes the shift from training to learning and from teaching to facilitating. An examination of job descriptions for MDT professionals highlights the need for academic qualifications, and understanding of adult learning theories, and supporting practical experience deemed relevant to the role. Further support is given to these features at Appendix D and E which outlines the course content in the Advanced Training Management and Train the Trainer courses.

The literature also indicated that the MDTs can be classified by virtue of their learning/past background into key roles in training and development (Bard et al., 1987). These include titles such as Instructional Writer, Instructor, Needs Analyst, Theoretician, and Strategist. A subsequent search of the additional literature on the topic of trainer roles indicate that such roles appear to change over time, as Cecil & Rothwell (2007) see the role of HR Professional more as a 'brokering' position offering advice to trainees as well as engaging in actual delivery.

In summary, the major differences between actual practice and the literature are two-fold. Firstly, in terms of qualifications and experienced required of the MDTs, and secondly in terms of the roles or functions performed by the MDTs in this research. In respect to qualifications and experience the MDTs in this research are extremely well qualified. There is only one MDT who has not got a degree, whereas the majority has at least an MBA; whilst three have PhD's. In respect to experience, the MDTs in the research have an average of 17 years associated with RB Ltd, with a minimum of 10 years. These features emphasise the significance of both academic and extensive practical related experience. In terms of the roles or functions undertaken by the MDTs, whilst the labels given by Bard et al. (1987) bear some resemblance to the functions performed by the MDTs in this research, they do not capture the true role of the MDT currently being performed.

7.1.3.3   *Specific Research Question 3*

The third specific research question asked, **"How do adult MDTs learn?"** The main category that addresses this question in the theory of transferring relevance is that of **Acquiring.** The MDTs acquired learning based on the types of learning required by the managerial trainees. Ongoing training comprised of various forms of continuous learning – academic, professional, and experiential. In most instances the learning was acquired from academic sources, informal means, or in the actual workplace. The majority of MDTs indicated the positive influence that academic study (coupled with academic interaction) had on their own learning. In addition, informal learning in social settings was deemed highly important, especially when it came to observing other MDT professionals. Lastly, the majority of MDTs stressed the importance of learning within the business environment. This enabled the MDTs to place the learning into context, reflect on its practical implications, and thereby enhance relevancy.

The literature reviewed emphasized the need to understand what managers actually do (Mintzberg, 1989), and how 'managing' can be learned (Drucker, 1986). Mintzberg (2004) was also informative in including how management trainees (and, arguably, MDTs) should acquire managerial learning. He advocates a three-phased approach starting with management education (delivered by educators), then management training (delivered by trainers), and lastly management development (delivered by corporate advisors). In this phased way a rounded approach to management learning can be provided.

Management learning styles, espoused by Kolb (1984) and Mumford (1989), link well with the three-phased approach suggested by Mintzberg (1989) above. Kolb (1984) suggests that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience, and proposes that all learning is re-learning and builds on what is already in place. Mumford (1989) adds to Kolb's (1984) four stage cycle of learning and labels the different styles as Activist oriented (having an experience), Reflector oriented (seeing results), Theorist oriented (thinking about the results), and Pragmatist oriented (planning the next steps). Mumford & Gold (2004) further support the learning cycle in a subsequent revision of Mumford's (1989) earlier work. These styles are not mutually exclusive and often co-exist in professional frequently making them 'reflective practitioners' (Schon, 1983), thereby continually thinking about how to improve their practice through learning reflection.

The literature reviewed also notes that management learning is a subset of adult learning, and is therefore, quite different from learning approaches adopted for children (Knowles, 1970). In essence, Knowles (1990) suggests that adults learn from being self-directed and engaged in a process of mutual enquiry with the trainer. Knowles (1990) uses the term 'andragogy' to describe 'the art and science of helping adults learn' (p.54).

In summary, there were major similarities to how MDTs learn in actual practice and that described in the literature. The learning styles adopted by the MDTs closely resemble those features by Kolb and Mumford in that the MDTs were theoretical, reflective, activisitic, and/or practically focused when learning. It was also found that MDTs used these learning styles in combination, even though a preference was often apparent. In terms of a phased learning approach, there was a move towards gaining management education, management training, and management development. However, this was NOT sequential. For example, most of the MDTs received their management education after or during the time in their role as an MDT professional.

7.1.3.4 Specific Research Question 4

The fourth specific research question asked, **"How do MDTs apply their learning in practice?"** The main category that addresses this question in the theory of transferring relevance is that of **Delivering.** In the process of delivering the MDTs in this research use a three-phased approach. There is an initial phase of designing the course or learning initiative, followed by a preferred training style for delivery, and a determination as to the type of

context or environment best suited for the learning to be delivered. During the design phase the MDTs took the information from the 'gap' or needs analysis and determined whether the course or learning initiative should be focused on content, concepts, or be practically driven. Content driven courses tended to be the lower level executive training courses, like Finance, whereby there was specific content that needed to be imparted to the management trainees by a technical (MDT) expert. The MDT in this role played the part of an 'educator' or instructor, and delivery was conducted in a classroom setting. Conceptually driven courses focused more on using ideas and the experiences of the trainees with the MDT playing the role of a facilitator. The setting was generally classroom based or used seminar facilities in a local hotel. Practically driven learning initiatives had virtually no content input. The philosophy behind these learning initiatives was for the MDT to act as a coordinator of the experience, with the setting frequently being in the workplace and usually in selected global locations.

The literature reviewed focused on recent authors approach to addressing skills gaps in a five step process in training and development. The steps were: Needs Analysis, Instructional Design, Validation, Implementation, and Evaluation and Follow-up. The Needs Analysis is often the prompt in organisations where there is a concern that managerial skills are lacking thereby affecting organisational performance. This leads to the design of a form or type of 'instruction' that best suits the organisational requirements (Saks & Haccoun, 2007). Instructional Design is at the heart of the delivery of a suitable ETDL. It attempts to develop learning objectives, methods of delivery, and preparation of media to best relate to the trainees (Dessler et al., 2007). Mintzberg (2004) would suggest the delivery actually follows his three-phased approach and be delivered by the most suitable types of MDT. In other words that management education be delivered by educators (academics), management training be delivered by trainers (in-house and external), and management development be delivered by corporate advisors (in-house and external).

The literature also describes delivery approaches shifting from the more traditional (pedagogical) style of 'filling up' trainees with knowledge (Ornstein & Levine, 2007) to one that involves the trainees as active participants in the learning – especially as so much agreement is placed on the fact that most managers learn primarily on the job (Mailick & Stumpf, 1998; Marsick, 1987; Pedler et al., 2001; Ornstein & Levine, 2007). However, Northouse (2010) indicates that much of leadership training and development is determined by whether managerial learning relates to technical, human, or conceptual types of

managerial skills; this will generally be determined as the manager progresses through their career and over time.

In summary, there is a strong similarity to what is practised by the MDTs in this research and the approaches described in the literature. For example, Mintzberg's (2004) three-phased approach is similar in framework to the activities performed by the MDTs in this research, and the training roles they adopted. Mintzberg (2004) indicates that management education should be performed by educators (academics); interestingly, the MDTs in this research have very strong academic backgrounds. Similarly, with management training, Mintzberg (2004) suggests this be delivered by trainers and consultants, and some of the MDTs in this research are classified as both. Lastly, management development is suggested as being delivered by corporate advisors, and this is exactly what happens in RB Ltd.

This section addressed the four specific research questions. A further outcome of the research that generated a theory of transferring relevance also generated a typology of MDTs in the way they manage their own learning and apply it in practice. This is discussed next.

7.1.3.5 A Typology of MDTs

A major outcome of this study was the generation of a typology of MDTs in terms of how they manage their own learning. This addresses the key research question: **"How do Management Development Trainers manage their own learning and apply that learning in practice?"** The distinguishing feature that separates the MDTs into the various types is addressed by the category of **'Adapting'.** Adapting refers to the process whereby the MDTs acquire learning and adapt it for use by their management trainees. In essence, the MDTs achieved this using three approaches. Firstly, they adapted theory into practice. They would take their own learning and alter it to fit their trainees' requirements. This was done by making the information more digestible and relevant to the particular management trainees. Secondly, they simplified original material or experiences to enhance relevancy for the management trainees. The MDTs placed a great deal of importance on their ability to take complex issues and put them into simple relevant blocks. Lastly, they would constantly provide personal examples and link it to the business from which management trainees originated. The search for relevancy and to transfer links between business examples was an ever present goal for the MDTs in this research. The differences between the MDTs came in the manner in which they acquired learning and then delivered it to their trainees. These

differences were seen in the categories of analyzing, acquiring, adapting, delivering, and evaluating processes in the theory of transferring relevance. Therefore, based on theory grounded in data, the MDTs can be broadly classified into three types of learner-deliverer: the Academic-Educator, the Conceptualiser-Facilitator, and the Practitioner-Guide.

In essence, the Academic-Educator addresses managerial learning gaps by focusing on content. They acquire 'theoretical' knowledge and deliver it in the form of basic knowledge in the role best described as that of an educator. They are often subject matter experts. Typical programmes delivered are those including Finance and Core Competency workshops. The Conceptualiser-Facilitator addresses gaps in learning by providing concepts, ideas, and learning tools. They tend to learn by interacting with other learners and building on the experiences in the group. They see their role as being that of a facilitator of learning. In this way, they provide some content and use the management trainees' experiences to benefit the rest of the group. Typical programmes being delivered include the middle and some senior Executive Development programmes. The Practitioner-Guide provides learning experiences by allowing the management trainees to experience outside work practices that may be relevant to their own business. These MDTs learn from practical encounters and adapt that by seeking business environments where the management trainees can best benefit. Their role is more that of 'guide' as there is virtually no content or deliberate conceptual input in providing managerial learning experiences.

The literature reviewed provides a typology of the training professional (Harrison, 1988). These include: Strategic Facilitator, Organisational Change Agent, the Role in Transition, and Passive Provider. This typology only labels the training professional from the stand-point of a deliverer, not as a learner. In addition, it does not provide a meaningful description of the role undertaken. Consequently, this research provides some highly pertinent information in this substantive area, and has some relevant implications for the organisation (RB Ltd).

7.2   Implications

The implications of this research impact various stakeholders who could benefit from the outcomes generated. These stakeholders include all the MDTs in this research, RB Ltd, MDT practitioners generally, and academic institutions providing business related courses. It should be noted that the emerging theory and typology are tentative, as this is arguably the first study of its kind conducted. As the research was conducted in only one organisation (as

single case study) it could warrant further testing and development in other organisations to evaluate or assess its findings. Such further testing could be within other multi-national organisations, or academic institutions providing business or management courses.

7.2.1 *Implications for MDTs in this Research*

The MDTs in this research all have a long history with RB Ltd. Consequently, they have their own styles of both learning and its application. They are recognised for their own personal expertise and particular brand of experiences. What they lack is an understanding of just how similar the approaches they adopt are to those suggested in the literature. Similarly, they are not necessarily aware of how significant the 'transfer of relevance' is to all the programmes/initiatives that are utilized in RB Ltd. This research was the first of its kind in this organisation, therefore, the information discovered is not yet common knowledge, thereby potentially limiting organisational effectiveness.

7.2.2 *RB Ltd.*

RB Ltd allowed this research to take place and it is the first of its kind in this organisation. Therefore, the comparison between actual practice and the literature obtained would support the actual practices taking place and highlight areas of strength. For example, the depth of academic qualifications and business related experience is highly sought after in the business community. The literature reviewed on Mintzberg (2004) has direct relevance to RB Ltd, as the phases adopted follow closely that advocated. In this way, management trainees obtain management education, management training, and management development through the learning and delivery approaches of its own MDTs. Therefore, this model or approach to executive training and development appears to be very sound and worth exporting to other RB Ltd related or subsidiary organisations.

7.2.3 *MDT Practitioners – In General*

As far as in known, this is the first time a study on this topic has been conducted. Therefore, it has potentially some very useful implications for MDT practitioners in business organisations. For example, the typology suggested by Harrison (1988) is already quite dated. This research gives an up-to-date account of exactly what happens in practice in terms of how MDTs learn <u>and</u> apply that learning in practice. Consequently, it could provide a basic framework for future studies of a similar ilk – whether the MDTs are in private, public practices, or quasi-government agencies.

7.2.4 *Academic Institutions Providing Business Related Courses*

There are a variety of institutions that offer management related courses. These extend from local community colleges, to universities and corporate universities. RB Ltd has been in existence for some 180 years and has around 260,000 staff world-wide. Therefore, its approach to executive development and the typology of learner-delivers of its MDTs could well benefit those involved in the training or teaching of adults who aspire to gaining sound managerial experiences.

7.3   Recommendations

This research suggests a number of recommendations to address the implications for MDT practitioners and for RB Ltd. These suggestions are made in respect of the categories of adapting, and evaluating. The recommendations are based on the comparison between actual practice and the literature reviewed so far. The recommendations are based on the typology of MDTs discovered in this study. These recommendations should be passed to the MDTs and to RB Ltd for review.

7.3.1 *Academic-Educator (A-E)*

These MDTs are highly specialized individuals who can best be described as subject matter experts. In regards to adapting the material for the management trainees the A-E's use a building block approach incorporating a reduction to simplicity principle. This appears to work very well – from the perspective of the MDT. The use of practical examples, both from life-experiences and from the pool of businesses in RB Ltd, is a very sound approach to getting trainees to understand what can be quite complex subjects. However, the emphasis on evaluation is placed on a 'gut feeling', more than an objective assessment of how management trainees are performing or coping with the new knowledge. The idea of an ongoing assessment whilst the course or programme is running could be advantageous, and is recommended.

7.3.2 *Conceptualiser-Facilitator (C-E)*

The C-E's tend to be highly people-oriented individuals. Consequently, they are inclusive in their approach to learning and delivery. The main recommendation is to use the story-telling approach to link ideas to personalities within the related businesses, thereby adding additional relevance to the learning. By using their own stories the management trainees should be encouraged to add to the bank of knowledge by using a similar approach, thereby enhancing

group learning around specific concepts. The evaluation methods used could be extended to incorporate ongoing assessment of concepts during the courses/initiatives offered.

7.3.3   *Practitioner -Guide (P-*G)

The P-G is very much focused on the practical application of learning – virtually to the exclusion of content and conceptual input. Whilst this appears to work extremely well, it may be advantageous to consider a platform of technical and conceptual learning prior to embarking on such a high profile initiative. In essence, the recommendation is for an assessment of early learning prior to attendance on the most senior programmes, to facilitate the best experiential learning. In terms of evaluation, it was noticed that there is virtually no evaluation form for this initiative. It is recommended that a short evaluation form be designed to allow management trainees to collect their thoughts so that potential learning points are collated for the benefit of future participants.

7.3.4   *Recommendations for RB Ltd*

The major recommendation for RB Ltd is that this report be presented to the MDTs and to the Board of Directors. The report should contain what occurs in practice with that which is stated in the literature review. The learning points should be reflected in a potential Train the Trainer programme (For MDTs and HR professionals) to highlight the major importance of the theory of transferring relevance, as discovered from this research.

7.4   **Personal Reflections**

This final section gives some observations and comments on how the process of conducting this research has informed this researcher's own practice. Essentially, the six year journey involved a constant comparison between what was stated in the related literature, what the MDTs indicated they did in practice, and this researcher's own reflection during the whole study. By using a grounded theory approach the information discovered emanated from the data provided from the interviews with the MDTs. This provided a very practical account of activities in both learning and its application in the workplace. The literature was used as a backdrop against which the theoretical implications were compared. The researcher kept an ongoing journal throughout the six years and developed a concept called the "Learning Triangle'. The concept suggests that learning initiatives need to incorporate an academic (theoretical) component, a practical (real world) component, and include the trainer/teachers personal reflections to add value and relevance to the audience. This concept has been

incorporated into actual practice in both an associated private organisation linked to RB Ltd, and whilst teaching at a university in Vancouver, Canada. The feedback obtained from trainees/students/fellow teachers, has been highly favourable; and is supported by class average grades well above the university norm.

A major reason for the promising feedback from trainees/students is believed to be due to typology of MDTs discovered in this research. The profile of MDTs parallels the 'Learning Triangle' concept in that there is an academic/educative aspect, a conceptual/facilitative component, and the need to guide the trainees/students towards learning by discovery in a way that has relevance for them as a learner. In this way it mirrors the role of the MDTs as an A-E, C-F, and P-G.

It is hoped that RB Ltd will allow this research and the discovery of the typology of MDTs to be shared with the training/teaching community as a whole to further enhance managerial ETDL in Hong Kong (and elsewhere).

Appendix A

Background Details of Members of the RB Ltd, EDD Team

MDT	Service in RB Ltd	Role in EDD	Degree's	Professional Memberships	Currently Studying	Other Responsibilities or Comments	Country Base and past experiences
1. RB	23	Group HR Manager	1.PhD 2.MSc	1. HKIHRM	BA History	Adjunct Prof. D.HR Leicester	HK Based Ex-Police HK
2. JDG	20	Head of Executive Development	BA Social anthropology and linguistics Dip. in Teaching	Nil	Nil	Executive Development	HK Based UK experience
3. VC	14	Management Trainer	BA Psych Dip. HRM Dip TM	Nil	Nil	18 months in EDD	HK Based Mandarin Oriental Hotels
4. CW	10	Head of Performance & HR Planning	B.S.S M. Ed MBA	1. HKIHRM 2. Hotel & Cat. Assn. in UK	PhD	18 months in EDD	HK Based Hotel Catering
5. KCT	7 Full + 12 PT	Associate Consultant	Nil	Nil	Nil	Studied nautical studies	Canada Based Merchant Seaman
6. DM	8 Full + 10 PT	HR Director Securicor Associate Consultant	BA Hons. Law	1.FIPD, UK 2.TEFL 3.OPQ 4.SASGT	Nil	Writer and Observer Development Centres	Philippines Based Ex-Police UK & HK
7. SR	19	External Management Consultant	MBA	CIMA C.I.M CMA Institute of Learning and Teaching, UK	Nil	SEP CIMA	UK Based Ashridge Management College
8. DB	20	External Management Consultant	PhD BA (Hons) MBA	CA CFA		Finance programmes	HK Based KPMG
9. AON	10 Full + 9 PT	External Management Consultant	PhD BA Theology MA Divinity MBA	Nil		Colliers as HR Director	Australia Based GMT Management & ODI
10. LK	15	External Management Consultant	B. Econ. Math/Econ MBA	Certified Mgt Consultant	PhD (Thesis Re-write stage) BA Applied Science	MBA programmes	Australia Based University lecturing In Australia
Total Years	*177*		*3 PhD 7 MBA's 7 Degree's 3 Diploma's*		*2 PhD's 2 BA's*		

Appendix B

Preliminary Thesis Interview - RB

Naming or Labeling (Strauss & Corbin (1998. p. 106) Using Action Codes (Charmaz, 2003, p. 321)	Group HR Director
Code: Pilot RB1:8.04.2004	6th July 2004
	Doctoral thesis: Wiktor interviewing RB, Group HR Manager,
Re-phrasing the question	W:How do your staff know what needs to be developed, in themselves and others?
Defining 'development' in RB's Department. Knowing how to develop others. (Driver?)	R:Yes, so they, cos the people in here, their development, what they need to be developed in, is knowing how to develop others?

W:Alright, so how do they start, from the point of view of understanding to develop themselves? |
| Time. Depth of previous knowledge | R:Well they've learnt that a long time ago.

W:And how would they have done that? |
| Individual assessment tools
Diagnostic phase
Licensing of staff
Understanding oneself

Learning by working with consultants and by 'teaching' 'Pilot' courses to assess them | R:Through being assessed, through various psychometric tests, that's supposed to be the diagnosis – first they know that they've got to be diagnosed, so all of us who have been licensed to run, and everyone's been licensed to run psychometric testing here. Um, all have a fairly good understanding of our abilities and inabilities. And then once we've got that, our job is then to develop ourselves in those areas, and the way we do that is through various ways. We do it through working with consultants, we do it through conducting training ourselves, because you learn by teaching, if you like, we do it through attending courses ourselves, to pilot them, to see if they're valuable for anyone, but also to grow ourselves. |
| Opportunities for post-graduate study – even for secretaries

Work relevant courses
Interacting with senior staff | Um, we do it for a more formalized structure sort-of training, everybody here, including the secretaries are all doing Masters degrees. In fact, I think there's only one secretary who's not doing a post-graduate type of thing or a graduate type or a diploma time level program. So those have been the main ways. Courses, formalized distance learning type events, working with consultants, being trained up in specific areas; being trained up in very pertinent relevant to the particular job that they're having to do, and just general interaction with chief executives, both internally and externally. |
| Understanding effectiveness | W:So then, the interaction with chief executives. What actually takes place in that scenario?

R:Well, what we do is, with that, we firstly understand, is it working? Want to check it? Ok. (Nb. Taking about the tape.) Firstly, what we'll do is, we have to understand what we're going to see the Chief Executive for. So for a series of interviews… |

Appendix C

Comparison of Advertised 'Training and Development Positions

	Title and Responsibilities	Experience	Attributes/Skills	Qualifications
1	Learning & Development Manager - Delivery of workshops - Researching best practice training solutions - Maintaining and implementing company policy and procedures - Inspiring and motivating staff - Being proactive/ hands on	Able to work at a strategic level	Results oriented. Development, design and delivery competence	Degree in HR or equivalent Adult Education in related filed
2	Learning & Development Specialist - Design through to delivery of courses and material - Development of training modules	Change Management experience	Sound knowledge in Adult Learning theory/methodology. Project Management skills. Understanding of quality standards and systems. Development, documentation and delivery of training	Qualifications within Human Resource Development
3	Training Manger - Leading a team of 12 Training Consultants - Design, development, delivery and evaluation of training programs.	Extensive experience in all areas of the training cycle.	Have considerable experience in the learning and development arena. Possess outstanding influencing, negotiation and implementation skills.	Relevant tertiary qualification in Adult Education/L&D

Source: Web-site – www.seek.com.au Posted 5th September 2006

Appendix D

Course Syllabus: Certificate in Advanced Training Management

Certificate in Advanced Training Management - Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management: May 6th 2006 for 8 x Half Day sessions

Introduction: *Top*
Organizations today look into return on investment on all their expenses. Training is no exceptional. In this certificate program, we have invited experienced trainers and training managers to share with the participants their experience and practices. The focus will be in formulating training strategies, managing training functions, being a business partner, designing a training program and some of the delivery methodologies, and measuring the effectiveness to justify the dollar spent to the management.

Objectives
Module 1 - Formulating T&D Strategies
▪ Understand the role of Training & Development in managing talents, nurturing leadership and developing skills to deliver business and/or organizational results, short and long term
▪ Apply strategies to create and prioritize Training & Development interventions related to business and/or organizational needs
▪ Synergize with other HR efforts to achieve maximum employee and managerial development and motivation
▪ Learn through different business cases to set T&D strategies

Module 2 - Managing Training Functions
▪ Understand the alignment between business strategy and training
▪ Understand how organizations and employees benefit from training
▪ Understand how to position training as an organizational strategy
▪ Apply appropriate strategies and tactics to manage a training department

Module 3 - Partnering with Line Managers
▪ Understand and commit to the role of Training & Development as business partners of line managers
▪ Understand how to manage the alignment of staff training needs and business needs
▪ Learn how to get end-to-end commitment and support from line managers on Training & Development projects/programs

Module 4 - Instructional Design
▪ Understand a systemic approach of instructional design
▪ Develop an instructional strategy
▪ Assess training needs to identify instructional goals
▪ Analyze learners and contexts
▪ Develop instructional materials
▪ Design and conduct formative evaluations

Module 5 - Experiential Learning
▪ Understand the EL model
▪ Understand the characteristics of EL
▪ Experience the EL

Module 6 - Organization Development▪ Define organization development and its context
▪ Apply the OD process in a business scenarios
▪ Introduce OD tools for intervention
▪ Relate OD to cultural change and reorganization

Module 7 - Application of e-Learning to Organisational Effectiveness
▪ Understand the trend of applying IT technology in HRD initiatives
▪ Identify the benefits and costs of e-learning
▪ Identify the road maps in implementation e-learning in your company

Module 8 - Measuring Training Effectiveness
▪ Understand the key role of evaluation in the training process
▪ Apply different approaches to programme evaluation
▪ Conduct cost-benefit analysis of a training programme
▪ Measure training effectiveness to organization success

Appendix E

Certificate in Train the Trainer - Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management
A Five-Day Programme from February 2006 to March 2006

Objectives:

This certificate gives solid training concepts by understanding the role of the trainer as well as to learn effective presentation skills and select appropriate training methods for course design and delivery. By the end of the program the participants will be able to:

- Understand the importance of training and the role of the trainer
- Learn and practice effective presentation and facilitation skills for training delivery
- Understand and select appropriate training methods for course design and training delivery
- Make good use of the survival kits fro trainers
- Apply the skills learnt by designing and delivering a part of a training program

Target Participants

This program is designed for those who are new to the training field and wish to acquire the necessary skills to be a professional trainer. Experienced trainers who wish to refresh their sills are also welcome.

Program Outlines

Module 1 The Training Cycle

Session 1: Introduction to Training & Development. The Importance of training and development

- Training Vs Development
- The scope of the training function
- The role of the trainer
- The training cycle

Session 2: Psychology of Adult Learning and Training Needs Analysis

- Principles of learning
- Characteristics of adult learning
- Putting the concepts into practice
- Business needs analysis
- Learning needs analysis
- Designing and implementing needs analysis: Case sharing

Session 3: Course Design and Learning Objectives

- Writing high-impact training objectives
- Training design process
- Course contents: opening; main messages; closing/concluding
- Designing learning activities
- Session-by-session preparation

Module 2 Presentation Skills (for Trainers)

- Effective communication skills

- Overcoming nervousness in presentation/public speaking

- Planning for effective delivery: strong opening; main messages with impact; closings

- Effective presentation management

- Professional behaviours in delivering a presentation

- Preparing audio visual aids: PowerPoint slides; flipcharts; video tapes.

- Video-taped practice exercises

Module 3: Training Methodologies

- Review

- Leading group discussions

- Case studies

- Role play

- IT in Training

Module 4: Facilitation Skills

- Training Vs Facilitation

- How to draw participants attention and improve active listening skills

- How to handle questions and answers and difficult participants

- Skills for organising/leading group discussions and concluding the program

- How to evaluate training effectiveness

Module 5: Application: Delivery of a Training Program

- Delivery of part of a module/program

- Act as an Observer for other participants and provide feedback

- Video-recorded presentation for reference by participants

Appendix F

Theoretical Memo: Gap Analysis

- This builds on earlier comments in the memos.
- The issue covers taking a theory or concept, understanding it yourself, then understanding the business unit's need/audience need, and re-formatting the information in a way it will be better understood and applied.
- The 'input', 'process', and 'output' model would apply here. With the raw input coming from the theory , the output being what is required and the process being the measurement of the 'gap', and the process needed to 'translate' it into meaningful material (for the audience).
- This would also apply to the design stage in the earlier cyclical process used in the research question.

Figure 3.2   Theoretical Memo: Translating Relevance (Learning)

- After several interviews the issues of a 'gap' analysis has been raised several times.
- One issue is of understanding oneself in terms of what is needed to train others, and the other suggests understanding what an audience may need to know (as determined by the Company, Department, Trainer, or Participant.)
- See RB's preliminary interview, CW's and the first from KC. (NB. These are the initials of three of the research participants)
- The 'gap' appears to be both personal and business unit oriented. (See RB's comments about management trainers knowing their limitations.) The need includes knowing where to look for it.
- This 'gap analysis' extends to measurement. CW indicates it is linked to business competencies. VC also indicates how sometimes the participants don't know what they need to know. This is essentially a 'corporate gap.'

Appendix G

An Example of Open Coding - Thesis Interview with DB on 12.09.2005

Naming or Labeling (Strauss & Corbin (1998, p. 106) **Using Action Codes** (Charmaz, 2003, p. 321)	Date:Monday 12th September. 2005
Code: DB1.12.9.05	**Place:Police Officers Club, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong**
	W: So, in terms of managing your own learning. **How do you learn how to learn?**
Learning by trial and error	D: Oh, I think, trial and error. Yup. Trial and error. Whatever's good for you. And so, what you feel comfortable with, and what you don't feel comfortable with you'll veer away. So, I suppose its in-depth reading, and I love video's.
Staying within ones own comfort zone	W: Just building on that. You mentioned that you printed off, and then, did you say, highlight?
	D: I underline. So, what I do, certainly this is not for this programme, that's my own studies. You want me to answer for that programme?
	W: I think just generally.
Learning by searching	D: Well, what I'm doing is, over the summer, I had to do a whole series of searches on management accounting articles. What I did is I read them and often I would read them again and underline what I thought were the important points. I then type into 'Word' those underlined paragraphs, and I'd give a page reference. And the idea is I would then download all those typed up pages into NVivo, which I'm happy to explain later, and then I'd code all the topics under particular categories, and then can then give you a summary. For example, definition of a successful entrepreneur, I can then search my whole database of summarised articles, and I'll get, hopefully, three or four pages but it may only be one page of page number references, from a whole series of articles on that concept.
Using software packages – Nvivo – summarising relevant information	
Learning by asking questions and reading	So, that process, now how did I learn to do that? By asking lots of questions and reading. So, I learnt, for example I learnt about NVivo through research off the internet, through academic papers, and then I'd have to…, I knew nothing about this, and so I want to put myself on a course and learn about it. I went to Melbourne, Doncaster Road. I went on the course for three days, and just from talking to people I learned that this was an excellent way of summarising all this material, and getting sense out of it, and using software. And I was convinced by the people that I talked to that this was…, so I suppose, just poking around, and just asking lots of questions. (W: Alright.) Very expensive way of doing it. Fly to Melbourne. (Laugh.) (300)
Learning ways to summarise material – being convinced of its value	W: Second part of this. Undertaking the process of learning. So, in other words, what is it that's prompts you? I've got to learn about this. I need to learn about this.
Present and Future Learning – driven by teaching and personal reasons	D: Um. That can be varied. One, because I've got to teach it. So, if I've got to teach it, I've got to know more about it than my participants. So, that triggers it. Secondly, because, you know, as the years go by, maybe a mid-life thing but no problem with that at all, I think that maybe there's only 20 more years, and I always thought, that by mmm, by the close of play, I should have read all these very, erudite people like Max Weber and Karl Popper. Um, so, I've now got the books, I have dipped in. Dave McClelland, 'The Achieving Society, 1961. I was recommended that. When I got it I thought 'Good God', this should be required reading for everybody, just, it's quite illuminating, etc.
Realising own learning must be in excess of participants	

Appendix H
Example of an Open Coding Memo – Thesis Interview with KC

Naming or Labeling (Strauss & Corbin (1998, p. 106) **Using Action Codes** (Charmaz, 2003, p. 321) Code: KC2:29.9.05	Interview: KC Position: Consultant Date: Thursday, 29th September 2005 at 11am Place: Group HRD, Devon House, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong *"How do management trainers manage their own learning and apply that learning in the workplace."* What I'd like to know is, how your ability has changed whilst working in the Jardine Group, so, if you like, over the years, what's helped you? What's hindered you?
Understanding one's own abilities. Wanting a challenge Diagnosing new needs	KC: Ok. Um. I think I said earlier, probably last year, that I'm more happy with the programmes that I know best, or to that effect. Um, and obviously I've been learning over the years. I've been modest. I've been modest. I take challenges. So, what is helping me to extend my sort of repertoire of techniques or knowledge is new programmes. Customers new needs. Or subjects, you know, that was in the past, not really an issue, but now it is. Like Fraud Prevention for example. W: Ok.
Translating content – delivering in an understandable way Translating concepts	KC: Because I had some help from this organisation. This Kroll business. Their job is to support me to deliver. So, I have somebody who is an expert, so I was the translator, you can actually call it. (W: Ok.) So, I have somebody who is very good in that knowledge, but poor in delivery. (W: Aah.) By changing it into a concept that it is easier for people to understand. (W: Ok.)
Describing his role – helping people to learn Facilitating learning Assisting others to learn by providing direction	How would you describe your role when dealing with a group of participants? KC: Galileo. You can't train anybody. You can only help them to learn. W: That's really what I'm doing. I always try to help people to learn. So, by facilitation. By leading them to the right direction. By asking questions. Asking them to think. I mean, if necessary, you know, force them to do something with discipline, I mean, with some of the lousy participant,
Qualifying the MDT role – in delivery – being a 'trainer' Indicating concepts need to be 'instructed' not facilitated.	W: Is that the role for all of the functions that you perform? KC: Not really. I mean, there are parts where you have to be a trainer, where you deliver concepts. Then you can't facilitate people on concepts. You have to do them and tell them.

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