CHAPTER 1
Introduction to Learning and Development

Key Concepts

Learning; training; education; development; human resource development; management development; learning and development (L&D); rigour and relevance; role of theory

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Knowledge Outcomes

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

• define each of the key concepts listed above;
• explain the relationships between learning, training, education, development, human resource development, management development and learning and development (L&D);
• explain the individual and collective purposes of learning and development;
• explain the role of theory in L&D and the significance of rigour and relevance in L&D research.

Introduction

If the challenge of the past has been to 'get organised', the challenge of the future is to find ways in which we can remain open to continuous self-organisation: so that we can adapt and evolve as we go along.

Gareth Morgan, *Imaginization*, p. 17

Learning is at the heart of *organization*. Learning has the power to enable individuals and organizations to fulfil their personal and collective goals and ambitions. Individuals may be transformed by their learning, but also through learning they may gain the power to transform the context in which they find themselves or to create new contexts for themselves. Learning potentially is transformative and emancipating. It is through learning that we can acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes that may enable us to function and perform more efficiently and effectively and exercise greater choice in our working and personal lives. The position adopted in this book is that managed learning has the potential to contribute to the development of individuals and organizations, to enhance their performance in worthwhile and meaningful ways, and that the benefits to be accrued by the individual, the organization and wider society can be significant and mutually reinforcing. For these reasons it is argued that learning and the ability to manage the processes of learning and development are key capabilities for individuals and organizations in the information age.

Learning is the focal point of this book. For students and practitioners of learning and development an understanding of learning is a vital aspect of professional education, development and practice, but of itself learning and the ability to learn also play crucial roles in one's personal growth and one's intellectual and professional development. The overarching aim of this book is to provide an introduction to the concept of learning and development in the context of work and organizations. If the book achieves this aim readers may come to be able to understand and explain learning and development in its many and various manifestations and also, in the context of a professional role, be able to manage it in the pursuit of enhanced organizational and individual effectiveness. The first step on this journey requires that we attempt to define learning and to distinguish it from related concepts. In order to do this we will begin by examining various perspectives on learning and then consider what learning means in relation to concepts such as training, development, education and human resource development (HRD).

Learning

Learning and development (L&D) as a field of management research and practice (and within this context learning per se) is concerned with how individuals (either singly or as groups) acquire (in the sense of getting something that already exists) or create (in the sense of making something completely new) knowledge and skills which enable them to perform and grow in their current or future occupational role. Definitions of learning abound in the literature; Table 1.1 summarizes a selection of these from some of the various fields that this book draws upon.

It is clear from the table that learning is an elusive phenomenon that may be interpreted in diverse ways when viewed from different perspectives; however, it

Table 1.1   Some definitions of learning

Field or sub-field	Description	Source
Andragogy	The process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise	Knowles et al. (1998: 17)
Behaviourist psychology	Learning can be understood in terms of environmental events (stimuli) and their effect upon behaviour without recourse to internal mental processes	Schwartz and Reisberg (1991: 14)
Cognitive psychology:	Learning is best understood in terms of the events taking place inside the learner and the role of mental processes in the acquisition of knowledge	Schwartz and Reisberg (1991: 2)
Education	It has the quality of personal involvement (both of feelings and cognitive aspects), of being self-initiated (the impetus comes from within), of being pervasive (making a difference in the behaviour, attitudes and even personality of the learner), of being evaluated by the learner (who knows if it is meeting a need) and of having the essence of meaning	Rogers (1985: 121–2).
Experiential learning	The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience	Kolb (1984: 38)
Instructional design	A change in human disposition or capability that persists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to processes of growth	Gagne (1965)
Knowledge management	The creation of new knowledge, dissemination of it throughout the whole organization and embodiment of it in new technologies, products and services	Nonaka (1991)
Organization science	A process of detecting and correcting error	Argyris (1977)
Organizational behaviour	A relatively permanent change in behaviour, or potential behaviour, that results from experience	Rollinson and Broadfield (2002: 172)
Situated learning	For individuals it is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practice of their communities, for communities it is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members; for organizations it is an issue of sustaining the interconnectedness of communities of practice	Wenger (1998: 7–8)
Training	The systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment	Goldstein (1993: 3)

is possible to synthesize a definition that may be useful for the purposes of this chapter and for the remainder of the book:

> Learning is a longer-term change in the knowledge possessed by an individual, their type and level of skill, or their assumptions, attitudes or values, which may lead to them having increased potential to grow, develop and perform in more satisfying and effective ways.

Offering a definition of learning begs questions about how it relates to or differs from associated terms such as 'education' and 'training', which are also concerned with knowledge and skill acquisition, and also raises the question of why couple together 'learning' and 'development'? Many authors (for example, Buckley and Caple 1992) have attempted to differentiate the various concepts that have at their core the issue of learning whilst others have concluded that to attempt to make any such distinction is potentially futile (see Stewart 1999). There is also a more fundamental question of how learning may itself be conceptualized and perceived. The view of learning that was stated at the outset was essentially an optimistic, positive and humanistic one; however, as Holton (2000) has argued, learning may be seen in a number of ways, not all of which are positive:

1. Positively (as a humanistic endeavour): learning helps individuals to grow, aspire towards and realize higher-level needs; it enhances human potential individually and collectively for employees, organizations, society and humanity (see Holton 2000).
2. Neutrally (as the value-neutral transmission of information and knowledge): this is a narrower technical-rationalist and instrumentalist view of learning which sees it as a means to solve everyday problems through the effective transferring of information and knowledge (see Holton 2000).
3. Negatively (as a tool for societal oppression): the assumption that learning is by nature good or at least neutral may be a naïve one since, as Holton (2000: 63) argued, learning can also be a tool for oppression particularly outside organizational settings (he cites certain political, religious and educational examples to illustrate the potential that learning can have as a means for repression and control).

The assumption that learning is a 'good thing' has also been questioned by certain theorists who espouse critical perspectives of management (for example, Contu et al. 2003). In their view, the stance taken by some which asserts that 'learning is the only sustainable source of competitive advantage' makes it difficult to take up a position which is 'against learning' but such an uncritical position may overlook problematic L&D issues and practices. The potentially negative connotations of learning are a matter to which we shall return in our discussion of the relationship between learning and training.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

Here are some dictionary definitions of key concepts: (a) learn: to gain knowledge or understanding of or skill in by study, instruction or experience; (b) train: teach a specified skill especially by practice; (c) education: give intellectual and moral instruction, especially as a prolonged process; (d) develop: bring to or come to an active state or to maturity. (Source: *Oxford Encyclopaedic English*)

PERSPECTIVE FROM PRACTICE: HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEARNING PRACTICES

Based on the following source: J. C. Meister, 2005. Learning that leads to high performance, *Chief Learning Office*r, January 2005: 58.

A survey of senior executives in 285 organizations revealed an apparently simple association between productivity, growth and income and L&D practices. In the high-performing organizations L&D activity was characterized by:

- an alignment of L&D with strategic goals to the extent that many executives viewed the L&D function as a key to accomplishing the company's goals;
- a focus upon developing competencies for key occupational groups ('strategic workforces'), some of which had their own profession-specific L&D team;
- an integration of L&D with related HR (human resources) activities and to other areas such as knowledge management;
- a blending of L&D methods so that traditional classroom-type approaches were integrated with alternatives such as e-learning;
- a focus upon leadership development to the extent that some participants in the survey had developed their own stand-alone leadership institutes (such as Johnson & Johnson's School of Leadership).

Training

Training, especially in the traditional view or from a non-L&D perspective, is often equated with learning and development. However, L&D is much broader than the provision of training courses for employees (although the latter may, of course, be part of planned L&D interventions in organizations). Training is undoubtedly of value to individuals and organizations, but it is by no means the whole story. It is concerned with a tactical approach to the acquisition of predefined knowledge

and skills rather than the more strategically aligned perspective that characterises human resource development (HRD) and the integrated view of L&D presented in this book. In this sense training is instrumental (i.e. it is a tool or a means to an end). The distinctive features of training may be described and explained in terms of its process and effects, and also by looking at what it is not (for example by comparison with contrasting concepts such as education). For example, Buckley and Caple (1992: 19) described the *process of training* as mechanistic; whereas that of education, for example, is more 'organic' (though the authors are not specific as to the meaning of this, but which presumably means more amorphous, less constrained and more unpredictable); and the *effects of training* as specific, predictable and uniform, whereas those of education are more general, less predictable and variable (see Figure 1.1).

This distinction is helpful in that L&D practitioners may be concerned with enhancing performance in organizational and business environments that are uncertain, rich and complex. Therefore to concern ourselves solely with training is too narrow a view since for one thing it may focus too much upon the learning content (i.e. the subject of the particular training) but may ignore learning processes (i.e. how the content is acquired) and also may overlook the unplanned, incidental, informal and implicit learning that is inevitable in any organizational or social context. The process of learning is important because the ability to engage in learning and to manage learning more effectively may present a generic competence that can help an organization to differentiate itself from its competitors. Content may be comparatively easy to acquire (it may be bought in or copied comparatively easily from the public domain of knowledge); process is more difficult to emulate (and hence of greater competitive value as a means of differentiation). Learning-how-to-learn may be as important as learning itself for individuals and organizations. Boxall and Purcell (2003: 143) noted that training is often predicated upon a deficit assumption (that is, there is a performance gap that needs to be filled). However, not all training needs to be predicated upon this assumption
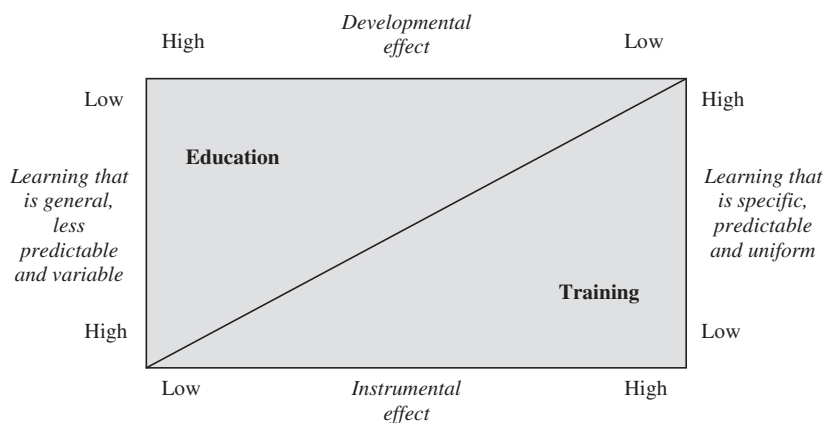

Figure 1.1   The relationship between education, training and development (after Buckley and Caple 1992: 19)
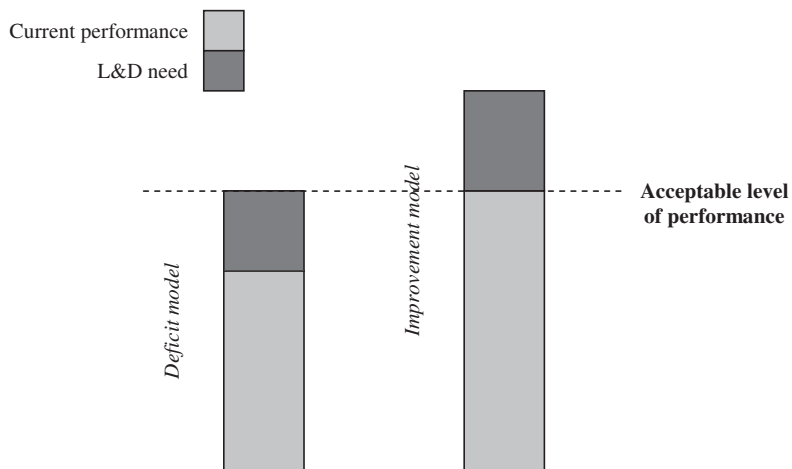
Figure 1.2　Deficit and improvement assumptions for L&D

and by going beyond the deficit assumption we can postulate an improvement assumption in which there is a level of satisfactory performance that can be enhanced or exceeded through L&D. Specifying demanding or 'stretch' goals is one way in which employees' learning can be extended beyond the minimum required in order to perform (Figure 1.2).

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

In an employer survey in the UK published in 2002, 82 per cent of employers had provided on-the-job training, 62 per cent of employers had provided off-the-job training. Of the small number of employers that did not provide any training the reasons included: (a) existing skills meeting the needs (66 per cent); (b) employees learning adequately from experience (13 per cent); (c) new recruits being sufficient to obtain the skills required by the firm (12 per cent). (*Source*: Learning and training at work 2002, Department for Education and Skills SFR 02/2003.)

PERSPECTIVE FROM RESEARCH: THE NATURE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRAINING AND LEARNING IN THE UK BANKING SECTOR

Based on the following source: E. P. Antonacopoulou, 2001. The paradoxical nature of the relationship between training and learning, *Journal of Management Studies*, 38(3): 328–50.

Antonacopoulou's starting point is her argument for a more critical analysis of the relationship between training and learning. She defined the latter

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as the liberation of knowledge through self-reflection and questioning. An implication of her argument is that progress in understanding this issue has been hampered by the limitations of reductionist approaches which assume linear cause-and-effect relationships and straightforward associations between training, learning and performance. The dilemmas faced by individuals and the dualities that we observe in L&D may be one way in which we can explain why development interventions have the potential to be counter-productive (2001: 331). One example of such a duality might be the identification of training needs ostensibly as an indicator of a development need or an opportunity to learn and grow, but which also may be perceived as an indication of an individual weakness that could have ramifications for wider matters such as individual reward. The conclusion that Antonacopoulou draws from this argument is that training and the activities associated with it (such as training needs identification and analysis) may not be assumed always to produce learning, nor can learning be assumed to be an integral part of training (because transfer of learning from the training situation to the job situation may not occur). *Note*: Antonacopoulou's perspective is somewhat different from the one outlined in the preceding discussion, where the learning process (lower order) was postulated as underlying training events (higher order). For her the training process is seen as leading (sometimes) to the occurrence of learning.

To investigate the paradoxical and dualistic relationships between training and learning Antonacopoulou employed a variety of data collection methods (interview, questionnaire, observation and critical incident review) longitudinally in three case study organizations in the retail banking sector of the UK. The type of questions asked of managers ranged from the specific and operational (for example, 'Give examples of the best learning experiences you came across so far') to the general and aspirational (for example, 'What do you think training should be able to do?'). The paradoxes are illustrated by some of the quotations from the participants in the study and are perhaps indicative of what she termed the 'strong' and 'weak' relationships that may exist between training and learning:

> Training can help shape ideas and aspirations because it involves learning new things. Depending on the type of training, it can be the most effective way of learning. (2001: 336)

> Some needs are not easily fulfilled by on-going training. They are continuous and part of the unexpected day-to-day procedures that a [training] course cannot resolve. (2001: 337)

The contradictions apparent between participants' responses were taken as indicative of a disjunction between training and learning. Some of the distinguishing and contradictory features of each are shown in Table 1.2 as a further means of comparison between the two.

The relationship between training and learning is often portrayed as uni-directional – for example, training produces learning which in turn has an effect upon performance; training is often portrayed as serving organizational priorities (enhanced performance); and as mechanistic (superficially per-ceived and rarely existing as an interaction between training and learning) (2001: 339). Antonacopoulou's study presents a thoroughly described and comprehensive analysis in a sub-sector (retail banking) of the financial serv-ices industry in the UK. Clearly the generalizability of these case study find-ings is limited but they articulate a fundamental tension and paradox between two terms (learning and training) that are sometimes used synony-mously. Antonacopoulou's research suggested that it may be fallacious to attribute learning as an outcome of all training. One interpretation of this argument is that training may have at least three possible outcomes: an increase in an employee's capacity for effective action (the latter is based upon Senge's 1990 definition of learning); no change in an employee's capacity for effective action; or a dysfunctional outcome in which there is a reduction in an employee's capacity for effective action. This concurs to some extent with the views put forward by Holton (2000), and which were discussed earlier, of the potential positive, neutral and negative outcomes of learning.

Table 1.2 Differences between training and learning based on Antonacopoulou's research (2001)

Training	Learning
Conditioning and control of individuals' understanding	Broadening and liberating understanding
An 'event'	Ongoing
Teaching cultural norms of the organization and enforcing the organization's definitions and perspective	Questioning and experimentation with freedom to learn and unlearn
Prediction of outcomes	Unpredictability of outcomes
Consistent with single-loop learning (incremental change) (see Chapter 5)	Conducive to double-loop learning (radical change) (see Chapter 5)

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

The 2004 American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) survey revealed that the annual number of hours of formal learning per employee averages about 28 hours across a broad cross-section of US organizations. In the UK, in a report published in 2002, the average amount of off-the-job train-ing provided was 1.8 days per employee. (*Sources*: ASTD State of the Indus-try Report 2004; Learning and training at work 2002, Department for Education and Skills SFR 02/2003.)

Discussion Point

As Antonacopoulou's research suggests, the distinctions and relationships between terms we sometimes take for granted, like learning and training, are not always so clear-cut. What are the relationships as you see them between learning as defined earlier in this chapter and training? Is learning an outcome of all training? How might the 'no change' or 'reduced capacity for effective action' outcomes of training arise in practice?

Development and Education

Development is an increase over the longer term of the capacity that an individual has to live a more effective and fulfilling professional and personal life as a result of learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is a directional shift towards a higher condition or state of being and in this sense is concerned with an outcome. Development in the L&D context should be considered distinct from development as a biological process of maturation (though of course aging may have an impact upon a number of L&D-related matters). Development occurs as a result of learning and can happen in any number of ways: for example, through training events (such as training courses) or via the methods of coaching, mentoring, planned and unplanned experiences in the workplace and so forth. Some training may be highly focused and job specific (such as learning how to use a new piece of software), whereas other training may contribute to a broader and longer-term development programme (such as undertaking training in team-working skills as a part of a management development programme). In this sense training (and to the same extent education also) may be seen as but one type of input into the developmental process (Table 1.3).

Individuals may differ in their motivations to engage in learning and development. Maurer (2002) argued that the notions of the actual self and the possible self are critical aspects of an individual's orientation towards their development. Taking Alderfer's notion of growth needs as a starting point, Maurer asserted that successful involvement in learning and development activities may strengthen an individual's orientation towards the attainment of what the self might become. A virtuous cycle may thereby operate where development-oriented individuals maintain or increase their interests in learning activities and projects. The building of learners' self-efficacy (the belief that one can perform tasks or behaviours) may be a crucial precondition for many individuals because as they become more effective as learners – and since learning often gives valuable payback – a positive feedback loop may operate. A related aspect of self-efficacy is the ability to learn how to learn and how to successfully engage in developmental and career planning activities. In one respect a 'learning-to-learn' capacity is likely to be founded upon individuals' understanding of their own personal learning preferences, styles and processes (i.e. what works for them and how this may be improved). Meta-cognition (defined here as thinking about and coming to under-

Table 1.3   The relationships between learning and training, development and education (K, knowledge; S, skill; A, attitude)

Outcome	What?	When?	Where?
Trained employee	KSAs that are specific and uniform and that may lead to enhanced job performance	Before or during employment	On-job and off-job
Developed employee	KSAs that are variable and more general and	Usually during employment	On-job and off-job
Educated employee	that may lead to professional and personal growth	Usually before employment	Usually non-work contexts

stand one's own thinking and learning processes) is an important aspect of a developmental and life-long learning orientation.

Managerial decisions to develop individual employees or groups of employees are not unproblematical. For example, if we examine the management of careers and the psychological contract we find that tensions and issues of organizational power and politics may become more focused through issues relating to L&D policy and practice. One such tension is with respect to where the boundaries of development are – these may be different from each particular stakeholder's perspective. For example, is development, when viewed from the individual's viewpoint, for career purposes (and perhaps beyond the organization), or is it, from the organization's perspective, for employment in the organization or employability in the wider labour market? As far as the management of L&D is concerned these tensions may raise policy-related questions such as 'development of whom and for what purposes?' These questions are important from the point of view not only of developing fair and equitable L&D plans and policies, but also for how L&D is perceived, understood and implemented in an organization, and in relation to L&D's political role and its relationships with the power exercised by specific occupational groups (such as managers). These issues may have ramifications for other organizational matters such as employee relations, employee involvement, workforce satisfaction and commitment, and may have a knock-on effect on human resource (HR) issues such as recruitment and retention.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

The UK's Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) Annual Training Survey 2004 found that a third of respondents said that over 75 per cent of the training in their organizations was informal. At the other end of the scale, only a tenth of respondents said that less than one-quarter of their training was informal. (*Source*: Training and Development 2004: Survey Report (April 2004). London: CIPD.)

Like training, education is an input to the developmental process and has been defined as the 'long term acquisition of valid and usable bodies of knowledge and intellectual skills and the development of the ability to think critically, systematically and independently' (Ausubel 1985: 71). The aims and effects of education are broader and deeper than training since its concern is with the whole person over a longer period. From an organizational point of view, Ausubel's attributes of an 'educated individual' (critical, systematic and independent) are likely to be those that some employees might be expected to bring with them when selected for employment. The attributes are likely to vary in their level since what constitutes 'educated' will vary between occupations and contexts. Nonetheless, critical, systematic and independent individuals ought to be products of an effective educational system. An organization's policy may be to recruit educated employees and develop job-specific skills and thus enable the individual to apply her or his generic abilities to think independently, systematically and critically to workplace issues (this is especially true of professional and management occupations) and thus develop them further in situ into a unique set of difficult-to-imitate attributes.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

Many countries are facing significant challenges in their patterns of skills requirements and labour supplies. In the USA the Department of Labor estimated that the number of jobs requiring a degree is likely to grow by 31 per cent and that 160 million US jobs will have only 154 million American workers to fill them by 2008 (the population of the USA in 2005 was around 300 million). In the EU (European Union) on average the number of students enrolled in tertiary education has more than doubled in the last 25 years. (*Sources*: American Council on Education, http://www.acenet.edu; CEDEFOP, 2003. *Key Figures on Vocational Education and Training*, http://www.cedefop.eu.int)

Through the human resource (HR) activities of recruitment and selection educated employees can be hired or 'bought in'. Education also has a role to play during employment as part of L&D through which attempts may be made to develop, 'make' or 'grow' employees in particular ways. Those educational processes and their outcomes which take place before employment (at school, college or university) are likely to be of lesser immediate and direct relevance to a task or job than are L&D activities which are engaged in as a response to identified learning needs. However, the indirect and longer-term impact of educational experiences and background upon ongoing development and performance may be significant. Education may also occur after an individual becomes an employee (for example, through a part-time evening class as part of a management development programme, through a distance learning course and so forth). Hence, education may be considered to be more developmental and less instrumental in its effects than is training, though both contribute to an individual's development.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

As a general rule the unemployment rates for people with higher qualifica-
tions tends to be lower than for those without such qualifications. For
example, in the EU on average in 2000 the unemployment rates for people
with a tertiary qualification was 4 per cent against 7 per cent for those with
secondary but not tertiary qualifications and 11 per cent for those with at
most a secondary qualification. In the UK the figures were 2.2, 4.4 and 8.5
per cent respectively. (*Source*: CEDEFOP, 2003. *Key Figures on Vocational
Education and Training*, http://www.cedefop.eu.int)

Education and training are tangible 'events' (for example, a training course or an
educational programme). Development, on the other hand, is less tangible and is
not an 'event' or an input as such; rather it is a trajectory of an individual or an
organization. It takes place as a result of the process of learning and may be a nat-
uralistic process (for example through experience) or supported by training, edu-
cation and other workplace-based activities (inputs to the process). Education
(including vocational education) often takes place pre-employment, but also may
continue during employment with employer support (for example, as part of a
company-sponsored management development programme) or without the
sanctioning and support of the employer (for example, where an individual
undertakes self-development activities that may or may not be work-related or
career-related). One of the aims of training or education is to bring about learn-
ing, but training may be considered to be more instrumental in its effects (in the
sense of being for a well-defined, and usually organizational, purpose) than is the
ongoing professional education of managers and other employees.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) approached the semantic issues relating to edu-
cation and training from the perspective of management development and asked
the question: why not 'management education' or 'management training'? For
them 'education' is too tainted with notions of formalized learning in educational
institutions that are far removed from the informal and workplace-contextualized
learning that is a productive form of knowledge creation in organizations.
Similarly, 'training' has connotations of vocationally oriented education guided
by formal or structured means. For Woodall and Winstanley management
development may include one or both of these but 'is used more comprehensively
to encapsulate all types of learning which enable an individual to develop their
skills and understanding to meet current and future organisational needs' (1998:
9). Woodall and Winstanley acknowledged an overlap between management
development and human resource development (HRD), but the former is seen
as being concerned more with learning and development at the strategic
level whereas the latter may have more of a functional and specialist emphasis.
They argue that the two concepts overlap in the areas of competence, appraisal,
coaching and team-building skills. As we shall see in a later chapter, a further

dimension is added when one considers leader and leadership development – an area seen by many as crucial in enhancing individual and organizational performance.

Human Resource Development (HRD)

The formal origins of the term HRD may be traced at least as far back as Nadler's work in the 1970s (see Nadler 1970). He defined it as 'a series of organised activities, conducted within a specified time and designed to produce behavioural change' (Nadler 1979: 3). Later it was defined by Davis and Mink in the 1990s as: 'a wide range of interacting, integrating processes aimed at developing greater purpose and meaning, higher levels of performance and achievement and greater capacity for responding to an ever-changing environment leading to more effective individuals, teams and organisations' (1992: 201). As usage of the term HRD has grown, so, it appears, has its remit – for example, more recently McLean and McLean (2001: 4) defined it as:

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

Since its inception and growth in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s the term HRD appears to have migrated to the UK, mainland Europe and beyond and in many cases has supplanted references to 'training and development' (T&D) and 'employee development'. The field of HRD is undergoing strenuous attempts at self-definition and debates about HRD's precise meaning are continuous and ongoing (see Lee 2004). For example, HRD has been described as 'planned interventions in organisational and individual learning processes' (Stewart 1999: 19). The latter implicates HRD as being concerned with the more manageable aspects of learning. This does not mean that HRD is merely concerned with training, since clearly it is possible to have a managed learning process that goes beyond the instrumentality of training interventions and into broader issues of individual and organizational development (including, for example, action learning and action science). Grieves and Redman argued that the distinguishing characteristics of HRD are that it is a strategic intervention where there is some devolvement of responsibility to line managers and which assumes a positive set of attitudes to learning with an emphasis on the workplace as a context for learning (1999: 89–90). However, as we shall see in this regard, some have proffered the specific term 'strategic HRD' (SHRD), which begs the question of what HRD per se means given the implication in Grieves and Redman's assertion that all HRD is strategic. An alternative view is to consider HRD (or L&D for that matter) to have both strategic and operational facets. To this extent HRD has subsumed T&D (perhaps there are parallels between this and the relationship of HRM – human resource management – to personnel management). To be strategic in an effective manner HRD

must have an operational component which is concerned with the day-to-day implementation of strategy (any HRD strategy is only as good as its implementation); however, it is also possible for L&D to be operational (i.e. concerned with the day-to-day activities of identifying and analysing learning needs, implementing and evaluating L&D) without having a strategic focus (this has been one of the perceived weaknesses of training and development in the past). The issue of strategic L&D will be returned to in the next chapter.

PERSPECTIVE FROM PRACTICE: THE ORIGINS OF HRD

Source: W. E. A. Ruona, 2001. The foundational impact of the Training Within Industry project on the HRD profession, *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 3(2): 119–26.

The term human resource development (HRD) has gained significant currency and impact in academic and practitioner circles in recent years. The origins of contemporary HRD practice may be traced to the Training Within Industry (TWI) Service of the US government in the period 1940 to 1945, which had two objectives: to help contractors to the US government's war effort pursue faster production and reduce the costs of production of war materials (Ruona 2001: 121). Rather than training being viewed as an end in itself it was seen instrumentally as a means to achieving the desired objectives (increased production of resources to support the war effort). The ethos and method of the TWI approach were described by Ruona (2001: 122–25) and may be summarized thus:

1. Strategic and business focus: training is a business tool whose aim should be to solve production problems and whose results should be evaluated accordingly (i.e. the focus should be upon performance improvement).
2. Roles and responsibilities: training professionals should be business partners, supervisors should be the 'central conduits' (Ruona 2001: 124) for training, employee coaching and performance, and management is ultimately responsible for maximizing the impact of training (i.e. line managers have an important role).
3. Systematic approach: training should be based upon the sound analysis of tasks and work processes and be structured to provide opportunity for demonstration, practice and feedback (i.e. training should be based upon assessed needs and implemented in a workplace climate that is conducive to facilitating the transfer of learning from the training situation to the job situation).

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4. Systems perspective: training should reach beyond the scope of the individual (for example, through a multiplier approach in which trainees train others and so forth) and should recognize the broader linkages, interactions and opportunities for integration between job, process, worker and supervisor (i.e. there should be integration with other aspects of HR and job design).

The TWI as described by its author, Dooley (1945; 2001), and reviewed by Ruona (2001) and Swanson (2001), may be seen as representing the birth over half a century ago of a systematic approach to L&D. The latter is discussed more fully in Chapter 2, but for now it is enough to note that it is a method that has an inherent logic and business focus and which, in spite of its acknowledged limitations and the changes and elaborations that it has undergone over the intervening decades, is still recognizable as providing the foundation of much HRD (or L&D) practice to this day.

The lack of consensus in terminologies (including the more recent usage in the UK of the term 'learning and development') may be seen as characteristic of a dynamic, emergent and rapidly evolving and practice-focused sub-field of management theory and practice. Ruona (2000: 1) asserted that that the work, values and paradigms of HRD are not yet well understood even by those within the field; as a result of this HRD (or the managed aspects L&D) often faces challenges in differentiating itself from related areas such as HR. For example, in the UK L&D practitioners may face difficulties in distinguishing themselves as a discrete body with their own identity from the mainstream of the HRM function; the same may be true in other national contexts with regard to L&D and adult and vocational educational practice in general. For our purposes we will argue that HRD (or L&D) should be considered as a set of practices that should be integrated with other relevant HRM practices.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

On average 62 per cent of countries in the EU provided continuing vocational training (CVT) (ranging from 96 per cent in Denmark to 18 per cent in Greece; the figure for the UK was 87 per cent). The figures were higher for larger enterprises (250 employees or more): 96 per cent compared to medium (50 to 249 employees), 81 per cent, and small firms (10 to 49 employees), 56 per cent. On average the percentage of employees participating in CVT was 40 per cent (for the UK the figure was 49 per cent). (CEDEFOP, 2003. *Key Figures on Vocational Education and Training*, http://www.cedefop.eu.int)

Learning and Development

The issue of the semantics of L&D terminology is not irrelevant. It needs to be seen in a historical context wherein may be detected clear changes in the emphases placed upon the different activities and processes associated with learning in organizations. A useful summary of the UK historical context is provided by Pedler et al. (1997: 12–14), who argued that there has been an evolution away from an education and training emphasis. For example, in the UK large public organizations often had their own workforce education departments, and even nowadays 'training departments' are not uncommon and job advertisements frequently appear for the post of 'Head of Training' or 'Training Manager'. According to Pedler et al. the approach to planned learning in organizations has evolved through a systematic training model (1950s, 1960s and 1970s), through self-development and action-based approaches (1980s) up to the decades in which the approach in their book (*The Learning Company*) was conceived (the 1980s and 1990s) and the advent of the much vaunted 'learning organization' movement. They argued that we never actually 'get there' (to the ideal approach) because as one problem is solved by the latest method (for example, systematic training) another emerges (for example, lack of transfer of learning from the training room to the work environment) because 'the seeds of [the next problem] were sown by the previous solution' (1997: 12). This chain of developments could be seen as accretions to extant practices in which newer ideas, tools and techniques are added to and embedded in older established ones rather than being replacements for them via a wholesale paradigm shift (in the same way that HRD as a field of practice subsumed T&D).

So, for example, even though the systematic approach (a 'plan-design-do-check' cycle) was limited by its very reductionism (the splitting or reducing of jobs into tangible micro skills was not universally applicable, especially to managerial and creative job roles), the systematic approach is not irrelevant simply because of this inherent (but non-fatal) limitation or because it happened to be developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The systematic approach is still alive and well (for example, in elements of the UK's national occupational standard for L&D practitioners and in many L&D and HR job descriptions and workplace practices). Newer developments in L&D practice (such as action learning) have been added to older ones thus enriching the L&D field as a whole (Figure 1.3). What has not been witnessed is any kind of major 'revolution' in L&D theory and method in which a wholesale paradigm shift has taken place. One reason that this has not occurred is perhaps because in practical terms traditional methods are not wholly incommensurate with newer ones and they also have an inertia which embeds them in practice, whilst newer ones (such as e-learning) have some undoubted utility but are not the panaceas that many of their proponents might have wished for or led us to believe.

Professional bodies also play a role in this evolutionary process by driving or reflecting changes in the occupational and organizational contexts of the practice
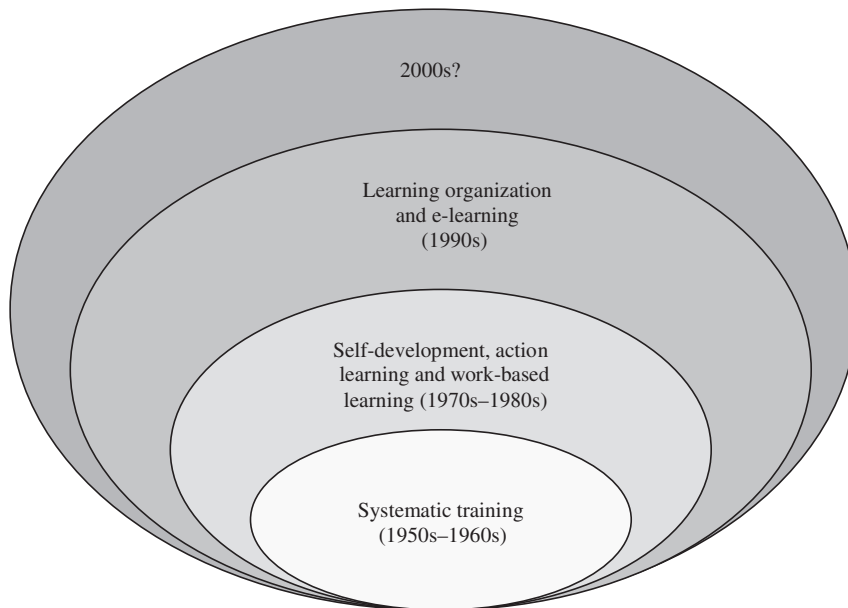
Figure 1.3   An accretionary model of the development of L&D practices (after Pedler et al., 1997: 12–14)

of L&D. For example, in the UK there used to be an Institute of Training and Development (ITD), which was subsumed in the 1990s by the Institute of Personnel Management, which itself became the Institute of Personnel and Development (and latterly the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the CIPD). 'Training and development', gave way to 'employee development' and then 'HRD', and, as noted, the most recent shift in the UK has been to the use of the term 'learning and development'. Gibb suggested that a simple pragmatic reason for the adoption of the term 'learning and development' might be because in the UK the highly influential CIPD now calls what was 'employee development' by a new name, 'learning and development' (2002: 5). However, as outlined above there are valid conceptual reasons for using the term 'learning and development', not least because of increasing interest in and recognition of the processes of informal learning, including the role of implicit learning and tacit knowledge, in organizations. Learning and development represent processes that may be supported by events such as training, education or working. There are also national cultural differences in aspects of terminology. For example in the USA the term 'instruction', 'instructor' and the associated concept of instructional design is not uncommon; indeed the classic 1979 text for learning design by Gagné and Briggs is called *Principles of Instructional Design* (see Gagné et al. 1992). The equivalent term in the UK would have been 'training design' or more latterly 'learning design'. In some practitioner circles the term 'training and development' (T&D) appears, at the time of writing, to be holding up. Terminologies in the field are diverse.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) describes itself as a leading association of workplace learning and performance professionals, forming a world-class community of practice some 70,000 members strong. The ASTD has a membership structure, publishes magazines and books, runs conferences and sponsors research. The ASTD traces its development back to a meeting in New Orleans in 1942, when there was especial emphasis on training since this was essential in meeting increased production needs and for quickly replacing workers who had gone to fight overseas in the Second World War (for example, the USA's Training Within Industry initiative; see Dooley 1945). In 2004 the ASTD celebrated its 60th birthday (see: http://www.astd.org).

Whilst human resource development (HRD) is often concerned with the tactical and strategic management of organized learning and development processes in organizations (see Dooley 1945; Nadler 1970; Davis and Mink 1992; Grieves and Redman 1999), L&D, as defined for the purposes of this book, takes a broader view of learning as occurring in both explicit and implicit ways. To this extent L&D has two facets. Firstly, it is concerned with describing, explaining and understanding the informal and formal, planned and unplanned learning processes that occur in organizations. Secondly, it is concerned where possible with enabling, facilitating and managing these processes also. To this extent L&D is implicated in the management of explicit learning and planned interventions, but also is concerned with the interpretation and understanding of naturalistic learning processes that occur in social systems such as workplaces (even when they cannot be controlled or managed). Hence, from our perspective L&D may be defined as an area of management enquiry and practice which is concerned with the understanding and, where possible, management of learning in the workplace in order to maximize its impact upon the achievement of work goals, the development of the individual and the enhancement of collective performance.

Purposes and Practice of L&D

These discussions raise questions about the purposes of planned interventions such as those implied by the term HRD when it is described as 'planned interventions in organisational and individual learning processes' (see Stewart 1999: 19). Planned activities, such as training and formalized learning experiences, are most often concerned with the achievement of individual and organizational objectives. The latter are by definition predetermined (often on the basis of a needs analysis). Stewart offers another perspective in arguing that HRD is not necessarily bound up with achieving organizational objectives that are predetermined. He sees the purpose of HRD as being the changing of individual and collective

behaviour, with concomitant questions about what is 'desirable behaviour' and for whom? There are implicit unitarist assumptions in many models of HRD and planned L&D of the congruence of individual and organizational motives and agendas. Such a conception of L&D, it may be argued, assumes that the vast majority of – if not all – employees are eager learners who are willing to buy in to the organizational and business purposes of L&D. This may overlook the agency of the individual. Moreover, it may gloss over political issues and the impact of organizationally driven change on the individual employee, for example through downsizing and delayering and the effects that these may have upon motivations, career development trajectories and even the very meaning and purpose of the term 'learning and development'.

There is a danger that in a changed organizational context a unitary, managerially driven or externally driven (for example, from professional or governmental bodies) conception of L&D may result in a partial and perhaps uncritical view. Such a perspective may fail to acknowledge the tensions and paradoxes, the role of emotions, the significance of power and hidden and conflicting agendas (wherein individual and organizational priorities may compete), which may be manifestations of political, cultural and contextual factors. Moreover, to focus wholly upon predetermined objectives assumes a rational planning process in which there is a natural sequence from business goals, through strategic planning, to HR planning and ultimately to L&D policies and plans and their execution and evaluation. However, the limits of rationality in management have been widely recognized (see, for example, Simon, 1989). Planned 'learning' and 'organization' are not unproblematic; indeed the conjunction of the two (learning and organization) may, as Weick and Westley (1999) have suggested, represent an oxymoron itself.

The label 'L&D practitioner' will be used, but it is not ideal (not least because it is cumbersome); nonetheless it is a useful blanket term intended to encompass those individuals whose role engages them in the formal planning, implementation, evaluation or management of activities which are intended to enable and assist:

• employees in acquiring new knowledge, skills or attitudes (for example by providing planned L&D);
• the collective learning process in organizations (for example, by facilitating or supporting organizational development and change).

The term 'L&D practitioner' is preferred as being less contentious than the term 'L&D professional'. As such it is not intended to encompass other groups of stakeholders such as line managers since for these groups, although they may have some key L&D responsibilities, L&D is not the main part of their job role. It has been argued that for the L&D practitioners' role to be sustained, grow and gain continued recognition L&D practitioners or the L&D profession (if it is such) must take learning seriously and strategically in an organizational context in which learning is inclusive and built into the ethos of practice (Gold et al. 2003: 447). The

enhanced esteem and professional status to which Gold et al. allude is important if planned L&D interventions are to be successful in supporting organizational strategy and enhancing business performance by getting the 'buy-in' of senior managers. From a US perspective Kuchinke concurred with this view, namely that one potential difficulty in this regard is the ill-defined professional status of the field of L&D, with (in some instances) low entry barriers to L&D positions and often a location within organizational units that may have little power or influence (he cites the example of HR units) (2000: 281). Professional qualification and certification schemes such as that of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK represent one attempt by a national professional body to raise the entry level to HR and L&D roles.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is the main professional body for human resource (HR) specialists in the UK. By 2001 it had over 100,000 members. Its roots and evolution can be traced back to the Welfare Workers Association in 1913, the Welfare Workers Institute (1919), Institute of Labour Management (1931), the Institute of Personnel Management (1946) and its merging with the Institute of Training and Development (ITD), formerly the British Institute of Training Officers (1964), in 1994. *Source*: I. Beardwell, 2002. In T. Redman and A. Wilkinson, *The Informed Student Guide to Human Resource Management*. London: Thomson Learning. (see also: http://www.cipd.co.uk).

The term 'intervention' used in some of the foregoing discussions is relevant and significant in that it implies a conscious act with the intention of enabling or managing the learning process in a planned (and perhaps systematic) way. This can apply equally to those instances where learning occurs away from a formal setting, for example in a workplace context, as much as it can to formal classroom-based learning (for example, it is entirely feasible to intervene in workplace settings to facilitate learning by methods such as job instruction training or coaching). The L&D practitioner's strategic as well as practical day-to-day concerns are likely to include managing learning in organizations through organized activities (Nadler 1970), and how such activities (whether formal or informal) may actually be organized is one of the themes of this book. In pursuit of this goal it is important for the student of L&D to understand the learning processes in organizations in order that they may be managed more effectively. A useful starting point, therefore, is to examine the process of learning as it occurs in organizational settings since it is this which underpins the higher-order concepts and processes such as training, development and HRD.

Theory, Rigour and Relevance in L&D

As part of a social scientific endeavour L&D research and practice must be grounded upon a strong theoretical base, which requires a cognizance of extant and emerging theories in the base disciplines. Weinberger (1998: 77–9) argued that L&D (or HRD) is underpinned by the disciplines of psychology and economics, system theories (see Swanson 1995; 2001) and philosophy (including ethics), and to which may be added sociology, anthropology and political science (see Kuchinke 2001). There are contributions from organizational behaviour (OB) and organizational development (OD) also. What is also required is a theory-building endeavour within L&D itself. Lynham (2002: 223) described theory building as the purposeful process of generating, verifying and refining coherent descriptions, explanations, and representations of observed or experienced phenomena, which results in:

- process knowledge in the form of increased understanding of how something works;
- outcome knowledge in the form of explanative and predictive knowledge (Dubin 1978; Lynham 2002).

Torraco (2002: 358–9) summarized the methods available to the researcher in pursuit of building a methodologically robust L&D as including quantitative approaches, grounded theory, meta-analysis, social-constructionist approaches and case study method. The knowledge thus produced should possess the qualities of rigour and relevance. In management more generally in the UK, recent years have witnessed a debate regarding these twin issues (some have referred to it as the 'double hurdle') of rigour (i.e. both in terms of underlying theories and the research design, method and analyses used) and relevance (i.e. the significance and importance of the research to managers and management practice). Tranfield and Starkey (1998) and more recently Anderson et al. (2001) have outlined a number of scenarios and consequences of the various permutations of rigour (high or low) and relevance (high or low). This gives rise to a number of possible scenarios for research in management, described by Anderson and his colleagues as:

1. Puerile science carried out by misguided researchers, lacking scientific rigour and of low practical relevance.
2. Popularist science based upon popular ideas, which gives high exposure and impact on managers but has weak theory.
3. Pedantic science, which has high methodological rigour, tends to dominate the academic journals but may be incomprehensible to the majority of managers.
4. Pragmatic science that produces knowledge that is scientifically valid but also of practical relevance to managers in their work (Anderson et al. 2001).

Discussion Point

As you become more familiar with specific examples of L&D research and practice you might ask the question, 'Where might they each fit within the typology suggested by Anderson et al. (2001)?' If you undertake any L&D or other management research of your own, how might you try to ensure that it occupies the most desirable category in Anderson et al.'s typology?

So, where does the preceding discussion leave us as we prepare to embark on a consideration of the concepts, models, theories, research and practice that might help us to understand and enable L&D at the individual and collective levels in the contemporary workplace? A central concern in any scholarly endeavour is the role of theory. In very simple terms, a theory explains what a phenomenon is and how it works (Torraco 1997). A field of management, such as L&D, may be said to be theoretical when it draws upon a set of conceptually coherent explanations for, or predictions of, real-world phenomena. Thus, goal-setting theory may be used as a means by which the effectiveness or otherwise of objective-setting in L&D may be described and explained; and in similar ways we might think, for example, of equity theory and expectancy theory and the ways in which they enable L&D practitioners to describe and explain relevant phenomena such as motivation and engagement in L&D. A field is, on the other hand, atheoretical when it does not have any scholarly or scientific basis for the ideas and principles that embody it (see Swanson 2001).

Sound theory is, according to Swanson, valuable to scholars and practitioners for a number of reasons: firstly, it results in models and principles which can provide powerful and practical explanations by which practitioners may carry out their work. But why should a practitioner necessarily be interested in erudite explanations? Swanson's second point is that without theory every problem has to be reinvented anew, new strategies have to be developed to cope with each challenge, and the pressure to perform may be such that 'trial and error' or 'if it works, use it' becomes the modus operandi. Ultimately such an approach may be inefficient (the wheel may need to be constantly reinvented) and intellectually impoverished, as well as intellectually impoverishing of the field itself. The question of whether there is a theory of L&D (or HRD) per se is an open question, answers to which are beginning to emerge from the various attempts at theoretically based enquiry and theory-building research (for example Lynham 2000, 2002; McGoldrick et al. 2001). The question that will be considered here, since it is more pertinent to the ambition of a practical text, is that of the nature of the theories in use in L&D and the value that they may add for practice.

There is no question (for the reasons outlined above) that L&D practice needs theories if it is to be intellectually rigorous and scientifically founded, and if its various interventions are to be executed with any degree of confidence in their likely outcomes. The question then arises of which theories and why? Swanson

has argued that HRD (and we might add as a corollary L&D) relies upon theories from three base disciplines in order to understand, explain and engage in practice, and these are: psychology, because it captures the core human elements; economics, because of its concern with resources; and systems theory, because it captures the complexity and dynamism of organizations and their work processes at the individual and the organizational levels (2001: 304–5). As has already been noted above, these three theories are perhaps augmentable by the inclusion of others from areas such as philosophy (including ethics), sociology, anthropology and political science (see Kuchinke 2000, 2001). A slightly different perspective is offered by DeWolfe-Waddill and Marquardt (2003), who identified what they termed five major adult learning orientations (behaviourist, cognitive, humanist, social and constructivist). They start from the position of andragogy and its concerns with how adults learn, and they disaggregate this into the five major schools of thought (what might be termed theoretical traditions) referred to above. Hence, DeWolfe-Waddill and Marquardt are concerned with theories in L&D and the explanatory and predictive power they add to practice (their principal concern was with action learning). This is the stance that will be taken in this book, i.e. there will be a concern with the theories in L&D that may be used to describe, explain and make predictions about individual and collective learning in the workplace and hence inform L&D decision making. The main schools of thought that will be used as our foundation (and which correspond broadly with those of DeWolfe-Waddill and Marquardt) will be:

1. Behaviourist theory (because of its historical significance and concern with behavioural change).
2. Cognitive information processing theory (for its concern with the internal mental processes of learning).
3. Social learning theory (because of its concern with the significance of the human model and reciprocation with the environment).
4. Situated learning (for its concern with the role of participation in practice and the significance in learning of shared sets of assumptions, norms and language).
5. Cognitive constructivism (because of its concern with the significance of schema change).

Several theoretical traditions coalesce in the domains of experiential learning and andragogical learning and these are often called upon in attempts to theorize L&D practice. In the UK L&D practice has been dominated by models predicated upon the assumptions that adults 'learn through experience'. For example, Megginson et al. argued that the experiential learning model provides the trainer, manager or others involved in managing learning with 'a methodology that can be used to support learning covering a wide variety of situations and participants' (1993: 85). Downs (1995: 103) recommended the use of reflective 'ponder periods' after learning as part of an experiential learning cycle, with the latter sometimes represented as 'trial-and-error learning'. In recent decades, with the various exhor-

tations to organizations to 'innovate or die', the 'trial and error' interpretation of learning is sometimes condoned and legitimized in the pursuit of the laudable goals of experimentation and creativity. Clearly, there are learning episodes in any workplace that are unplanned, unpredictable and even unintentionally hazardous; these can lead to creative breakthroughs which may ultimately translate into the invention of new products and processes and their eventual commercial exploitation as an innovation. Experiential learning is more complex than simple trial and error or learning from the mistakes that one makes. Furthermore, it is not enough to theorize adults' workplace learning largely in terms of the results of such experiences; L&D needs a comprehensive and coherent theoretical base. The experiential-type approaches alluded to above might also be interpreted as suggesting that adults have the resources and skills to be naturally reflective (whereas not all adults may have the skills or motivations to be reflective learners), and that formalized experiences have comparatively little to contribute in comparison to the experience of solving day-to-day problems (whereas formal learning experiences, when integrated with practice, have a significant and often unique contribution to make to managers' learning). None of this is to deny the value of error-based learning per se; errors may be beneficial in that they can elicit attention, uncover incorrect assumptions and force increased mental processing (Russ-Eft 2002: 52), but error-based learning is more than giving free reign to mistake making.

L&D FACTS AND FIGURES

'Learning is the major process of human adaptation . . . One's job as an educator is not only to implant new ideas but also to modify or dispose of old ones. In many cases, resistance to new ideas stems from their conflict with old beliefs that are inconsistent with them. The learning process will be facilitated . . . by bringing out the learner's beliefs and theories, examining and testing them and then integrating new, more refined ideas into the person's belief systems.' (*Source*: D. A. Kolb, 1984, *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 32, 28)

Alas, there is no 'grand theory' of learning; hence there is a necessity to consider a range of theories derived from the base disciplines (such as psychology and organizational behaviour). The experiential learning model is, undeniably, of central importance to the study of L&D and to L&D practice, but other viewpoints are also needed. Our endeavour also requires that we consider other perspectives from the domains of education, educational psychology and adult education (which themselves draw upon and interpret particular base disciplines in specific ways). None of these theories or perspectives is sufficient in itself to give as full a picture as possible of L&D as an applied field of management practice that is often highly complex and where outcomes can be causally ambiguous. Hence there may be a need at times to at least consider and draw upon, if not ascribe to,

what may be seen by some as epistemologically incommensurate ways of seeing the world. Furthermore, it is impossible to ignore the important issue of the conditions under which certain forms of L&D (such as that which occurs away from the workplace, for example in training courses) are likely to prove effective in transferring back to the workplace setting, and hence the extent to which they may have the potential to impact upon performance. Some of the most conceptually rich and exciting theory-building efforts in human resource development are currently to be found in the area of learning transfer and the specification of the workplace conditions that may promote transfer. Deeper conceptual, philosophical and ethical issues are also raised relating to the nexus of learning and working. Where, for example, within a broad perspective of performance-oriented L&D, does work begin and learning end? Is there such a thing as 'learning' as formally understood or is there only the changing participation in the culturally designed settings of everyday organizational life (see Lave and Wenger 1991)?

Conclusion: the Plan of the Book

The focal point of this chapter and the underpinning concept of the book is learning. The definitions of learning that exist in the literature are diverse, and whilst it is well-nigh impossible to produce an all-encompassing definition that is likely to be valid across all contexts and perspectives, for our purposes learning involves a longer-term change in the knowledge, skill and attitudes that guide thought and action. Furthermore, from the perspective of the performance improvement mission of L&D these changes in knowledge, skill or attitude (KSA) should lead to employees either individually or collectively having an increased potential to perform in more effective ways. Within this paradigm enhanced or effective performance is often defined in terms of productivity; more of the latter is assumed to be 'good' and, furthermore, the contribution of the individual employee is taken to be meaningful in these terms. In the L&D field the question of what constitutes 'good' or 'meaningful' work or learning is not often held up to scrutiny.

One challenge for L&D theory and practice is the weaving together and reconciliation of some of the various themes and issues that were highlighted in this chapter so that learning in the workplace can be managed in more effective ways in order that individuals and organizations may acquire the knowledge and skills which may enable them to develop and grow and thereby achieve the goals that are important to them. This challenge in its various guises is the theme of the remainder of the book. Our journey will begin with an exploration of the business context for L&D and the purposes of learning from a performance perspective. From there we will examine in Chapter 3 a selection of theories that may help managers and L&D practitioners understand and explain learning in their own contexts. Not all learning occurs through explicit processes and the outcomes of learning may be tacit to the extent that, in the words of Polanyi, we may actually
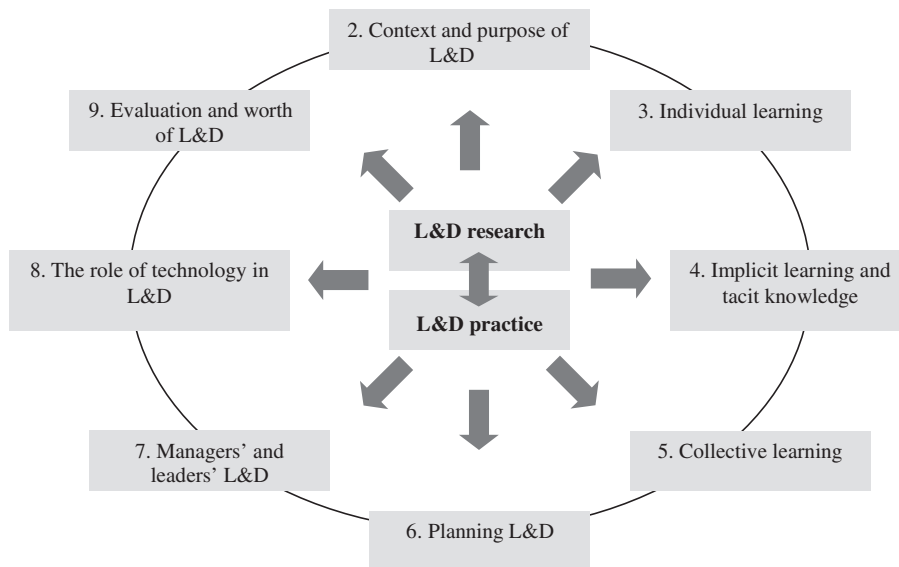
Figure 1.4   The plan of the book

'know more than we can tell'. The issues of implicit learning and tacit knowledge and its codification will be the subject of Chapter 4. The concept of individual learning is crucial but so is the notion of collective learning (Chapter 5), especially in those organizations for which the creation of knowledge assets is an important source of competitive advantage. L&D is not a process that can be left to chance and serendipity (although there is much learning in organizations that is incidental and unplanned); the bedrock of the L&D planning process is needs assessment, and this is covered in Chapter 6. Managers and leaders are crucial stakeholders in modern organizations and they have a dual role as learners themselves and as players in the L&D process more broadly (for example as clients of the L&D function) – we look at this in Chapter 7. L&D is an applied field and as such it has always drawn upon technology as a supporting mechanism for learning; therefore the role of technology in L&D (for example e-learning) and the notion of the technology of L&D (for example, instructional design) will be the subject of the Chapter 8. Finally, we will explore the concept of evaluation and issues of return on investment (ROI) in L&D, and the question of L&D's ultimate contribution and purpose in organizations (see Figure 1.4).

Concept Checklist

Can you now define each of the Key Concepts listed below, and are you now able to achieve the other Knowledge Outcomes specified at the beginning of the chapter?

• Learning
• Training
• Education
• Development
• Human resource development (HRD)
• Learning and development (L&D)
• Rigour and relevance
• Role of theory.