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Symposium

The European perspective of HRD
A debate on selected issues put forward by the EHRD Network

Symposium at ECER 2002, Lisbon 13 September 2002 (see programme)
Chairs: Michael Kelleher, Sabine Manning & Martin Mulder
Editor of proceedings: Sabine Manning

Proceedings

Introduction to the symposium (Sabine Manning)

Block 1: Notion of 'flexible worker' challenging 'professional identity'
- **Developing flexibility in pursuit of competitiveness** (Nick Boreham)
- **Competence and learning in late career** (Leif Lahn)
- **Professionals as flexible workers or portfolio people** (Graham Guest)
- **Discussion**

Block 2: Integrating work and learning in organisations
- **Organisational innovation and learning: Developmental work tasks** (Barry Nyhan)
- **A package for integrated learning and development** (Jonathan Winterton)
- **Working and learning practices in an oil refinery** (Nick Boreham)
- **Gender specific key qualifications for working life** (Gerald Heidegger)
- **Discussion**

Block 3: Knowledge sharing as both managerial and participatory approach
- **Organisational learning and knowledge sharing in the chemical industry** (Martin Fischer)
- **Organisational innovation and learning: Challenges for the actors** (Barry Nyhan)
- **Discussion**

Final note on the debate across issues (Jim Stewart)

The European perspective of HRD

A debate on selected issues put forward by the EHRD Network

Programm of the Symposium at ECER 2002

Lisbon Friday 13 September 2002, 11:00 – 12:30 hours (updated!), Fac. PES - Room 11

Chairs: Michael Kelleher (Learning Futures Ltd.), Sabine Manning (WIFO) & Martin Mulder (Wageningen University)

Based on the proposal submitted on behalf of the Network of European experts in HRD (EHRD Network) for the ECER/ VETNET Programme at ECER 2002 in Lisbon 11-14 September 2002*

*ECER/ VETNET 2002 programme and proceedings; [**Introduction**] [**Programme**] [**Procedure**]

Introduction

As already envisaged at our ECER Roundtable on 'HRD in Europe' last year, we intend to share major outcomes of our accompanying measure (AM) at the ECER 2002 Symposium. In view of the AM objectives there will be a focus on discussing interim and final results of the **cluster projects** (see overview) with a particular emphasis on the European perspective of HRD. At the same time we shall link this event closely to the EHRD Base (see EHRD Portal), both by using available resources and by producing more input to this base.

The symposium starts out from selected **issues of the European perspective of HRD**. These were first set out at the ECER 2001 Roundtable and have been further developed in the course of the AM. The outlines and references of the issues can be looked up under **selected issues** in the EHRD Base.

Programme

In preparation for the ECER 2002 Symposium colleagues were invited to put forward contributions from their projects related to these issues. Following the reviewing process the accepted contributions were arranged around three sets of issues. These form the core of the symposium programme as set out below:

(1) **Introduction** on the aims of the symposium (Sabine Manning)

(2) **Panel discussion** (including audience) in three successive blocks:

(a) Issue: **Notion of 'flexible worker' challenging 'professional identity'**
Moderator: Mike Kelleher
Contributions:
- Developing flexibility in pursuit of competitiveness (Nick Boreham)
- Competence and learning in late career (Leif Lahn)
- Professionals as flexible workers or portfolio people (Graham Guest)

(b) Issues: **Integrating work and learning in organisations/**
Shift from skill building to performance improvement and competence development
Moderator: Martin Mulder
Contributions:
- Organisational innovation and learning <I> (Barry Nyhan & Mike Kelleher)
- A package for integrated learning and development (Jonathan Winterton)
- Working and learning practices in an oil refinery (Nick Boreham)
- Gender specific key qualifications for working life (Anke Kampmeier)

(c) Issue: **Knowledge sharing as both managerial and participatory approach**
Moderator: Mike Kelleher
Contributions:
- Organisational learning and knowledge sharing in the chemical industry (Martin Fischer)
- Organisational innovation and learning <II> (Barry Nyhan & Mike Kelleher)

(3) **Final note** on the debate across issues (Jim Stewart).

Procedure

The symposium revolves round a panel discussion which will be structured according to the three sets of issues outlined above. The following timetable is envisaged:

11:00 - 11:05   Introduction
11:05 - 11:30   Issue (a)
11:30 - 12:00   Issues (b)
12:00 - 12:20   Issue (c)
12:20 - 12:30   Final note

There will be NO presentation of papers; instead each panel participant will offer a thesis (max. 5 minutes) related to the issue concerned for joint debate. The theses are based on full papers produced by the contributors or related teams.

The **theses** have been compiled as a single document - please download the file!

The related **papers** listed below are also available for downloading.

- Fischer, Martin; Röben, Peter 2002 Organisational learning and knowledge sharing: The use, documentation and dissemination of work process knowledge
- Guest, Graham 2002 Professionals as flexible workers or portfolio people
- Heidegger, Gerald; Kampmeier, Anke; Niemeyer, Beatrix 2002 Gender specific key qualifications for working life
- Lahn, Leif 2002 Competence and learning in late career. European perspectives on the management of motivation
- Nyhan, Barry; Cressey, Peter; Tomassini, Massimo; Kelleher, Michael; Poell, Rob 2002 European perspectives on organisational innovation and learning
- Winterton, Jonathan 2002 Integrating work and learning in organisations

Also recommended for downloading: **discussion paper** 'Taking stock of the European perspective of HRD' (Sabine Manning)

Subject	**Introduction** (Sabine Manning)
Outline	Welcome all to our symposium on HRD in Europe. This is the highlight (I hope!) of our one-year accompanying measure supported by the Fifth Framework Programme and carried out in collaboration with a network of more than 200 experts in European HRD, the EHRD Network. Important to note: we agreed on a broad concept of HRD (link to outline), also extending into VET (vocational education and training), and we focused on the European perspective of HRD (link to outline). Today we want to discuss a few selected issues of the European perspective. These are the following: • The notion of 'flexible worker' challenging 'professional identity'; • Integrating work and learning in organisations, including the shift from skill building to performance improvement and competence development; • Knowledge sharing as both managerial and participatory approach. As you can see we have got a panel of leading experts for discussing these issues. Would you please introduce yourselves briefly (names below linked to who'who): Nick Boreham, Martin Fischer, Graham Guest, Gerald Heidegger, Mike Kelleher, Leif Lahn, Martin Mulder, Barry Nyhan, Jim Stewart, Jonathan Winterton. Mike Kelleher and Martin Mulder will moderate the debate, Jim Stewart will have the final word, and I shall prepare the review of debate – the floor is yours!
Reference	Discussion paper: Manning 2002
Source	Recording of the symposium
Descriptors	D-HRD	EP00					

Editor: **Sabine Manning** © WIFO

Subject	**Developing flexibility in pursuit of competitiveness** (Nick Boreham)
Outline	My presentation is based on the Framework IV TSER project 'work process knowledge in technological and organisational development' (WHOLE). The final report has just been published (book on work process knowledge - see reference), so you can refer to this if you want some further details. I am just going to pick out main points of the project that are related to the issue of developing flexibility in pursuit of competitiveness.

This project looked at changes in European work processes and in particular the so-called modernisation programme supported by the European Commission. That is to say, this looked at changes from bureaucratic type organisations to much more organic work organisation, the change from hierarchical organisations where managers do the thinking to organisations which are much more participatory, where everybody is supposed to be involved in continuous improvement. It is the European Commission's policy that European industry should modernise itself in this way, and it is also the policy of most of the European member states that industry should change in the direction I have just described.

However, there is empirical evidence that the modernisation programme is actually moving very slowly, although there are some examples of learning organisations with much more flexible ways of doing work. There is a lot of evidence that this is a very gradual transformation. For example, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Standards carries out regular surveys of working conditions in Europe. These surveys show that most workers in Europe do not work under modernised conditions. There have also been a number of case studies which have looked in detail at modernisation attempts (some of these are especially described in chapter 15 of the book) and go into detail why modernisation attempts have failed.

There may be many reasons why the modernisation programme is moving slowly: flexible work may not in fact confer a competitive advantage, there may be a shortage of the skills needed for flexible work. However, my thesis in this presentation is to point to an argument which comes out of the work process knowledge report, which is that there is another reason which we can see as to why flexibility is not going to be taken up with great enthusiasm. Basically, any functioning work system is a social system which achieves a certain degree of equilibrium. This equilibrium is a particular way of distributing certain things throughout the organisation, it's a way of distributing responsibilities, it's a way of distributing rewards, and it's a way of distributing knowledge. The central issue in the modernisation programme is to reorganise European work places so that the distribution of knowledge is very different than has been in many traditional work systems.

The point that I want to make is that the case studies of the failure of modernisation projects show

that modernisation tends to upset the delicate social contracts in the organisation. If you try to introduce a new work system which relies on different ways of distributing knowledge then this is very threatening to everybody involved, because it upsets the equilibrium which was established in the previous work system. Generally speaking, the modernisation requires much more knowledge creation and sharing at all levels of the organisation and it also requires much more lateral communication and much more bottom-up communication of knowledge within the organisation. The introduction of more flexible systems of continuous improvement imply changes of this sort, and these tend to challenge the existing social relations, and this is experienced as a threat by everybody involved.

So the point that we can draw from this is that the European modernisation programme is not just a process of vocational education and training and human resource development. There may be a cost to this, a cost in terms of the damage it does to the social systems we call work. It may be that many of these costs exceed the benefits to be gained in productivity. This is a fact which may underline the slow movement towards modernised work in Europe. But as far as this particular symposium is concerned it should draw our attention to the fact that if we want to be involved in modernisation then we need to address a much broader range of issues and skills, competences and training methods.

Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; final project report: Boreham et al. 2000a; publication: Boreham et al. 2002
Source	Recording of the symposium

Descriptors	D-KM	EP05					V20

Subject | **Competence and learning in late career** (Leif Lahn)

Outline

This presentation is based on the WORKTOW project, whose theme is 'changing working life and training of older workers'. We wanted to challenge the wide-spread belief that late career is a period of decline in work performance and in learning capacity. That is the very common picture of late career. Also we looked into the need of differentiating policy of human resource development, because it is an established fact that the individual variations and the contextual variations are going with increasing age. So that is also an argument for a more differentiated approach. At the macro-political level , when we started the project, there was quite a lot of discussion about keeping older people, also the tension and social implications. This was transformed in the course of the project to considering or developing this group of employees as a productive force. We may now ask again, looking at the reserve army, facing decline, maybe economic decline, depression.

We have been confronted with dilemmas: the mismatch between the well-documented competence and learning ability of the workers on the one side and the rising problem of early exits on the other side. The expertise of late career is more valuable because it has some of the characteristics of social competence, of wisdom. Also the number of physically demanding jobs is declining, so there should be an increasing acknowledgement of that kind of expertise. However, there is evidence of very early exit from working life. Nick Boreham was also referring to this (see contribution). There are those surveys on the working conditions in Europe, and we have also documented this in Norway: When it comes to restructuring in working life these are enormously costly in terms of health risk and of course in terms of motivation. Very often these pathologies are attributed to learning deficiencies and burn-out. So they are focusing on the negative aspects of late career, because there is evidence that some of these working conditions that are deteriorating may affect specifically the group over fifty.

I think we have to have a broader understanding of why we have this kind of results within the companies. For instance, there is this figure of intensification or the concept of intensificational work that could be a summary of many of the results here. This would also be understood as less ferocity within the working life because, for example, flexible measures of job rotation are misused because jobs are out-sources or they get slimmer, and that affects the learning opportunities in late career.

Also this question of attitudes to ICT and learning, with their negative effect especially when it comes to stereotypes about how older people learn or are not able to learn ICT. These are challenged by a lot of literature, but we find some very subtle mechanisms in this. When integrated technology is breaking down, some mechanism is that among young employees that kind of problem or bugs within a system are attributed correctly to the system, whereas with older workers those bugs are attributed to their own mental deficiency. That makes some kind of stereotype mechanism that we have to look

into. We have to take up those features and facts about attitudes to get older workers motivated for involving themselves to learn, so that they can see they are able to learn. That could be some conclusion of my argument.

| Reference | Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Lahn 2002; final project report: Tikkanen et al. 2001 |

| Source | Recording of the symposium |

| Descriptors | D-CDO | D-LO | EP09 | | | | V21 |

Subject	**Professionals as flexible workers or portfolio people** (Graham Guest)
Outline	My main thesis is that there are great changes taking place in the nature of work, learning and the development of organisations. These issues are the bases for a debate on how professionals need to adapt to flexible working and to develop portfolio careers.

My main thesis is that there are great changes taking place in the nature of work, learning and the development of organisations. These issues are the bases for a debate on how professionals need to adapt to flexible working and to develop portfolio careers.

The knowledge-society: Knowledge is a valuable asset and many companies are putting a lot of resources into devising methods of identifying and capturing it. For individuals wishing to survive and prosper in the modern world knowledge is vital. We are seeing a rapid increase in the number of so-called knowledge-workers: professionals who are highly committed to their own learning, development and personal growth.

Lifelong learning: It is considered normal for a person first to attend school and then to progress to university or college to gain a specific qualification. In many instances that qualification is still thought to be sufficient to serve the person for life. This was never really true, but now lifelong learning is increasingly being regarded as a necessity rather than an optional extra. Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important facet of such learning.

The virtual world: Information and communications technology (ICT) expands people's possibilities of working when, where and how they like. An office or other workplace need no longer be geographically based, but can be located throughout cyberspace. The professional association EurEta (European Higher Engineering and Technical Professionals Association), for instance, is a virtual organisation that operates through email, the internet and so on.

Networks: Professionals can be members of a number of different networks through which they carry out their work, learning and development. These networks, which can be physical or virtual, are fluid, flexible and highly responsive to change. Even traditional organisations are coming to recognise the benefits of operating as networked entities.

Self-development: Individuals can receive support for their lifelong learning and CPD from a number of sources, including their employer if they have one. But ultimately each person is responsible for his or her own self-development, which has both personal and professional aspects. To be fully effective such development must be clearly identified, planned, recorded and continually built upon.

The disappearance of the job: It has been said that there is no such thing any more as a job for life; as we go through life we fulfil many functions. It is more meaningful to talk about work rather than jobs, and our work can take different forms: paid, voluntary, purely for personal interest, and so on. Too often an individual professional has been identified solely in terms of his or her role or job, but such perceptions are changing.

	Portfolio people: Flexible working patters and changes in the way we live are leading to the concept of a portfolio of work, for which the individual professional is responsible. Portfolio people have many loyalties, but if they are to be truly effective members of, and contributors to, the knowledge-society their first loyalty must be to themselves and their own personal and professional development. In effect they are one-person businesses.							
Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Guest 2002 (these two documents are focusing on the issue of portfolio people)							
Source	Recording of the symposium							
Descriptors	D-CDO							

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Editor: **Sabine Manning** © WIFO

Highlight	Symposium: The European perspective of HRD

Subject	**Notion of 'flexible worker' challenging 'professional identity'**
Context	The discussion summarised below is related to the presentations in block 1 of the symposium.
Discussion	Participants: Nick Boreham, Martin Fischer, Graham Guest, Gerald Heidegger, Mike Kelleher, Jim Stewart

[MKe:] Nick, in his conclusions from the WHOLE project (see contribution), is particularly interested in the implications of power and control relationships and the implications for industrial relations on the European Commission's work and industry programme. Particularly interesting for me at least was: if all organisations are looking for flexible workers, what are the trade-offs and tensions?

[GH:] I would like to point out the fact that most of this debate is about modern industries and industry related services, which only employ about one quarter of the work population. When it comes to networking, Graham talked about virtual networks and people communicating with emails. Most workers do not communicate with emails, they are just selling and doing things like that. Therefore I think that we should always keep in mind that we are dealing with a minority of workers. And excuse me please, Nick, I think that your presentation was very much focused on those aspects which are certainly an important part of the economy which is relevant for international competition, but when we think about this occupational identity and the social meaning of work then we have to think about the vast majority of people.

[NB:] Just a quick point: I quite agree with that, nevertheless we have got to look at European vocational training policy. If you look at the European employment strategy it emphasises flexibility and adaptability as one of the major objectives. Employability is defined in terms of becoming more flexible, and the concept of key skills always stresses the idea of preparing people for flexible work. So I quite agree with what you say, but we have got to interrogate European vocational and HRD policies because they are based on an assumption that the future is going to be this very small sector.

[GG:] I would agree with that. As I said, my contribution was designed to be provocative and we need to take care to balance the concept of knowledge workers with people who are more involved with day-to-day practical activities. But it is worth noting that over 60 per cent of UK businesses have just one employee and that's the person running it. I have certainly seen more and more people working in a virtual context. Yes, but we must not get carried away, I agree.

[JiS:] Just one or two things not to get carried away about. A related term that has not been mentioned is that of employability, which is part of the trade-off for the employee to be more flexible. Some research I came across, conducted in Ireland, showed that where employability was emphasised by

the employer as an attractive feature of working there, that is increasing employability with other employers, the consequence was that you had a high commitment to that employer on the part of the employees and a much lower likelihood of intention to leave. So in fact it was having the opposite effect that it was intended to have.

[MKe:] An issue addressed by Leif (see contribution) is that the learning capacity and the contribution of ageing workers is detrimental to organisations. At British Telecom, for instance, people at the age of 50 have pensions and are no longer workers; some of them are actually pensioned off before the age of 50. It is assumed they can't make a contribution any more.

[MF:] In the title of this part of the programme the challenge of professional identity is mentioned. I thought that this is a particular German issue. So I would be interested to hear from you what your findings say about this topic: challenging professional identities.

[GG:] As well as working for EurEta I have a background of working for a professional institution in the UK. We spent a lot of time thinking about what that institution is for. Certainly in the UK, professional bodies were founded as gentlemen's clubs two centuries ago, where people would get together. They were men who would sit around discussing the latest developments of steam turbines or whatever. I think many of the professional bodies are still living in that sort of era, and they really have to look now at their relevance. If we go down the road of the portfolio concept what does it mean to have a profession, what does it mean to be an accountant, an engineer or whatever? So those structures I think are breaking down, but many professional bodies deny this.

Source	Recording of the symposium						
Descriptors	D-CDO	EP05	EP09				V23

Highlight	Symposium: The European perspective of HRD

Subject	**Organisational innovation and learning: Developmental work tasks** (Barry Nyhan)
Outline	Developmentally challenging work tasks are a prerequisite for implementing a learning organisation. This is one of the main messages arising from a CEDEFOP project under CEDRA (CEDEFOP Research Arena). We are looking at the Europeanisation issue in the same way as in the earlier discussion. The title of this message is one of the six or seven messages which are coming out of the project. The book 'Facing up to the learning organisation challenge - Volume I: Key issues from a European perspective' will be published in the coming months.

This concept of developmental work tasks means that work is organised in such a way that it promotes human development. In other words, it is about building work place environments in which people are motivated to think for themselves so that through their everyday work experiences they develop new competences and gain new understandings and insights. People are learning from their work, they are learning as they work. Developmental work is work which is inspiring learning, so developmental work promotes what Per-Erik Ellström has called developmental learning. The nature of the tasks is facilitating or compelling people to think. It is almost pushing people to learn. Now we realise, and this is linked to Nick's point (see contribution), that this is very complex.

Another aspect of learning at work which is very real, and which Per-Erik also uses in his taxonomy, is adaptive learning. Obviously a lot of work we are doing relates to routines. We are following procedures, obeying people. Maybe we often don't understand why we have to do something, but it has to be done. There is not a shared meaning across an organisation about why things are changing, so everybody starts complaining or whatever. But, there is a lot of adaptive learning, and people have to be able to cope with adaptive learning. The reality of adaptive learning means not glorifying developmental learning as the only kind of learning that takes place at work. But the key point is that if you are just merely adapting the whole time you are not creating a learning organisation in which people are developing the capacity to learn in this kind of evolutionary learning organisation.

The main message is the link between work in organisations, how work is organised, leading to the learning organisation. These cannot be seen as separate, so there must be radical changes in work organisations and how work is organised. And it is true for all of the people in the organisation at all the levels, not just management strategic learning. It is through all people participating in this kind of collective practice of working – that the developmental nature of practice will bring about developmental learning.

The final point is about the learning organisation concept. We shouldn't have an euphoric notion of what in reality is going to come about. We are talking about an imperfect learning organisation: perhaps an organisation is learning one year, and it stops learning next year, maybe Enron was

learning 10 years ago! So organisations can stop learning, although parts of organisations may continue learning. The community of practice concept is about sub-groups and informal groups learning. Basically we are talking for most cases about compromise and unfinished work and things starting off and new hopes for this kind of learning organisation reality being generated.

Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Nyhan et al. 2002
Source	Recording of the symposium
Descriptors	D-LO		EP09				V22

Subject	**A package for integrated learning and development** (Jonathan Winterton)

Outline	What I want to do is to encourage people to read my paper. This draws on the LEONARDO project DEVELOP, which is now completed. It also draws on research on management development done for the Department of Education and Skills and the Inland Revenue in the UK in recent years. Further research on work organisation and human resource development has been displayed through the Academy of HRD and through the CEDRA network that Barry mentioned (see contribution). Finally this has resulted in a product, rather than simply a project, which has been taken up by a consulting firm known as Andorra.
	
	   The starting point is the learning organisation. The origin of the DEVELOP project was really the observation that, despite a lot of very useful models of learning organisations, the practical aspects of how do we establish the necessary conditions for learning and development in an organisation, there is very little about that, there is very little sort of concrete practical tools to do this. And that was the background to the project DEVELOP. The purpose was to establish a comprehensive framework for integrating learning and development in organisations, especially for raising competences at the intermediate skills level. I am using competence in a holistic sense to embody cognitive and functional competences as well as behavioural and meta-competences and psycho-social characteristics as well.
	
	   The second limb is really the management development. For us it is a useful starting point because, if you like the Matthias Principle that managers and other professionals typically enjoy very high participation in learning and development, much more certain than subordinates, and also because – a bit of an ideal case – the variety of routes and processes and ways in which managers learn, then the argument is: can management development which provides clues to good practice, can those good practice principles be applied to other employees, can they be generalised to other employees?
	
	   That then takes us to work organisations that I describe as anthropocentric, fit for human beings, but very much built on developing skills and giving autonomy to groups of workers. Through that we can actually develop forms of work organisation that enhance the opportunities of learning. So learning at work, learning through work as well as learning for work, that's the principle there. And a preliminary investigation of work places suggest that where skill and autonomy are developed at work they provide more routes to development as well as improving quality of working life and retention and all the rest of it.
	
	   So the project DEVELOP is really about building the conditions for learning organisation, for integrating work and development. We worked along a number of different learning domains. That's the area that Andorra has taken up, starting with the individual, moving to the team, moving to the organisation level, and dealing with the immediate needs, the future known needs, and the scary bit:

	the future unknown needs for most of the future. Finally, we put those together into this integrated learning and development framework, and the current policy context of lifelong learning provides the possibility of combining work place learning with broader learning and development in the community. It's really about bringing the conclusions of the Lisbon summit in March 2000, to create a European economy based on advanced skills and social inclusion, closer to reality.						
Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Winterton 2002						
Source	Recording of the symposium						
Descriptors	D-LO		EP09				

Subject	**Working and learning practices in an oil refinery** (Nick Boreham)
Outline	I'd like to describe an example of integrating work and learning. This is an example drawn from a project which Martin Fischer is coordinating, called OrgLearn, organisational learning in the chemical industry. This is a study of an oil refinery in the UK. This company used to be a very traditional organisation, but it has now stated that it wishes to learn as an organisation. It has taken learning as an organisation as one of its core values with the aim of being the best oil refinery in Europe. What I wanted to describe was an initiative which they've just begun. This is an example of planned culture change, called Procedures and Competence Development Methodology. The aims here are basically to get the workforce to redefine the working processes, and as part of the redefinition of the working processes the workforce are expected to learn.

We have been carrying out studies for two years observing this and interviewing employees. Of course it's very innovatory that the new procedures are being written by the process operators. Previously in an oil refinery the procedures were written by chemical engineers in very senior positions. But the new procedures manual is being written by people who turn the valves and take the samples, the basic grade employees. What they go through is a very highly structured methodology. Essentially it consists of convening and meeting of all the employees who carry out a certain operation. There are five shifts, and typically there are five employees who do a certain task. These people are brought in and sit round the table, and they have to exchange information on how they do this one task. When they compare the different ways of doing it they have to decide on best practice. This is then written up by a set of operating procedures which become the operating procedures for that part of the refinery. There is something of an authorisation process in which what they recommend is put to senior management and the refinery technologists who check it for safety, but basically they don't change the whole procedure.

We did an interview with a refinery technologist, a highly qualified chemical engineer. He said he much prefers that the procedures are written by the workers who actually do the operations themselves. These in the UK are people with no formal qualifications whatsoever. This is essentially a learning process. We have investigated the way in which learning takes place in this context. Not only is there the exchange of information of best practice between the five operators who do the work, but in the process of doing the PCDM they involve many others employees in the plant in which they are operating. So there is a widespread lateral communication going on.

What is very significant is the change in the nature of work. Previously there was very little talk in the work place. You are coming to work, you are allocated a task and you do it on your own. Now everybody is talking very much about the best way of carrying out these various operations. So there is

a massive increase in dialogue between workers at all levels, and this is generating knowledge and creating learning. There is also learning which goes up the hierarchy. Some of the procedures which have been developed have been discussed with senior management as part of the authorisation process. That has created a dialogue between management and operators about the best way to run the plant. This has led to in fact a project to re-engineer the plant. The refinery technologists are actually learning form the process operators who, I repeat, have no qualifications in engineering. So it does seem that there has been a normalisation of a culture of learning in this particular context.

My problem is this: in the UK there is a debate on organisational learning by educationalists. These people are very critical of the concept of organisational learning. They say it is not authentic learning because it is firstly instrumental and secondly because there is no autonomy to the learner. On the basis of these observations my own conclusion, having listened to the voice of the workers involved, is that they are more empowered than they were previously and that there is genuine learning that is taking place here. However I am having some difficulty in convincing the educational community in the UK that this is authentic learning.

Reference	Thesis: included in [Manning 2002a](#)
Source	Recording of the [symposium](#)

[Descriptors](#)	D-LO	EP09					

Subject	**Gender specific key qualifications for working life** (Gerald Heidegger)
Outline	This is based on a project within the Fifth Framework Programme which is called 'gender and qualifications: transcending gender features of key qualifications for improving options for career choice and enhancing human resource potential' (GENDERQUAL). The last word was I think the reason why we have been invited here. For the project the idea is that there is a dialectical relationship between improving individual options for career choice on the one hand and enhancing human resource potential on the other. Because we think that if everybody has improved chances of career choice then also the societal human resource potential will be improved.
	The idea of the GENDERQUAL project is not to pretend the so-called sameness, that quality means sameness, that men and women are the same, or that they should be treated equally. We have generated, I'm not sure whether it was us, we use at least the term 'gender autonomy', which is directly related to this idea of improving individual options for career choice. In our project we research into the fields of electricians, a so-called male dominated occupation; nursery nurses is a female dominated occupation; and bakers or waitresses is a more mixed occupation. The idea is not that there should be equal numbers of men and women, but the idea is gender autonomy, that a woman who wants to become an electrician should not be hindered so much as she is nowadays. And to come back to the theme of our workshop here, it is thought that this will also improve human resource potential because it puts the right people at the right place.
	A second aspect is that this is not a project just about women and the improvement of their chances. We are working on an intermediate level of qualifications, and at least at the lower level it is nowadays the men who have sometimes less chances. This is because young women are doing better at school, as you know, and hard manual labour is almost disappearing, which was the type of working place for low-achieving young males. So we are thinking implicitly about how to open up new career opportunities for men which had been closed to them, often by way of stigmatisation, a mixture of self-stigmatisation and stigmatisation by others. A typical example are men in the occupation of nursery nurses: they themselves feel a little bit strange sometimes, but also their female colleagues find it sometimes a bit strange that they are there.
Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Heidegger et al. 2002 (including gender aspects of learning and acquiring qualifications)
Source	Recording of the symposium

Subject	**Integrating work and learning in organisations**
Context	The discussion summarised below is related to the presentations in block 2 of the symposium.
Discussion	Participants: Nick Boreham, Alan Brown, Leif Lahn, Martin Mulder, Barry Nyhan, Jim Stewart, Jonathan Winterton

[JW:] I haven't before conferred with Nick, but it's firstly sharing his view on the reality gap between the work place and education, or education and the work place perhaps, and secondly also similar experience in a chemicals plant. There we brought about some changes which led to a very high commitment to learning. Interestingly, these workers, also very low qualified, no qualification at all: the employer was reluctant to qualify them, for fear of loosing them, but they got qualified to VQ level 3 (operator control) and of course labour retention was much improved as a result. So it's exactly the opposite, just a kind of very similar experience.

[JiS:] I have a comment on the presentations in the form of two questions to the critics from education. The first is: what's wrong with instrumentality? The second is: Could you give some examples of non-instrumental learning?

[NB:] My reply is that university and secondary education is a lot more instrumental than training and qualifying.

[LL:] Just a comment on Barry's point on learning organisation (see contribution). I obviously agree that this will be a kind of normative model of connection between the learning organisation and developmental work. But I think also it should be attentive to other functions of these kinds of ideas and slogans. Slogans like this are also used by companies. For example, I have been looking at very traditional parts of Norwegian industry and retailing. There they also use that kind of language to attract what they call the young and bright, and of course to kick out the old. In this sense they use the learning organisation rhetoric as a way of introducing new training for apprentices and trainees, and do not look at the developmental potentialities of their own group. So I think we should look at the descriptive power of this concept.

[BNy:] I think that this whole learning organisation and all modern forms of learning have been contaminated by a lot of empty slogans and catch phrases that have been used for all sorts of reasons which are not learning related at all. But all our words can be abused. Leif used the word 'wisdom'. I think there was a technology person recently, an American talking to the European Commission on the technology people, who was saying "we are no longer selling knowledge; people now want to buy wisdom, they want experience rather than hard products; rich Americans now don't want to buy holiday

in Hawaii, they want to drive a tank into the wide desert, they want wisdom, experience...". So all these words, information, knowledge, wisdom – every good concept is going to be abused for different reasons.

[MM:] An important message that comes out of this discussion is that for us as HRD researchers it is very important to look at practice really within the industrial organisations; there is so much theory and slogans...

[AB:] I'd like to make a couple of mixed points about learning. I think it is less a matter for engagement with educational researchers than engagement more generally with the sort of educational systems. I've done some work on learning in organisations across supply chains, and exactly the same thing: operators teach managers and so on, fantastic amount of learning, but it is at a point at which people are interested in that. It's interesting though that the interest is coming from the Department of Trade and Industry, rather than from the Department for Education and Skills, because they still are attached to the sort of qualifications and achievement of learning tasks. One of the most interesting things about the work in the supply chains was that there is a fantastic amount of learning going on if supported by people like educational researchers or other researchers; a lot was achieved. And when it turned to what sort of use they want to make of that, in terms of vocational qualifications or credits within the formal educational system, the majority of people wanted neither because they said "I possess these skills, I had that learning, I'm recognised within my organisation". It was the educational organisations which had difficulty in coping with that: management schools and people like that saying "we've got to turn this into something". I think it is less of a challenge for us, because within educational research there is a strong element of people actually looking into this. But I think it does present far greater challenges to our educational institutions because they want to get their hands on it.

Source	Recording of the symposium						
Descriptors	D-LO	EP09					

Subject	**Organisational learning and knowledge sharing in the chemical industry** (Martin Fischer)
Outline	In the project OrgLearn we empirically investigate processes of organisational learning in four large chemical companies in Italy, Belgium, Germany and the UK. We try to find out what those companies which claim to be learning companies really do. I must admit I was rather sceptical, but we have found some interesting cases of organisational learning. I've brought such a case with me, similar to the case which Nick already described (see contribution).

In the chemical industry the knowledge which is being stored in plant manuals and standard operating procedures is very important, it's crucial. Usually that kind of knowledge is being produced by engineers, but in many companies we investigated the workers had their own little booklets. In the Belgian company from our consortium for instance there is a tradition that each worker has a little grey booklet where the knowledge is being documented what to do in different critical situations. So this kind of knowledge is really important. In our case of organisational learning the German company decided to produce such a plant manual with the help of the workforce. Teams were set up, with one experienced worker, one novice and steered by an external chair person. Those teams had three to four weeks time to produce the operation manual for one unit of a technical plant. So within two and a half years time all the workforce together produced 35 single folders describing the plant and describing what to do in a critical situation. This operation manual is linked to the wage system. Workers can pass an examination and raise in salary if they prepare this examination with the help of the operation manual. This case has been described in detail in my paper.

I am coming to the conclusions now. Some of them have already been discussed by Alan Brown (see discussion).

- In the case which I described the emphasis lies in the provision of an organisational structure for knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. The knowledge to be created and shared is what we call work process knowledge. It's knowledge about the whole labour process within a factory, including reflections on practical and theoretical knowledge which might be used for work.
- There is in that case an increase of self-organised learning and a reduction of personal controlling and of determining learning processes by masters and foremen, which was the case in former times. Now these workers can pass this examination independently from the masters and foremen.
- The content of learning is oriented towards the running of the plant combined to some extent with career opportunities. The content of learning is not oriented towards job descriptions and

to the range of vocational competencies which are defined by the German Beruf. That is the thing which Alan mentioned. Processes of organisational learning were among others like health and safety regulations stimulated by a remarkable reduction of personnel and a loss of experienced workers. Organisational learning can be regarded as an attempt to compensate the loss of know-how.

- Knowledge which formerly belonged to the individual worker or a group of individuals is objectified in two ways: it is objectified through a process of generalising individual knowledge and it is objectified through artefacts – this operation manual by which knowledge can be stored in a memory of the organisation.
- It is not yet clear to what extent organisational learning may support an outsourcing-and-insourcing policy and to what extent the individual worker benefits from processes of organisational learning he is involved in, especially if he is leaving the company.

Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Fischer et al. 2002
Source	Recording of the symposium

Descriptors	D-LO	D-KM	EP10				V24

Subject   **Organisational innovation and learning: Challenges for the actors** (Barry Nyhan)

Outline

The other thesis which comes out of the work we have been doing (see contribution) is that the implementation of learning organisations raises serious challenges for vocational education and training and human resource development actors. The issues here are that organisational learning is something outside of the vocabulary of many people in education. Education is more about individual learning, qualifications and formal systems, so the concept of dealing with this chaotic organisational learning is something that for a lot of professionals in VET and also to a certain extent in HRD, is a challenge. For people engaged in the VET system, which is a rather complex system to start with and very heterogeneous, in future there has to be much more focus on engaging with untidy social environmental learning, where we have lots of complex relationships, complex ways of teaching, illustrated by what Nick was talking about (see contribution) and Alan came up with (see discussion).

So there is this kind of rediscovery of all sorts of unanticipated learning. Learning is often taking place outside the training department. This raises issues about interdisciplinarity and boundary crossing between the world of VET and HRD. These two groups of people are often grouped together, but they have very different value systems and different practices and different interests. So the interconnectivity between these two groups in a pragmatic and not an ideological type of dialogue, which it often turns into, is an issue to be addressed. The whole business of developing social learning systems outside of the school system, like learning organisations in industry, but also in community systems, in educational and public systems, that's another issue to be addressed.

Also, just a comment on the role of researchers. There is a tendency among researchers – even though Alan Brown spoke about a different kind of dimension where the researchers are the innovators (see discussion) – but there is a tendency among researchers to just adopt a purely critical role of being able to deconstruct what's going on. This is purely objectivist, a strong tradition of research: the researcher has to be detached from the question that is being researched. But there is another minor tradition which is for the researchers to be advocates. This dispels the neutrality of research which is a big debate and hotly contested issue. This entails researchers working with practitioners being a kind of critical reflector, being on the same side rather than just knocking the many failures that are going to take place when people engage in complex challenges like changing the way learning takes place.

Finally, and this is just a comment I heard from a Dutch expert in knowledge management. He was referring to all those 'gurus' who come in to a knowledge based company. They are not going to the HRD people, nor to the VET people. They are creating another world of interconnectedness, they are talking to some other strategic planners in the organisation. So it's a different concept of knowledge, of learning. The HRD people in this context are not participating in this new way in which knowledge is

developed. There is an issue about a repositioning and reintegration of what I would call European values. I would be a strong advocate for the German Beruf concept as giving people a certain security in a chaotic social system. But obviously one has to be open to realities rather than holding on to something that cannot resist the inevitable change that is going to take place.

Reference	Thesis: included in Manning 2002a; paper: Nyhan et al. 2002
Source	Recording of the symposium

Descriptors	D-HRD		EP07				V25

Symposium

Perspective
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Who's who

Subject	**Knowledge sharing as both managerial and participatory approach**
Context	The discussion summarised below is related to the presentations in block 3 of the symposium.
Discussion	Participants: Gerald Heidegger

I am obliged to say something if Barry (see contribution) talks about the German Beruf concept. The interesting thing is that despite all what has been said about flexibilisation and portfolio persons and so on, the German Beruf has not been weakened, it has been strengthened. In quantitative terms – one has to be careful about that I admit – but in quantitative terms it has never been as strong as nowadays. The relative number of apprentices has risen during the last few years and has surpassed 70 per cent of the cohort. We should keep that in mind. |
| Source | Recording of the symposium |
| Descriptors | | | | | | | | |

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| Subject | **Final note on the debate across issues** (Jim Stewart) |

| Outline | We had three issues in three blocks, so I'm going to continue to the theme of three and have three caveats and three observations. The caveats are first of all that I read the theses before and prepared my observations on that basis. Most of the speakers have faithfully stuck to what they wrote, some less so, but my observations are more a response to what they wrote than what they said; I haven't had enough time to think about and analyse their verbal presentations. The second caveat is: each of the issues is highly complex in its own right, and trying to find common links is a serious challenge. That leads to the third caveat: because of the first two don't expect any wisdom or startling insights, although hopefully my three observations will be of some interest and use and relevance and validity in relation to what has been said. |

The first observation is that human resource development clearly has a continuing role in identity construction. I think that has been apparent across the three issues and across the three blocks. I could mention a couple of examples, but that would be to simplify the commonality. So, human resource development is perhaps not critical but certainly significant in the construction of individual identities, not just in relation to professional identity but as I think has been pointed out, the whole person, the whole identity of which professional identity is obviously only one part.

The second observation is that human resource development is and continues to be significant in creating new forms of organisation. So human resource development has an organisational focus as well as an individual focus. What I think has been implicit in several contributions and what I'd like to make explicit is the continuing tension between those two levels, those two foci for human resource development: how do we within human resource development reconcile organisational requirements with individual, personal requirements? If I just for this purpose refer to one paper specifically, which was Nick's first contribution. He mentioned that organisations are social systems for the distribution of various things. He mentioned three; responsibilities, rewards and knowledge. Organisations are social systems for the distribution of power too. I personally think that human resource development tends to avoid that issue, that word. But if it is to make progress in reconciling or matching the needs of individuals and organisations it has to get to grips with the distribution of power within organisations.

My third and final observation is that the session confirms various and contrasting strands to European perspectives of HRD. If I change the word to models I can say that models – again using the number three – can be of three different types: they can be descriptive, they can be analytical and they can be normative. My sense from all the contributions is that if we were to produce a prescriptive, or normative, model for human resource development in Europe it would have to have a person centred and developmental approach and purpose. So perhaps the business case for the European model for

	human resource development would be that – to take Barry's comment (see [contribution](#)) on European values – the core values would be person centred and developmentally oriented. Thank you.
Reference	
Source	Recording of the [symposium](#)

[Descriptors](#)	D-HRD						

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