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Human Resource Development

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Human Resource Development

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Course Rationale

Human Resource Development (HRD) at work is now a prominent and central part of Human Resource Management (HRM). This course is designed to provide a complete, integrated introduction to the process, practices and perspectives of this important area of people management. The process of HRD at work is an integral part of the overall performance management of organisations. Selected, representative and prominent practices in HRD at work are explored, using case studies to illustrate what this process involves in practice. Finally contemporary perspectives that should illuminate concerns, concepts, arguments and evidence are explored. The course is thus an 'all in one' view of processes, practices and perspectives.

The common concerns about HRM are found amplified in the context of HRD, and performance in work and organisations. The promised ends are tantalising: win–win outcomes for individuals, organisations and nations in the global economy – HRD for individuals to gain entry to work and occupations with career success, HRD for organisations to improve and enhance standards of performance and success, and HRD for nations to compete and prosper. These are the promised ends of HRD, and although achieving them can bring the greatest gratification, it also involves some of the greatest work that many individuals, organisations and nations will encounter.

A frustration that faces any author in this field is that the current nature of the subject exhibits a lack of 'content stability'. Texts are out of date almost as soon as they are written, even before they are published, as new institutions, practices and initiatives bloom and old ones fade. Organisational practices evolve and change with bewildering frequency, government policy is subject to constant review, and even the apparently established content of learning theory is merely a thin crust. It can be difficult to even define a basic vocabulary and language for HRD that remains stable from one year to the next. This is a general problem with HRM, but it is acute in the field of HRD.

The constructivist view of learning offers a way around this problem. Constructivism recognises that human development requires more than just forcing people to attend training courses. It involves evoking a readiness to learn by animating people, connecting with their prior learning to allow new learning to be built up, and then providing new ideas and information. Concentrating on providing new information and ideas in themselves is not enough. Individuals who are not animated, and who cannot make connections with existing ideas, are as likely to ignore or misconstrue new ideas and information as they are to absorb them.

In this respect the subject of HRD presents a real challenge. Learners come with a rich array of different backgrounds and ways of thinking about human development. It is a subject where many preconceived ideas will be present. Myths, taboos, things people learn from their families, friends, and past teachers will have all shaped their prior understanding, providing insecure foundations upon which to try to build anew. This is why learning must be based on the learners' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking, through activities that they find relevant and engaging. Only by testing ideas and approaches that challenge their prior knowledge and experience, and applying these to a new situation, can learners 'construct' sound new knowledge.

Hands-on activities and observations of a real organisational world provide the best source of experiences to facilitate such constructions. In lieu of that, this course is styled to combine coverage of processes, practices and perspectives that draw on both the practicalities and the more academic analysis of HRD at work. Models, concepts, text references and illustrations are available as resources, but learners should always treat these as the results of others' observations and speculations, not as authoritative conclusions. Such references are actually the 'constructions' by others of the current understanding of the world around us, and are open to challenge and change.

The aim of adopting such an approach is to avoid the pitfalls of providing an introduction to managing HRD at work that is either too practically oriented and prescriptive, or insufficiently set in the wider context of performance and organisational management. The result is a course for students that both introduces the core elements of the HRD processes at work and analyses these in the context of contemporary practices and perspectives. My goal was to bring together these aspects of HRD at work. In the spirit of constructivism, I have not tried to provide the last word on HRD at work; instead I have tried to provide a course that will energise you and provide you with some practical ideas and frameworks to help address the kinds of HRD problems found in most organisations.

Module 1

Introduction to Human Resource Development

Contents

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- define the key concepts associated with HRD in work organisations;
- describe a model of the core process of HRD;
- identify and analyse five major practices associated with HRD in modern work and organisations;
- evaluate the connections between the HRD process and the contemporary performance management concerns of organisations.

1.1 Introduction: Definitions and Concepts

For many people HRD is synonymous with organising training courses in the workplace. That is part of HRD, but there are also broader and deeper concerns. This introductory module will describe the key concepts and core processes associated with HRD in work organisations. The central terms that need to be defined here are:

- HRD and the HRD process;
- the three dimensions of HRD: cognitive capacity, capability and behaviour;
- performance management;
- human resource management.

1.2 HRD and the HRD Process

In the past the concepts of education, training and development represented a division of work-related learning (*see* Figure 1.1). They have since come to be seen as artificial boundaries around the facilitation, guiding and coordination of learning.

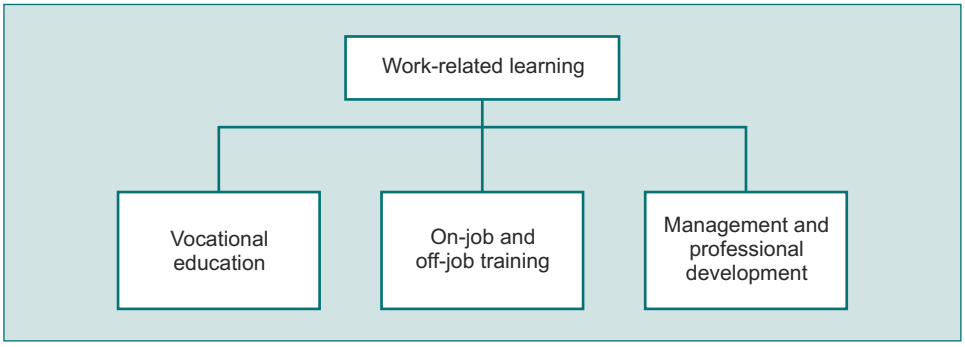

Figure 1.1 Work-related learning in separate boxes

In the past, **education** was differentiated from training. It was defined as academic learning undertaken in educational institutions in the pursuit of qualifications in advance of employment. Even if this learning was associated with employment, the participants in education were treated as consumers of bodies of knowledge, being taught subjects by professional teachers in institutions. The role and evolution of educational institutions and opportunities in a time of economic and social change is a critical concern for all. Some academic education is related to learning for work, but not all of it. Education, and academic learning, still seeks to promote learning for life and in aspects of life not connected with work and employment.

Training meant learning undertaken for the development of skills for work and in work, on-job or off-job, to enable effective performance in a job or role. This was separate from education and development. The connotations of training were of specific kinds of formal learning provided in the workplace.

Finally, **development** was distinguished from education and training but also seen as an process and outcome associated with both. Development was about the change of the whole person, not just the academic or vocational pieces of knowledge or skill needed for work. Development occurred during a person's experience and growth throughout a career and lifespan. In the context of work and organisations, development was usually used to describe training for managers and professionals. Employees had to be trained; managers and professionals had to be developed. Development therefore signified superior and more elaborate learning. However, now that personal development is becoming an integral part of life for all employees, the concept of development is being applied more broadly to learning.

HRD as a process is about more than the provision of training courses in workplaces. The definition adopted here is that HRD involves a **process** (*see* Figure 1.2) of observation, planning, action and review to manage the cognitive capacities, capabilities and behaviours needed to enable and improve individual, team and organisational performance in work organisations.

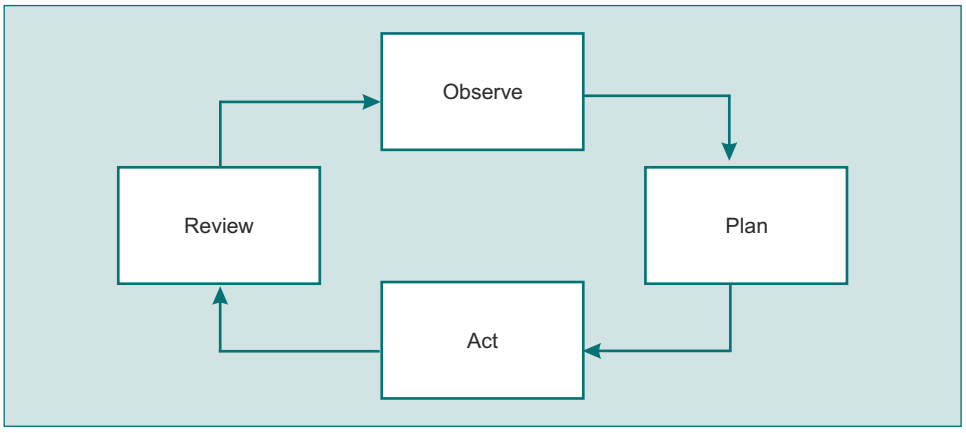

Figure 1.2 The HRD process

HRD involves observation during the assessment of HRD needs at work at various levels and in various ways. It involves planning, through setting objectives for HRD at work interventions to achieve specific kinds of outcome. It involves action, in professionally delivering HRD at work using a range of techniques. And it involves review, through evaluating HRD experiences and outcomes, from testing what learners have learned to assessing costs and benefits. It is this basic cycle of activities that forms the **HRD process**.

Exercise 1.1

What might cause problems with the smooth management of this HRD process? Think of a few issues.

HRD is the part of people management that deals with the process of facilitating, guiding and coordinating work-related learning and development to ensure that individuals, teams and organisations can perform as desired. A young new recruit to a manufacturing company and an older, senior manager assuming a new leadership role in a large multinational bank have different learning needs, which present distinctive challenges. Nevertheless the HRD process involved will have some common, core features. Coming to know core parts of the HRD process, and being able to deal with them effectively, is a significant part of HRM in work organisations. And the nature of organisational learning needs will be distinctive, varying with the strategy, structure and culture of the organisation. The ability to analyse these is also a significant part of general HRM.

1.2.1 The Three Dimensions of HRD

As HRD practitioners and managers seek to facilitate and guide learning and development they can draw upon many concepts and ideas. Psychology, economics, systems thinking and ethics all provide ways of thinking about individual, team and organisational learning. It is widely agreed that effective performance in work roles requires the development and combination of three elements: **cognitive capacities**, **capabilities** and **desired behaviours**. Definitions of these are given in Box 1.1 below.

Box 1.1: Basic definitions

Conceptualising the various elements involved in performing work roles that can be learned and developed.

Cognitive capacities: the foundations of intelligence, conceptualised as the processing and possession of information in the brain and higher-order neurological abilities

Capabilities: the practical abilities involved in work roles, either inherent in the person or developed through practice

Desired behaviours: from motivation to 'social skills', enabling social interaction, mediated by the affective; can be conceptualised variously as attitudes, values or 'emotional intelligence' (EI)

These three elements of performance are needed in every work role, from the simplest of roles to the most complex and demanding: from cleaning operatives to brain surgeons. They are required in every organisation, from the most basic, small organisation to the most complex and technologically sophisticated multinational firm. We shall explore these three aspects of HRD more fully in subsequent modules on the HRD process, as they feature in understanding how to identify HRD needs, plan HRD experiences, and deliver and evaluate HRD. At this stage some preliminary discussion to elaborate upon these elements and their role in HRD is appropriate.

1.3 Cognitive Capacities

Effective performance requires the presence, development and use of cognitive capacities, or the functions of the brain. The way cognitive capacities are conceived reflects the way the brain is modelled. Each person has a brain with the same basic parts. These include the cortex, which enables thinking, speech, motor control and spatial abilities. It is also common to conceptualise the brain as having a division between areas specialised in processing logic, words and numbers, and areas specialised in processing rhythm, picture and music. One study identified 35 different frameworks for generic thinking skills, concerned with information-gathering, building understanding and productive thinking. An example is given below in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2: A modular and a unidimensional view of cognitive capacity

Modular	**Unidimensional**
Halpern's cognitive capacities (2002): degrees of complexity	Anderson and Krathwohl (2001)
Memory skills	Remember
Language skills	Understand
Deductive reasoning and argument	Apply
Analysis	Analyse
Thinking as hypothesis testing	Evaluate
Likelihood and uncertainty	Create
Decision-making	
Problem-solving	
Creative thinking	

Alternatively the brain can be modelled as a holistic system, governed by a master cognitive capacity. This may be the archetypal **intelligence quotient** (IQ), or some other

construct that indicates a continuum, from simple to complex, along a single dimension (*see* Box 1.2 for an example). Some work roles may require high levels of IQ or complex thinking skill. This is because the work is complex and requires the independent use of thinking and judgement in a context of substantial responsibility, where there may be little prior knowledge available, and where the person doing the work has to act autonomously. Other work roles may require very little IQ or thinking skill; all that is needed to perform these roles is an awareness and memorisation of only the most basic of instructions. Such work roles may be fully scripted, with no requirement to do anything other than repeat a series of set behaviours or acts of communication.

Cognitive capacities are most commonly associated in the context of HRD with the concepts of developing **knowledge** and **understanding**. These are what people gain by studying for a work role before they engage in it, and what they get from experience over time while in the role. Knowledge and understanding both precede performance, and evolve alongside it.

Exercise 1.2

Consider the matrix below, with jobs listed alongside increasing levels of thinking skills complexity. For each job indicate the extent to which the different kinds of thinking skill are either 'not required', 'present' or 'critical'.

	Thinking skill complexity					
	Remember	**Understand**	**Apply**	**Analyse**	**Evaluate**	**Create**
Personal secretary						
Work team leader						
Astronaut						
Nurse						
Finance director						
Fast food server						

But the concepts of both knowledge and understanding are themselves complex and multifaceted, and the way they are obtained is also complex. Knowledge and understanding may be 'know what' or 'know how'. Knowledge and understanding may be manifested in simple forms, such as making sense of a message, or they may require the use of analytical and higher-order neurological abilities, demonstrated in activities such as problem-solving, decision-making and creativity. Developing and enhancing knowledge and understanding cannot always precede individual and organisational performance. Knowledge and understanding may be gained from experience. It is a cliché that any new entrant to a work role is told 'Forget what they told you in college/training; we'll show you how the work actually gets done.' But it is a cliché because it *happens*. We shall revisit this split between formal

learning and the nature of actual performance in later modules, as it represents a real challenge for the HRD professional.

Effective performance can also involve having and using **tacit** knowledge and understanding. These represent 'knowing how' without being able to articulate that for yourself or others. You can do something very well, but you do not know consciously how you go about achieving that level of performance; you just do it.

From neurological study of the brain to continuing analysis of the nature of the mind and knowledge, the nature and modelling of cognitive capacities, and how to enhance them, continue to exercise and animate HRD both in theory and in practice.

1.4 Capabilities

To perform to the standards expected in employment, individuals and organisations require more than certain levels of knowledge and understanding; they require **capabilities**. A person may have a high IQ, and a fully functioning brain, but still not be able to do what the work entails. Capabilities are the practical skills or competence that people and organisations need to achieve the required performance.

In the past, governments have conducted skills surveys, and have produced information on skills shortages and skill gaps. But the terminology is evolving, with workforce development, lifelong learning and other terms replacing the notion of skills.

Capabilities are the practical abilities involved in a work role. They are either inherent in the person or developed through practice. They may be considered at three levels, outlined in more detail in a later module: underpinning capabilities, intermediate capabilities, and overarching capabilities. Examples of **underpinning capabilities** would be literacy and honesty. Examples of **intermediate capabilities** would be communication and motivation. Examples of **overarching capabilities** would be teamworking and customer orientation.

Here we prefer to use the concept of capability rather than the concepts of non-cognitive skill or competence. The main reason for this is that these other concepts have unhelpful associations. With non cognitive-skill, or simply **skill**, one association is that to be skilled is to be able to do something basic, to an adequate or good standard. A skill is then a discrete and simple building block of performance, which exists or is absent. But to be skilled can also mean to be an expert. Skill is then a complex of many things, associated with expertise and a comprehensive and authoritative level of ability. This dual sense of 'skill' can be misleading (is a skills shortage a shortage of simple building blocks, or a shortage of expertise?), when the real issue is often a lower level of concern.

Also, skill was often referred to as expertise in tangible, physical and observable actions: being highly skilled was associated with being an expert in complex physical activities. A craftsman who wielded tools was skilled; a dancer who could complete complex steps was skilled. Nowadays, in economies dominated by knowledge- and service-based industries, much performance at work depends on less tangible skills such as information-handling and interpersonal relations. To classify these as being skills is legitimate for some uses but questionable for others.

This is why the concept of **competence** has become widely used as an alternative to skills, and many organisations have created sets of competence descriptions for their workforces. Competence in this sense was defined as comprising the key attributes desired and expected of superior performers. It involved setting out a list of core qualities and

standards by which all staff in an organisation might be evaluated or appraised, equally and consistently. Many questions have been raised about the validity of the concept of competence. We consider competence as a foundation for an HRD strategy in a later module. Rather than enter that controversy here, we prefer to use the term 'capability'.

Exercise 1.3

Think again of the occupations in the matrix below. Where do they sit on the capabilities continuum – that is, from needing only the possession of underpinning capabilities to requiring advanced and overarching practical abilities acquired through extensive practice?

	Capabilities continuum					
	Basic underpinnings only ←					→ Advanced capabilities acquired through extensive practice
Personal secretary						
Work team leader						
Astronaut						
Nurse						
Finance director						
Fast food server						

1.5 The Third Dimension

Finally, as well as identifying and developing the cognitive capacities and capabilities required for performance, it has long been emphasised that there is an important third determinant of performance, often defined in terms of forming attitudes, developing social skills, or, increasingly, developing **emotional intelligence** (EI). Attitudes are the settled ways of thinking and feeling about someone or something – positive and negative orientations about the world. Social skills are the 'soft' skills associated with effective interpersonal behaviour. EI refers to the understanding and controlling of emotions in order to act effectively in social situations.

What these different constructs have in common is a shared concern with acknowledging and making transparent the *affective* influences on behaviour in social situations – in our context, workplace behaviour. To get the desired forms of behaviour in the context of work performance we must develop the right kinds of attitudes, soft skills, or EI. The ways people perform in work roles are determined not only by what they know, explicitly or tacitly, or what they can do, basically or expertly, but also by how they feel. So the way people actually perform can vary significantly, even if they have similar levels and types of cognitive capacity and capability.

Exercise 1.4

Refer again to the work roles you identified above as being at the opposite ends of the cognitive and capabilities continua. How might the performance of people in these roles be influenced by the affective side, and how would that affect performance in a social context?

	The 3rd dimension: the affective factor					
	Requires little EI					Requires considerable EI
Personal secretary						
Work team leader						
Astronaut						
Nurse						
Finance director						
Fast food server						

1.6 Performance Management

These three dimensions of HRD will interact in any personal and organisational performance. Facilitating, guiding and coordinating HRD is then a process that requires each of these interrelated aspects of performance to be understood and dealt with: what does someone need to know and be able to do, and what challenges will be encountered in the real social context where performance is enacted?

Box 1.3: A stark example

A stark, always topical, and controversial example is the HRD required to make soldiers able to fight wars and shoot to kill. For this appears to transgress the values that people are socialised with in early life. And evidence has shown that in previous major wars many soldiers never fired their weapons with any intention of trying to hit a target, but now they will. What has changed? The training has changed.

Rather than just being given drill on the firing range, soldiers are put through simulations that make the decision to shoot automatic.

The concept of performance has been used several times in this module already. HRD has to be set in the wider context of performance management, which, according to one view, refers to the means of getting better results from the organisation, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, objectives and standards. Note, however, that HRD is only one – albeit important – means of achieving these organisational goals, objectives and standards.

1.7 Human Resource Management

You will often see the term HRD used in conjunction with HRM, and sometimes synonymously. However, the term HRM itself has various connotations and meanings. Usually it is used to define a particular approach to the management of people at work, and is contrasted with other approaches to this, such as the more conventional terms **personnel management** or **industrial relations**. From this perspective HRM is seen as a more managerialist and restricted set of activities, focusing on employees as individuals and playing down the traditional employee relations role, conflict and the legitimacy of trade unions.

In this course I use HRM in a more general and neutral sense, to mean the whole of people management – the combination of employee resourcing, employee relations, employee reward and HRD concerns in business and management. HRD is thus only one key function of the broader HRM of an organisation; it is not an isolated and stand-alone activity. Organisations' strategies and policies for attracting and retaining staff, and the ways in which stakeholders define their different and common interests at work, can have a great impact on HRD policies and practices. The scope of this text is to consider the HRD process, the practices associated with it, and perspectives relevant to exploring the nature of HRD at work in more detail.

1.8 HRD in Context

There has been increasing interest in effective HRD at work over recent years. This has been the outcome of more positive analyses about the connections between HRD and effective organisations. Individuals and organisations were entering an era where adaptations to the onset of a **learning society** and a **knowledge economy** were argued to mark the way ahead for many organisations. We can think of learning societies as communities dependent on the lifelong learning of all their members. This contrasts with industrial societies, which required most of their community to participate only in basic education. We can think of knowledge economies as those in which wealth creation depends on the creation and use of know-how rather than on the manufacture of goods and provision of services. In this context HRD at work becomes more than a mere minor function of HRM, and is treated as one of the essential and critical tasks confronting individuals and organisations (see the course on *Managing People in Changing Contexts*).

But this is no overnight success for HRD. It has been a slow rise to prominence. The belief that HRD was a 'good thing' was manifested throughout the last century in frequent exhortations for employers to invest in their people, for government to invest in new schemes and initiatives to improve workforce development, and for all individuals to embrace **lifelong learning** in one form or another. These exhortations grew louder from the 1960s onwards. Yet HRD has often been overshadowed by other HRM concerns. Sometimes industrial relations problems have dominated social and economic thinking, and consequently people management problem-solving. At other times people management was dominated by employee-resourcing concerns arising from changes in organisational and employment structures, such as the rise of flexible firms, and the establishment of 'new deal' employment practices and policies. It is often only when these industrial relations and employee-resourcing concerns slip off the organisational 'radar' that HRD gains the prominence many HR practitioners feel it merits. For many the 1990s saw employers

embracing HRD, and a host of government schemes and initiatives launched whose goal was to improve workforce development for those in work and those preparing for work.

The quantity and quality of HRD at work are currently acknowledged as key factors in adapting to change – economic change, social change, organisational change and technological change. As the traditional industries with their old forms of knowledge and skill base declined, new knowledge and skill bases had to be established to enable job creation and growth. In a context of dealing with unemployment, and aspirations to eliminating historical discrimination and inequalities, the foundations for the **social inclusion** agenda were established. And as work organisations changed from standard bureaucracies with classic divisions of labour to flatter structures for lean, world-class manufacturing or service delivery, so a new agenda for HRD at work was needed, both as a means of effecting such change and as a consequence of it. And finally, as new technologies, particularly information technologies, were invented and adopted, so a whole range of other changes to organisations and jobs required new HRD at work.

This convergence of various forces leading to a critical role for HRD at work shows no signs of abating. Indeed there are signs that the importance of HRD at work is still increasing; from being overshadowed it has now come centre stage. This prominence may be unstable: it might be threatened if the industrial relations or work and employment situation were to worsen. But at present the proponents of the learning society, of knowledge economies, of flexible organisations and careers, and the developers of new technologies all agree that the future will see greater demands upon employers, governments and individuals to participate in and improve HRD. It is in this context that HRD can claim to be a significant and challenging part of the future of HRM – much more than a passing concern except only for those aspiring to be specialist trainers, who had to learn 'how to train' people.

HRD at work seems to offer the ultimate win–win outcomes for everyone. In an era characterised by the volatility of the change to a learning society and a knowledge economy there is logic to this. Effective HRD at work promises to provide the levers that can be manipulated to control the future of work and organisation to ensure individual career and success and competitiveness for those currently prosperous, and a route to prosperity for those currently 'struggling to get by' or 'going nowhere'.

For those who are sceptical about HRM and management, this may all sound too good to be true. Certainly it is not enough to repeat the mantra that learning is good for individuals and good for companies. This is to be blind to questions both about the actual state of HRD, and about its potential to realise the hopes and aspirations of individuals and organisations. To convince individuals and organisations to commit themselves to HRD, we need advocates who can give a balanced and professional view – who can reflect critically on HRD, using what the human sciences have to offer; on the problems of HRD strategies in organisations; on how National Vocational Education and Training (NVET) policy is made; on the potential of e-learning; and on how to connect HRD with the theory and practice of **knowledge management**.

1.9 Practical Matters

Table 1.1 lists the areas of business and management practice where HRD themes and concerns are encountered in work and organisations. According to this survey, individual and organisational performance issues involve the management of cognition, capabilities and

behaviour in a wide range of areas, including health and safety, customer care, and technical training in new processes or services.

These are the practical areas in which the rhetoric of HRD is being explored. Here HRD interventions are typically designed and delivered using a range of methods. Some of these dominate; others are less frequently used. Table 1.2 gives an overview of the options. **On-the-job training** is defined here as training given at the desk or place where the person usually works. Both surveys show this is an important method of HRD at work. **Off-the-job training** is defined as training away from the immediate work position, at the employers' premises or elsewhere. It includes all forms of courses, as long as they are funded or arranged by the employer. The design of HRD seems to include some or all of these methods.

Table 1.1 Survey on HRD provision by subject in UK organisations (%)

Health and safety	68
Communication skills	61
Customer care	53
Teamworking	53
Computer/IT	47
Quality	44
Product knowledge	38
Equal opportunities	34
Legal/regulatory	15
Technical	17
Management of people	13
Business/finance	14
Leadership	6

Table 1.2 HRD techniques in organisations

Survey (of regularly used methods)	
On-job-training (OJT)	87.3%
Face to face (training facility)	84.3%
Coaching/mentoring	59.4%
Formal education	49.6%
Conferences	43.4%
Non-electronic open learning	34.7%
CD-ROM	28.9%
Video	26.1%
Intranet	23.7%
Other computer	22.7%
Action learning	14.7%
Internet	16.5%
Audio-based	8.4%
Extranets	7.4%

If we look at HRD service delivery in the shape of the techniques used in organisations (*see* Table 1.2), the typical approach is to use internal and external off-the-job training. For example, Table 1.3 shows that HRD at work is dominated by the delivery of short courses, typically of 1–3 days' duration. When organisations use external, off-the-job HRD interven-

tions, these are also usually 1–3 day courses (*see* Table 1.4). These are the basic and most frequently used means of delivery.

This overview of survey data shows that HRD at work in organisations typically involves five major kinds of practice for facilitating, guiding and coordinating learning. Their management is the key to developing effective performers in work and organisations. They are:

1. on-the-job learning experiences at the workplace;
2. organisation-based short training courses;
3. external short courses or learning events;
4. e-learning – either computer-based or in a 'learning centre';
5. 'learning partnerships', such as coaching or mentoring.

Table 1.3 Length of training courses received by employees in employment

1 day	21%
2–3 days	15%
4 days to 2 weeks	8%
2 weeks to 6 moths	9%
6 months to 3 years	19%
3 years or more	11%
Ongoing	17%
Total	100%

N = 1529

Table 1.4 Training approaches used regularly for external training (%)

Up to 3-day courses	82
Up to 1-day courses	79
Day release	69
Residential training	63
Evening classes	55
Distance/open learning	42
Computer-based learning	24
Outdoor training	24
Coaching/mentoring	12
Video-based learning	9
Learning resource centres	6
Action learning sets	7

Exercise 1.5: Typical practices

Read the cameos of good and bad experiences in Boxes 1.4 and 1.5. Think about the kinds of issues raised, and then list examples from your own experience of each method, and what makes the good effective and the bad ineffective, in the table below.

	Example	Effective	Ineffective
On-the-job learning experiences at the workplace			
Organisation-based short training courses			
External short courses or learning events			
Using e-learning; computer-based or learning in a 'learning centre'			
'Learning partnerships', such as coaching or mentoring			

Box 1.4: Some good learning experiences

John cited a total customer satisfaction (TCS) course as being effective. This was a company-wide course that used well-trained facilitators. A lot of thought was put into the course environment and room layout. There was good use of different media, and a blend of thinking and doing. There were many group exercises involving teamworking. There was even an after-course reception dinner, and follow-up involving developing and swapping action plans.

Paul experienced an induction process when he moved from one retailer to another. One of his new key objectives was to understand the store financial report. He arranged a one-to-one meeting with his line manager, who explained it step by step, line by line. He could relate this to what he knew from his previous experience, and understand the new (to him) method of reporting financial information. He could get immediate clarification of any questions from an experienced person.

Chris described learning how to do the 'store walk' as a manager in a supermarket. This was an experience with his store manager, who did this every day. He explained the benefits of doing this store walk daily – for Chris's own awareness, for staff awareness, and ultimately to benefit the customers. The walk was structured at a good pace, and he summarised each stage and referred to relevant issues. The manager got Chris's input by asking 'what if?' questions. Chris was encouraged to take notes; afterwards he was asked to communicate these to the manager, and the manager clarified issues Chris had misunderstood. On the next occasion Chris had to lead the store walk, with the manager asking him questions.

Jill talked about the importance of relationships. As someone aspiring to promotion she had the opportunity to shadow on the job for 2 days a senior manager, who was also female. The manager was prepared to discuss general issues, almost like 'mentoring', rather than just go through the tasks. She was very self-aware, and was able to highlight 'good' and 'bad' characteristics of her own management style, which Jill found very

useful and informative. It also dispelled some of the fear that Jill had about aspiring to promotion.

Simon had the near-universal experience as a student: learning to serve food in a restaurant and work behind a bar for the first time. He had no experience of either, and was thrown in at the deep end, getting coaching from other members of staff. The best way to learn was actually to do the tasks in the real environment. It was stressful, but he felt that he could learn at a faster pace this way.

Box 1.5: Some bad learning experiences

An ineffective experience Paul had was of being given a one-page handout on changes to the disciplinary process and authority levels. He did not understand the terminology, although he knew the outline of the process. He had to request clarification on the detail/terminology. He had to wait for more information, delaying his ability to understand and follow the new procedures.

For Fiona an ineffective learning experience was an evening course she enrolled on to learn typing. She was at university at the time, and did not have either the motivation or the time to complete the course. She was not really interested in the subject, although she could see benefit in knowing how to type. She paid for the whole 12-week course, but lasted only 3 weeks.

For John an in-organisation course was poor. The materials used were out of date, and there was only one facilitator delivering the course with a limited style. The pre-course objectives were unclear, and there was not a mix of thinking and doing on the course. There was no time for delegates on the course to mix, and the facilities were cramped and uncomfortable. There was limited connection to his work role, and no follow-up after the workshops.

For Jim an ineffective course was one with a senior manager delivering a course on a specific topic relevant to his job as a senior civil servant: 'drafting for ministers'. The course had been promised for a number of years, but was delayed time and again. This constant delay meant that training on the topic became a source of ridicule, which was vented against the senior manager, who eventually did come to deliver the course. His behaviour further annoyed the trainees: he was late for the course at the start, was ill prepared, allowed himself to be interrupted by phone calls during the course, and delivered confusing information. He constantly 'lost the thread', resulting in attendees feeling they had learned nothing. The delayed course had been worse than no course at all.

For Lorraine an ineffective learning experience was attending a one-day course (in house) on basic employment law, delivered by an employment lawyer. The course content was devised in house, but was aimed at managers with no HR background, so as an experienced HR person she found the course to be of little use.

For Mike an ineffective experience was when his company got a new computer system. A course was given on using this. A lot of information was rushed or missed, as the trainer felt the trainees ought to know it anyway. The trainer was unfamiliar with the materials, and jumped about from subject to subject. The trainees felt they could not ask questions as there was no time, and because they were afraid of looking stupid. It left them with no confidence at all about using the system, and having no faith in the trainer.

For Simon ineffective learning was in the use of the front-of-house computer system. This was learned on the job, with reference to a training manual. He learned how to do each task, but often not until he had made a mistake, and he then had to phone a very expensive help-line to fix it. A few hours with someone trained in the system would have helped him to learn the basics.

1.10 Conclusion

Few taking this course are likely to question the conclusion that HRD is an integral part of effective business and management. The good news is that most practitioners – though not all – equate investment in HRD with effective and improved individual and organisational performance. Like HRM generally, HRD is always being called upon to demonstrate its relevance to the business drivers and to financial criteria, especially among strategists and the guardians of organisational finances. The evidence on these issues is still being debated. Underlying these concerns is the belief that, although HRD is a necessary condition for success, it is not a sufficient condition for effective performance or success. Let's look at an example of this problem.

Box 1.6: A company with good HRD can fail

Motorola, the USA-based major multinational manufacturer of, among other things, mobile phones, established a large plant in a town in a European country. This town was in an area recovering from the decline of traditional manufacturing industries. At its the plant was employing around 3000 people manufacturing mobile phones. Local people thought this was an industry of the future, part of a new high-technology knowledge economy. Consistent with its reputation as a leading innovator and employer of excellence, Motorola invested heavily in training and development, with some of the best systems, facilities and training professionals in the country. The plant was very successful, and consistently more productive than other European plants. Yet when economic troubles hit the electronics and telecom sectors in 2001 the company had to review its operations. It accepted that the plant in this town was efficient, with a loyal and skilled workforce. But it elected to close it in favour of retaining European production at another plant in a different country. Although the plant had a model skilled workforce, other factors entered the equation, and the net result was total closure. This large, single job loss was just like those the town had experienced with the loss of the old manufacturing industries.

The argument that is encountered time and again is that HRD at work has to be embedded in the performance management systems of an organisation, and where this is the case, it seems to pay off. HRD is an integral part of dealing with strategic threats and opportunities by building on internal strengths and overcoming weaknesses. Linking HRD to the key strategic drivers of organisation can deliver the promised returns of HRD at work, and those who can manage HRD are to be valued and play a major role in success.

Exercise 1.6

Consider again the effective and ineffective profiles of methods you completed. What do these examples suggest about the management of the HRD process: that is, about assessing needs, planning events, professional delivery, and effective evaluation?

Multiple-Choice Questions

1.1 Which of the following statements are true?

A. Effective performance in work roles always requires the development of three elements: cognitive capacity, capability and desired behaviour.
B. Knowledge and understanding can be mapped using either a modular or a unidimensional view of cognitive capacity.
C. Literacy, communication and customer orientation are all examples of practical capabilities that may be involved in work roles.
D. Emotional intelligence (EI) is one way of describing the affective, third dimension of HRD.

1.2 Which of the following statements are true?

A. HRD has been a concern at the forefront of HRM since the 1960s.
B. It is agreed that the improvement of HRD depends mainly on creating more and better specialist trainers inside companies.
C. The subjects that feature highest in the provision of organisations are Health and Safety training and communication skills.
D. Methods of delivery such as Action Learning and Intranets are as highly used as techniques such as on-job-training (OJT)

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