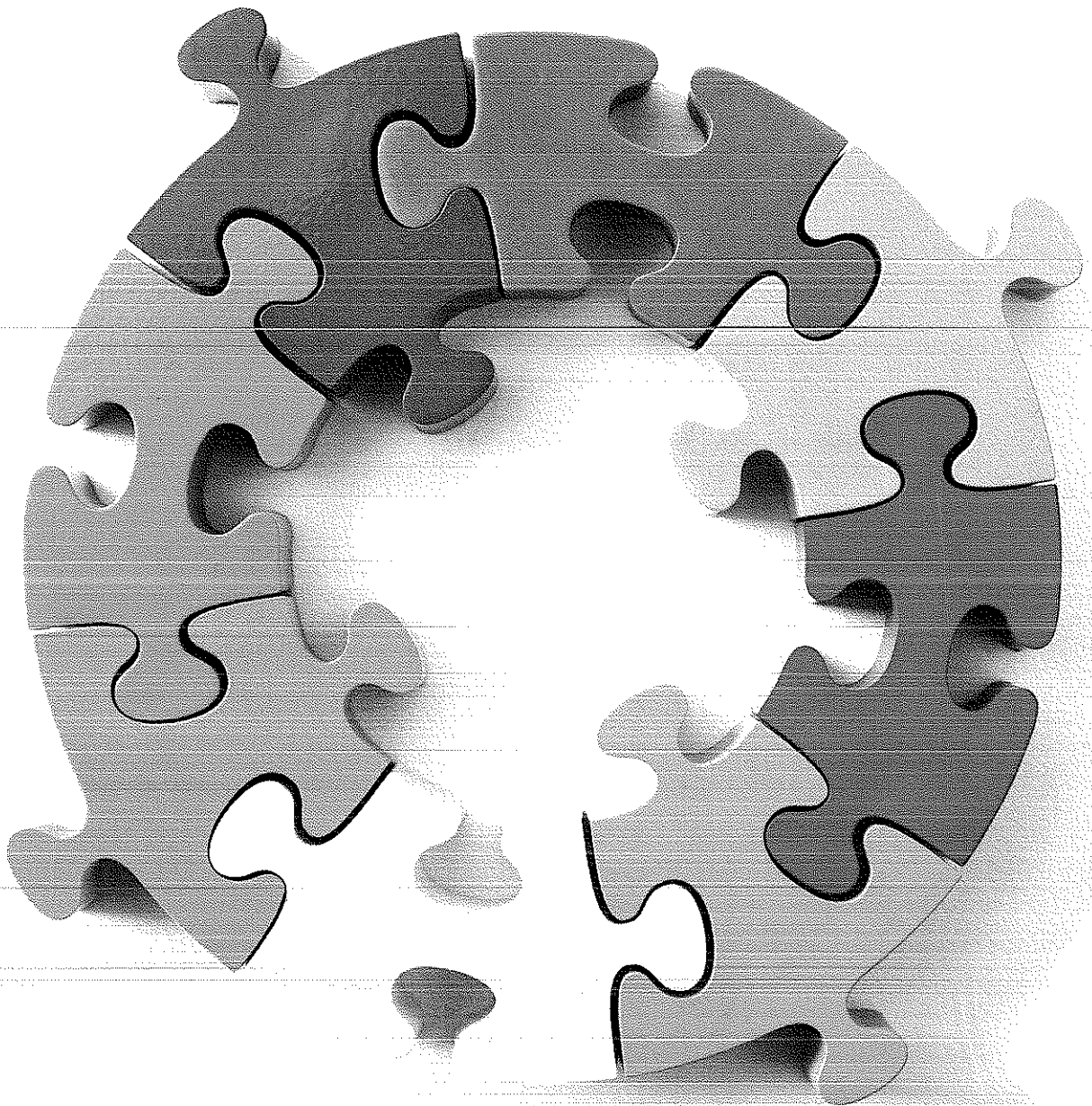


Introducing Human Resource Management

Margaret Foot & Caroline Hook





CHAPTER 9

Learning and talent development

Objectives

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

- explain why learning and talent development is important both to organisations and individuals
- explain the individual's rights to time off for training
- describe a model for achieving strategic learning and talent development
- identify when to use a variety of learning and development techniques
- explain what is meant by experiential learning
- demonstrate the importance of induction training
- outline key issues in international learning and talent development.

Why is learning and talent development important?

Learning and talent development is one of the key aspects of performance management and can help organisations achieve high performance; it is also a key factor in managing and retaining talent even in times of economic uncertainty. Wolff (2009) found that even during the recent recession most employers still recognised the value of learning and talent development, even if they had to work within reduced budgets. However, two-thirds of those surveyed had actually responded to the recession by increasing their efforts to develop skills and talents within their workforce, while at the same time trying to minimise their costs. The CIPD (2010a) also found that in tough economic times more employers were trying to be creative and aimed to develop and retain talent in a cost-effective way.

Most individuals also want to improve their performance in their jobs or learn new skills, perhaps to get a pay increase or promotion or maybe to move to a better job. Learning and talent development can help achieve these aims for individuals too. It can also help attract individuals to an organisation and can then engage their commitment, so that the organisation benefits by keeping their talent within itself; this in turn helps the organisation to achieve its current and future strategic objectives.

What do we mean by learning and talent development and how does this differ from training?

Governments too are concerned that their countries are economically viable and that they can provide a good level of services and standards of living for individuals; once again learning and development can play a key role in achieving this. Although there are huge benefits to be gained for organisations, individuals and countries, there has sometimes been reluctance by some employers in the UK to spend money on training or promoting learning and development, so successive governments have started various initiatives such as NVQs, apprenticeships, New Deal or in some areas Flexible New Deal, Train to Gain and Investors in People, all of which aim to encourage employers to improve the skills of their workforce. The Leitch Report in 2006 called for the UK to spend much more money on boosting skills for everyone at every level in order to avoid the UK losing competitiveness because of lack of skills. The Report also called for the creation of a new Commission for Employment and Skills and for employers to have more say in the way skills were developed (Kingston, 2006).

This chapter is about the contribution that learning and talent development can make to organisations and individuals in terms of improving their performance and helping each to achieve their particular objectives. It is also about what organisations and the people in them need to do to ensure that learning and talent development makes this positive contribution to performance. The first part of the chapter will focus on learning and talent development and in the second half of the chapter the focus will shift to consider effective ways of learning.

What do we mean by learning and talent development and how does this differ from training?

The term training was originally used to refer to some specified event designed to improve an individual's performance in a specific aspect of their work. However, as the UK moved from a largely manufacturing economy, where it was appropriate to train people to carry out clearly specified tasks and where a top-down instructor-led approach was suitable, to a much more flexible service and knowledge-based society, good workers became a source of competitive advantage to an organisation and it became more appropriate to focus on individual learning and encouraging people to learn how to learn.

More recently the term learning and talent development has gained in popularity as organisations increasingly recognise that in order to stay competitive they must use, develop and then retain the knowledge and talent of their workers as fully as possible. The focus of their activities has started to switch to learning and talent development as a means of achieving their organisation's strategic objectives. This should be as a part of human resource planning, discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, as it may be necessary to develop talent from within the organisation so future roles can be filled as people retire or leave, or to meet demand for new skills and knowledge because of a change of strategic direction.

According to the CIPD (2010b) the focus on the word talent also implies that whoever is identified as having potential receives appropriate experience and opportunities to develop their skills so they can progress. This could be a very wide definition as it can be argued that everyone has talent and potential and that organisations should seek to maximise this for everyone. In times of scarce resources and limited

budgets some organisations use it to identify those who will make the biggest difference to the organisation's performance, either because of their high potential, or because they are in critical roles within the organisation. Focusing on a narrow band of people who are perceived to have talent can be counterproductive as it may, however, build resentment among other workers and may result in higher labour turnover among these groups.

For individuals too, in an increasingly competitive job market, it is also vital that they develop their own talent to keep a competitive edge. The word development also implies something that is ongoing and that progress is made over time. This fits also with the emphasis nowadays on lifelong learning. As people work longer they need to continue to develop to improve their skills, knowledge or competencies and nurture and develop their talent throughout their lives. It appears that many people would like to see their employer offering more opportunities for development such as a training or personal development package and employers who do not provide this could be missing out in attracting staff to their organisation and in retaining staff they already have (Skillsoft 2010, Brockett, 2010).

The concept of individualised learning and talent development implies that this occurs in all sorts of situations, not just in the more traditional, formal training opportunities, although we hope that learning will occur here too. Learning and talent development includes other less formal, more learner-centred approaches to learning such as coaching, mentoring, work shadowing, job swapping and some of these approaches will be discussed later in this chapter. Changes in technology also play a part, enabling the completion of learning and development packages wherever individual workers are in the world, whether at home or at work, as long as they have access to a computer or telephone. Developments with Web 2.0 also mean the sharing of information and learning have become easier.

A move from training to learning and talent development also needs different roles to be adopted by line managers, human resource managers and learning and development specialists who have to become increasingly flexible, often adopting a facilitator role rather than always appearing to be the expert as the traditional trainer might have been. However, although this change in emphasis is undoubtedly occurring, you will still find other terms being used as different organisations will be at different stages in changing the emphasis from training to learning and talent development.

Did you know?

The CIPD carry out annual surveys of training and in 2010 for the first time they changed the name of their survey to Learning and Talent Development to reflect the changing emphasis that has been placed on learning and talent development.

(Source: CIPD, 2010c)

Creating a learning culture

If an organisation is to encourage learning to occur, then it must develop a culture which recognises that people learn in different ways and must provide a range of experiences from which they may learn. As the CIPD (2008) point out it is only learners who can do the learning so the organisation has to be effective in creating a positive environment in which learning can occur and where it can also transfer successfully to the workplace.

Human resource managers and learning and talent development specialists have an important role to play in ensuring that the organisation develops in a way which facilitates the learning that the organisation wants to occur, and that a suitable environment is created in which continuous improvement and talent development is actively encouraged. They themselves need to understand the learning process and the key stages in the provision of learning and development activities to ensure that this happens. Line managers also need to be involved in understanding and encouraging the occurrence of learning, and the organisation should try to minimise barriers and encourage individuals to seek learning opportunities for themselves. The training or learning and talent development opportunities that occur should clearly link with the objectives of the organisation, and its efficiency and effectiveness should be regularly evaluated.

Sometimes organisations aspire to calling themselves a learning organisation. In some ways the term is confusing, since people actually do the learning, but it is good that people have started to see learning within organisations as being of importance. According to Jones and Hendry (1992), the term at its simplest means an organisation where there are 'a lot of people learning' and according to Pedler *et al.* (1988) it means 'an organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself'. In today's fast-changing world it is necessary for organisations constantly to try to keep ahead of the competition and in order to achieve this increasingly many organisations are creating a coaching culture to facilitate in a cost-efficient way the learning of all in their organisation.

Not all organisations have been as proactive about encouraging learning and development as those that aspire to become learning organisations so governments have also developed many initiatives to encourage organisations to promote learning so that the skills of the country improve. The UK Government has had many such initiatives, as mentioned earlier, and individuals now have a legal right to request time off for training, though this does not necessarily mean that their request will be granted.

The right to request time off for training

While employers may want to focus their resources on just developing talent in certain groups that they identify as having the potential to make a difference to their organisation and its strategic objectives, all employees in organisations with more than 250 employees who have been employed by that organisation for at least 26 weeks have, since April 2010, had the right to request time off for training and this right has been extended to employees in all organisations of whatever size from April 2011. The training requested can lead to a qualification or could be to help the employee develop specific job or work-related skills. Although this is generally taken to mean the right to time off for study or training, according to Green (2010) the potential is much wider and could also include requests for employers to pay for the training, or for adjustments to be made to hours of work to allow for this training. The employer does not have to grant this request but has to seriously consider it.

The employee has to make a formal request in writing, either on paper or by email, and can make one application in every 12-month period. Certain groups such

as agency workers, individuals of compulsory school age, or 16- and 17-year-old employees who are already obliged to participate in education or training under the Education and Skills Act 2008 are excluded. However, employees who wish to make a request to study or train must do so in a formal way as laid down by the legislation. According to Frederick (2010) this includes:

- the date of the application;
- a statement that the application is a statutory request in relation to study or training;
- the subject matter of the study or training;
- where and when the study or training will take place;
- who will provide or supervise the training;
- to what qualification (if any) the study or training will lead;
- an explanation as to how the employee thinks that the study or training will improve both his or her effectiveness in the employer's business and the performance of the employer's business;
- whether or not the employee has made a previous application, and if he or she has, the date of that application and how it was submitted.

Some employers may already have a written policy for requests for training and may have a system in place for this. They should ensure that their system at least meets the minimum requirements stated here and if they do not already have a procedure may, in order to standardise this process, choose to design their own application forms which should then incorporate these key points.

While the employee can request training in any area that they think will be of benefit to the organisation there could potentially be conflict if the organisation has chosen to focus on a very narrow group for talent development purposes and to focus their resources just on this group. The employer must give serious consideration to any request but could refuse it. According to Macdonald (2010) they are under a statutory duty to hold a meeting with the employee to discuss a request within 28 days of receiving it. They must also allow the employee to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee and should provide a written response to the request within 14 days. There is also a right of appeal.

The employer can refuse the request but has to justify it on business grounds such as that it would not improve the individual's effectiveness at work or the performance of the business. Other possible business reasons which could be used to justify a refusal to grant time off include the following:

- the cost
- difficulties resulting from this employee's absence for training in meeting demand from customers
- inability to be able to reorganise the work among other staff members
- adverse effect on the quality of a product
- adverse effect on performance or
- changes that are already planned to the structure of the organisation making it difficult to grant this request.

Employees who are refused the right to training can take their case to an employment tribunal though this is based on limited grounds such as if they think the decision to reject their case was based on incorrect information or that the employer did

Did you know?

A survey of 2,200 workers in the UK, Germany, France and Spain conducted by the training provider CEGOS UK, found that workers were highly motivated to learn, to the extent that 76 per cent of those in the survey were willing to train in their own time, while 53 per cent were also willing to pay, at least partially, for the training.

(Source: Brockett, J., 2010)

not follow the correct procedure. The employee cannot just complain because they disagree with the business grounds put forward by the employer. If the tribunal finds in their favour, it can order the employer to reconsider the request or award the employee compensation of up to 8 weeks' salary, which in 2011 was capped at £400.00 per week. It is too early to know what effect these new rights will have on organisations' willingness to offer training opportunities to employees, but if employers have adopted a very restricted approach to talent management they could result in some conflict.

The Investors in People award (IIP)

One initiative that has been successful in encouraging many organisations in the UK to become more proactive about learning and development and to link their learning and development initiatives to their organisation's strategic objectives is the Investors in People award which is available to those organisations deemed to have met the standards, giving them the IIP Kitemark of quality.

This initiative aims to improve the quality of British training and talent development practices by setting national standards for good practice and by linking these to the achievement of business goals. From April 2010 the Commission for Employment and Skills became responsible for the strategic ownership of Investors in People in a move which is claimed will strengthen IIP's position, placing it at the centre of their mission to maximise the economic competitiveness of UK organisations (IIP, 2010). Training and development should always be closely linked to the organisation's objectives and the IIP standard encourages people to be trained and developed in ways which exactly suit the organisation's requirements, which should also enable the value of these activities to be clearly demonstrated.

According to the CIPD (2010d) the three key principles of IIP are:

- *Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation* – an Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.
- *Taking action to improve the performance of the organisation* – an Investor in People takes effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.
- *Evaluation of the impact on the performance of the organisation* – an Investor in People can demonstrate the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation.

The IIP standards can be expressed simply as Plan, Do, Review. They recognise that all managers, at whatever level, have a vital role to play in the development of their workers. As we said earlier in this chapter, it has often been difficult to get the commitment of line managers to spending time and money on the learning and development of their workers. These standards emphasise this vital role and have had quite an impact in this area. Achieving the IIP award is not the final stage as the organisation then needs to continue to encourage continuous improvement in order to get even better at developing its people and in order to meet the requirements of the standard again in future years. Organisations can achieve higher levels of bronze,

silver or gold by providing additional evidence and can also achieve yet another level of recognition if they become 'champions' by publicly profiling their IIP journey.

Learning and talent development strategy

Many organisations have demonstrated commercial benefits from achieving the standards and there are benefits for their workforce too, not only in being part of a thriving organisation but also in improvements in their own training and development. The Investors in People standard provides a framework for organisations to follow to ensure that they utilise key principles when designing learning and development initiatives. However, not all organisations work towards the achievement of these standards and it is still important for those organisations and their managers to take account of certain key issues when designing learning and talent development strategies.

As we explained in Chapter 2 it is important that all HR strategies contribute to the achievement of the overall organisation's strategic objectives; learning and talent development strategies are no exception to this. The CIPD (2010e) say that each organisation needs to identify its own particular strategic direction and ensure that its learning and talent development strategies align with and contribute to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals. They also need to contribute to the overall performance management in the organisation, to identify learning and training needs (discussed later in this chapter), and establish priorities and pools of talent.

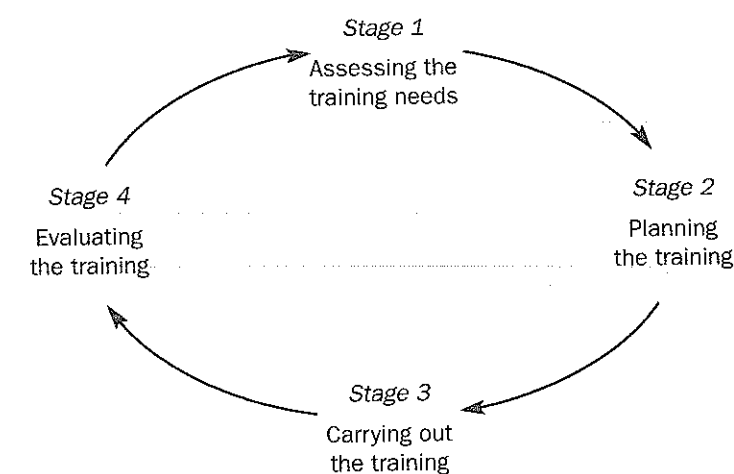
In its 2010 annual survey of learning and talent development the CIPD (2010c) identified the following as being the main learning and talent development strategies being used by organisations. E-learning has become increasingly popular with 62 per cent of the sample surveyed saying they use this method, while 56 per cent of organisations use some form of in-house learning and development, reflecting the trend to be cost-effective. Coaching by line managers is used by 51 per cent of the organisations in this sample.

Designing learning and development

It is not enough just to choose the techniques to be used and hope that these will develop into a programme. It is also important to ensure that any programme contributes to the organisation's strategic objectives and fits with its priorities. When you are designing a learning programme you should have in mind clear objectives for it. What do you want the learners to be able to do and what do you want them to know by the end of the course?

Our approach to the design of learning opportunities is derived and adapted from systematic approaches to training and learning such as the systematic training cycle, which is shown in Figure 9.1. Most recent models of the learning and talent development process, including our own, have used it as a starting point. There are of course many valid criticisms of the systematic training cycle which relate to the fact that its focus is on training rather than individualised learning and that it is more suited to a stable work environment rather than a rapidly changing environment in which the focus has shifted from formal training to more informal approaches to learning. It is also claimed that organisations and learners do not always work through all the stages sequentially and that it is also not clearly linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation. We have tried to address some of these criticisms in our own model

Figure 9.1 The training cycle



for learning and talent development included in Figure 9.2 and each of the stages will now be discussed in more detail.

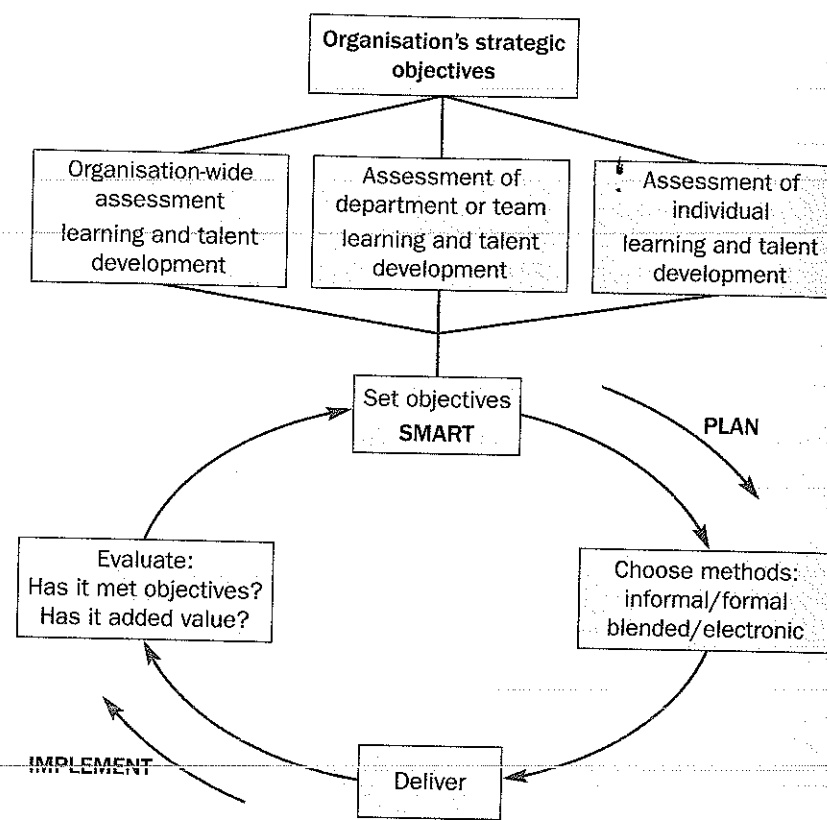
Assessing learning and talent development needs

It is important to assess what learning and talent development is needed for organisations, teams or departments and individuals. There needs to be an accurate assessment of business and organisational requirements (CIPD, 2010f). This should be done in conjunction with the people or groups concerned and should be aimed at contributing to the organisation's strategic objectives.

While there is much to be gained from both formal training and less formal learning and development opportunities in terms of improved skills and productivity for the workforce, they are nevertheless costly activities, so it is important to provide learning opportunities of the right type for the people or groups who need them. This may in itself present new challenges as different generations of workers have different expectations and preferences for learning approaches. A survey in 2010 by Skillssoft found that people wanted freedom and flexibility in their learning but also learning on demand when needed, so organisations need to think carefully about the methods they use, not just because of their cost but to meet the changing needs of individuals.

This stage of the cycle is referred to as assessing learning and talent development needs and this is frequently done for individuals using the performance appraisal process or personal development review. Learning and talent development needs can be assessed in many ways, but one of the easiest ways is to examine the job that has to be done and the knowledge, skills or competencies that the organisation needs the job holder to have, and then to examine the knowledge, skills and competencies of the person in that job and assess whether there is any gap between the two.

This type of assessment can be completed for a whole organisation, a team or department or for an individual. If there is a gap then a learning and talent development initiative may help the individual, team or indeed the whole organisation to progress to the required standard, but if the gap is caused by some other factor such as poor recruitment, then it may be a waste of money to use learning and talent

Figure 9.2 Model for learning and talent development

development to try to bridge this gap. However, individuals do not always want the same learning and talent development opportunities as their organisation wants and may want to try to develop their careers by identifying their own gaps in their skills in comparison with the direction in which they wish to develop.

Although no organisation has a limitless budget for learning and development some organisations are able to cope better with the differences between individual learners' aspirations than others. Organisations that are flexible in their approach and that budget for a certain amount of money to be spent on each individual's learning, whether or not it contributes directly to the strategic objectives, are likely to benefit from this approach as they are creating a positive feeling about learning which should result in the individual being more positive about the organisation, resulting in turn in them being successful in learning in other ways that will benefit the organisation. Some organisations are willing to fund specific learning and talent development activities but try to ensure retention of the staff by making it a contractual requirement that the employee pays back the cost of the training and talent development initiative if they leave within a certain specified time such as two years. Some organisations specify a much longer time scale for this, such as the need to stay for five years, and instead of being motivational the employee can feel resentment as they feel tied to the organisation for what, to them, may feel like forever. When employers have spent

considerable sums of money on training and talent development opportunities for staff it is easy to see the attraction to them of tying staff into contracts that keep them for a specific period of time to get payback. However, as stated, this can be counter-productive if it causes resentment and is a negative way of using learning and talent development to improve retention. It would be far better to concentrate on the positive motivational aspects of learning and talent development that encourage people to want to work in an organisation and to want to stay working there.

Job analysis needs to be undertaken to establish what is involved in the job. Refer back to Chapter 2 to refresh your memory of the ways in which to carry out this process. The usual result of job analysis is a job description, and a training specification can be written from this. In many organisations, where employees are encouraged to work towards National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), there will already be a national standard for the employee to work towards.

Learning and talent development needs can also be assessed by asking the person or people concerned about their learning and development needs, by using questionnaires, or by an analysis of mistakes (faults analysis). If there are any gaps where they do not meet the standards then there is a possible need for learning and development to help to close the gaps, and so a need has been identified.

● Setting objectives

To do this the person organising the L&TD event or process needs to be clear about what the individual, team or organisation needs to know, or be able to do, or the competencies they need to have acquired after the learning and development has taken place. It is important to establish clear objectives for the learning or development event since without them there is a danger that the event will become unfocused and will not achieve its objectives. It also provides a basis for one way of evaluating the L&TD by establishing whether or not the objectives of the event have been met. 'SMART' objectives are recommended: the acronym can stand for a variety of things but generally refers to the objectives being specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely or time-bound.

● Planning the learning or development initiative

Once you have decided your objectives for the learning and talent development event, you are then able to plan a programme that uses a variety or blend of techniques in order to achieve this aim in the most effective way.

If the learning and talent development is to be effective it cannot be left to chance and a great deal of planning needs to happen first in terms of basic preparation of materials and administration, such as notification to all participants and organisation of the event itself. You need to ensure that everyone is aware in advance of what will be involved in the learning and development event and its timing and location in plenty of time. Letters should have gone to the learners, the people involved in running the event, and the supervisors and managers of those who will be involved so that there is time to arrange cover for their absence from work, if necessary.

Once a learning or talent development need has been identified, there are a number of choices to be made about how it should be met. First, should it be carried out in the organisation (in-house) or by an external organisation such as a college or

other training provider? Second, the line manager or learning and development specialist needs to consider which techniques should actually be used. Should formal instructor-led traditional training be used or would the need be met better by less formal individualised learning such as e-learning, coaching, mentoring or the use of learning logs? Once this has been established a specific learning and development programme needs to be identified or designed.

Internal or external learning and talent development



ACTIVITY 9.1

Make up your own list in which you compare the advantages and disadvantages of providing learning and talent development in-house with the possible advantages and disadvantages of using an external provider.

In-house learning and talent development

Advantages

Disadvantages

External learning and talent development provider

Advantages

Disadvantages

Discussion of Activity 9.1

Your lists are likely to contain several advantages and disadvantages for both approaches. Among the points you should have considered are the cost and resources available to carry out the initiative. It is likely that in-house learning and talent development will be cheaper and will be tailored perfectly to meet your organisation's needs. However, if the particular need identified is very specialised and is required for only one or two people, or if there is no one with suitable qualifications or experience available to conduct or facilitate the initiative, then it may be better and more cost-effective for them to join a course run by an external provider. However, this depends on the organisation's priorities for learning and talent development. This, although it may not be tailored to meet the organisation's specific needs, will have the advantage of providing a wider experience and opportunities to find out how other organisations do things.

On and off-the-job training

In the past, when people were trained in traditional ways they were often just made to sit next to someone and told to do what they did. This is often referred to as 'sitting by Nellie', and the effectiveness of the training depended on how good Nellie was at her job. If she was good at it, and a naturally good instructor, then it could work well, but there was always a danger that the trainee would learn faults as well as good practice. This was one of the main disadvantages of using 'on-the-job' training. In more recent times the emphasis in a great many organisations has switched back to on-the-job training with the introduction of NVQs. This time, however, the person

who does the training and assesses what has been learnt is trained themselves, and there are national standards to work towards, so there should be much greater consistency in approach. This aims to harness the benefits of on-the-job training, in terms of low cost and relevance to the organisation, while ensuring that standards are high and consistent. In this case using on-the-job training could be beneficial, as the training has been planned, there is a trainer who knows how to train, and a qualified person will test whether the individual is competent in that job.

Learning and talent development techniques

We stated earlier that once the decision has been made about where the learning and development activity is to take place, it is also important to decide on the most appropriate techniques to use. Will formal trainer-centred approaches work best or will more informal learner-centred approaches be better? How much technology should be used? The method used must be chosen to be appropriate for the particular need that has been identified for that person or group and it must fit with the culture and resources of the organisation.

E-learning

As well as the more traditional approaches to learning, trainers and individual learners now have a choice of using e-learning techniques. There is some confusion about what exactly constitutes e-learning but it can include computer-based training and learning, technology-based training and learning and web-based training and learning. It may be integrated alongside traditional learning as a support mechanism, or be used separately as part of a distance learning or open learning course. Some university degrees, post-graduate qualifications and training packages are delivered totally by e-learning methods and this makes them easily accessible to people in any part of the world at any time.

One major advantage is that individuals, so long as they have access to the technology, should be able to choose when, where and what they learn and this should increase opportunities for learning. Support can be provided by chat rooms, discussion groups and online tutoring with everyone involved able to respond at a time that is convenient. Alternatively, approaches such as virtual classrooms, social networking sites, audio-visual conferencing and two-way live satellite broadcasts provide immediate feedback so learning and development managers and learners can interact with each other almost as quickly as they would in a more traditional classroom situation.

Some organisations are already embracing the Web 2.0 technologies as a part of their approach to learning and talent development. BT as a technology-based company

has embraced the use of social networking as a means of learning and talent development and already spends between 15 and 20 per cent of what would have been classroom based or formal learning and talent development activities on 'providing the capabilities for people to create the content for themselves in the organisation and share it' (CIPD, 2010c). This approach seems in line with the desire of people to learn in more flexible ways and creates new opportunities and ways of learning that could also appeal to those wanting instant access to learning and talent development.

Did you know?

In a survey of workers in the UK, Germany, France and Spain conducted by CEGOS UK, Britain was found to lead in what were regarded as the more innovative approaches to learning with the use of blended learning, mentoring and social media all being stronger than in other European countries.

(Source: Brockett, J., 2010)

With the current concern for environmental issues and our carbon footprints it will be interesting to see whether these approaches will become more popular and replace some of the travel by students and their lecturers. However, it is claimed that many of us spend too long searching for information online with 46 per cent of the respondents in the Skillsoft 2010 survey saying they spent between half an hour and two hours to find information online. If they have an urgent business problem to solve then that could be much too long.



ACTIVITY 9.2

How do you feel about e-learning as an approach to learning? Is it a method you enjoy or is it an approach you dislike?
 What about using social networking or social bookmarking sites as a part of your learning?

del.icio.us Digg Twitter Google Bookmarks Facebook

Do you do this already by sharing documents using methods such as those listed above or by using blogs or tweets? Is it an approach you welcome or dislike?

You will find the symbols shown above on many HR documents that you find for yourself and on many that we have used if you choose to look at the originals for some of our references. Some Internet sites such as those of the CIPD and ACAS also have facilities for people to share information on blogs or by using other resources such as LinkedIn or Facebook. Check for yourself and evaluate the usefulness of these resources for you.



You can experience some aspects of e-learning for yourself by using the support materials for this book at www.pearsoned.co.uk/foothook. Go there now and complete exercise 9.2.

Other learning and talent development techniques

Many other techniques could also be used and we have summarised the suitability of some of these in Table 9.1. Complete the second column for yourself to identify whether in your opinion the particular type of learning and development activity is led more by the learning and development specialist, the learner or equally by both. From your reading in this chapter so far, use the blank spaces in the table to assess the suitability of online discussion groups and audio or video conferencing and the use of podcasts and social networking sites. Spaces have also been left at the end of Table 9.1 for you to add your own suggestions for different training techniques.

Some of these learning and talent development methods are much more participative than others, and it is a good idea to use a variety of techniques to avoid the learner becoming bored and also to give opportunities to practise skills if a skill is being taught. This will also mean that if you are working with a group of people and you utilise a variety of techniques, you are likely to use the preferred learning styles of different individuals at various times. Learning is an active process, and even if it is a list of facts that needs to be learnt, most people learn more effectively when they test themselves, or rewrite information in their own words. This also improves their recall of the information.

Table 9.1 Learning and talent development techniques and their suitability

Training technique	Formal trainer-centred or informal learner-centred approaches	Suitability
Lecture	Formal trainer-centred	This is suitable when a large amount of information needs to be given to a large number of people at the same time. The information can be prepared in advance but a disadvantage is the lack of participation from the audience.
Role play		Here a small group of people have the chance to act as if they were in a real work situation. They have a problem or situation to deal with which would be similar to a situation that they might experience at work. They can practise their responses and receive help and support from the trainer and from the others in the group. This can help in developing awareness of interpersonal skills and can give confidence, as there is an opportunity to practise skills in a protected environment where it does not matter if mistakes are made. There can sometimes be a problem if the role play is not taken seriously or if trainees are too nervous or embarrassed to perform their roles.
Group discussion		This can lead to a free exchange of knowledge, ideas and opinions on a particular subject among the trainees and the trainer with the opportunity to air various viewpoints. It can be useful when there are varying opinions about an issue, or a range of ways in which a situation could be handled. There is a danger that the trainees may wander too far from the subject if it is not handled skilfully by the trainer, and that important points may not be discussed.
Video or film		These can be used to show a real situation and differing ways of handling that situation, or to give information to several people at once. They can show examples of good and bad use of interpersonal skills to a large number of people at once and be used as the basis for a group discussion. They do not demand much involvement from the audience, although the trainer could add to this by use of discussion or questions after each showing.
Project		Normally a task is set by the trainer which will give an individual or group general guidelines to work to, but will also leave a great deal of scope for them to show creativity or initiative. This is a good way of stimulating creativity or initiative but, in order to do so, the project has to be about something that will interest the trainee.
Case study		A case study is a history of some event or situation in which relevant details are supplied for the trainee to get an overall picture of the situation or organisation. Trainees are then asked to diagnose the problems or suggest solutions. A case study provides the opportunity to examine a situation in detail yet be removed from the pressure of the real work situation. This allows for discussion and provides opportunities to exchange ideas and consider different options. Since a case study can limit the number of factors or issues that should be discussed, it may sometimes seem too easy and trainees may not fully appreciate that in the real-life situation there may be other more complex issues to take into account.
Computer-based training		This allows the trainee to work at their own pace through a series of questions or exercises using a computerised training program. The trainees get immediate feedback from the computer program and can cover a range of work in a short space of time, going back over exercises if necessary and learning at a time that is convenient for them. Trainees may be nervous of the technology or may experience difficulties so it is normally useful to have easy access to help or advice at least via a telephone.

Table 9.1 Continued

Training technique	Formal trainer-centred or informal learner-centred approaches	Suitability
Guided reading		A series of recommended reading is provided on a topic, perhaps graded according to difficulty. The trainee is able to work at their own pace through this. Since the reading has been selected by someone else to highlight points on that subject, this can save the trainee time, since they know that the materials will be relevant to the subject. It does not encourage the trainee to research further around the subject or seek materials for themselves.
In-tray exercise		Trainees are given a series of files, memos and letters similar to those that they might have to deal with in a real work situation. They need to decide on the appropriate action to take and the priority for action. This gives an opportunity for trainees to experience the sort of issues that can arise, but it is important that the contents of the in-tray are realistic.
Online discussion groups		
Audio or video conferencing		
Podcasts		
Using social networking approaches such as blogs, tweets, information sharing or Second life		

These points emphasise the importance of providing some opportunities for the learner to practise what they are supposed to be learning, and underline the value for you of completing the exercises as you go through this book so that you continue to learn effectively.

● Delivering the required learning or talent development event

Although specialist learning and talent development managers will be trained in learning techniques it is also important that line managers and any other members of staff involved in facilitating or running learning and development events should also be trained appropriately. This is still important if informal learner-centred approaches are being used, since mentors, coaches or group facilitators also need training.

Even if the people involved are trained well they will still find that delivering specific learning events will seem different each time as the process also involves interaction with learners who may have different learning styles as well as differing personalities. Some degree of flexibility is therefore necessary to take account of these differences.

● Evaluation

This is an extremely important stage in the learning and talent development cycle, and one that is often neglected by organisations. According to Findlay (2004), it is still true

to say that 'many learning and development specialists do not evaluate the outcomes of their work – beyond handing out "happy sheets" at the end of courses. These provide feedback on whether the learners have enjoyed a course or other learning interventions but do little to measure its impact.' If no evaluation of learning and development is carried out at all then the organisation does not know whether it has been enjoyed or been successful, or even whether the learning and development objectives have been met, so it may have wasted money and resources on events that were not very effective and which did not help the organisation meet its strategic objectives.

Until recently very little had actually changed in the way training or learning and talent development was evaluated. Donald Kirkpatrick set out the general principles in 1956 in an article 'How to start an objective evaluation of training' (see Findlay, 2004) and, although there have been criticisms of his work, his ideas have lasted well. He basically argued that there should be four levels of evaluation. First, at the end of the learning and development event, the participants should be asked their views on the effectiveness of the learning experience. This could be done by means of a simple questionnaire to the event or course participants and this will at least give clear views as to whether the people concerned liked the learning or developmental experience, what they felt would be useful and what they felt was less useful. Consequently it should yield a great deal of valuable material, which the manager responsible for the design of the learning event should be able to incorporate usefully in the next course.

According to Kirkpatrick's levels of evaluation, the happy sheets equate to level one evaluation. However, this only establishes what the participants say they feel about the course or learning event and it is also important to establish what they have actually learnt so both knowledge and skills also need to be tested. One very effective way to achieve this is to test these both at the start of the learning event and at the end of it. This achieves Kirkpatrick's level two evaluation as it should show how much the person has learnt during the learning and development event.

If the learning is going to have an effect on the department and on the organisation and contribute to its strategic objectives it is also vital to find out what effect the learning and development event has had when the person actually gets back to work. Sometimes people may do well in a learning situation but when they return to their normal work area they revert to their usual behaviour and they seem to forget or not use the learning that has occurred. From the perspective of their line manager and from the organisation's point of view this is a waste so it is important to find out whether transfer of learning to the work situation has occurred. This can be done by questionnaires or with interviews with participants and their line manager a few weeks later, or by a review of the person's work and the effect that the learning or development opportunity has had on them. Kirkpatrick's level three evaluation aims to test whether the learning that has occurred has successfully transferred to the workplace and essentially this level of evaluation aims to measure changes in job behaviour.

Kirkpatrick's fourth level of evaluation relates to whether the learning and development activity has made a difference to the bottom line in an organisation. Has it succeeded in making a difference to the organisation or added value? According to Martin Sloman (2004), 'If you focus your training on the organisation's learning requirements, you won't need to get hung up on assessment.' To achieve this level of evaluation it may be necessary to examine organisational statistics to see, for example, whether sales targets have been met or whether levels of customer satisfaction have improved.

According to Ian Thomson (2004), 'Evaluating training is a way of combining the assessment of the impact of training and development, while raising the profile and

influence of HR and training functions.' Therefore it is in the interest of these departments to evaluate at all levels, not only to ensure that the learning objectives have been met, but also to demonstrate to the rest of the organisation that they have been successful in adding value to the organisation by making a difference in key strategic areas.

One of the things that have changed since Kirkpatrick's day is the emphasis that is nowadays placed on the reason for the evaluation. If you understand why you are evaluating something it is easier to select an appropriate method of evaluation. It has been suggested that there are four key reasons why learning and development should be evaluated. These are to:

- 1 **prove the value of the training** to try to find out whether or not it has worked and achieved what it was supposed to achieve
- 2 **control the training** to ensure that it is achieving value for money and is fitting with the organisation's priorities and is of a consistent standard
- 3 **improve the quality of the training** so that standards of administration or of training delivery are improved
- 4 **reinforce the learning** as a part of the learning process itself (adapted from CIPD 2010g).

Various methods that can be used for evaluation of learning and development or training including the following:

- questionnaires completed at the end of a course by course participants
- interviews of learners asking their opinion of the value of the learning
- calculation of the return on the investment in training
- assessments by tests of what the person has learned or is able to do
- self-review by participants of what they had learned
- discussion with the learner's immediate superior of the improvement in performance
- cost analysis of the learning and development.



ACTIVITY 9.3

For each of the main purposes listed in Table 9.2 write next to it which forms of evaluation are likely to be most useful and in the third column write for whom that form of evaluation would be particularly useful.

Table 9.2 Forms that evaluation can take and those who would find them useful

The purpose of the evaluation	The main forms that the evaluation could take	The people or groups who would benefit most from the evaluation
1 Prove the value of the training		
2 Control the training		
3 Improve the quality of the training		
4 Reinforce or contribute to the learning		

Suggested answers will be found at www.pearsoned.co.uk/foothook.

Induction training

We have gone through the key principles involved in designing learning and talent development activities but the choices made will depend on the organisation's strategic objectives, what the specific learning and talent development is aiming to achieve, the organisation's culture and the resources and skills available. We shall now examine some of the ways these could be undertaken in one specific form of training called induction.

Anyone who leaves one organisation and goes to work in another will appreciate that things are done differently in different organisations, and people sometimes suffer a feeling of culture shock if behaviour that had been acceptable in their previous organisation is not viewed in the same way in the new one. This feeling of culture shock is likely to be even greater if the individual has moved from another country to work or to study. The new person picks up clues from the behaviour of others as to what is acceptable and what is not. Supervisors and managers will be seen to praise certain types of behaviour but will frown on others. At its simplest they are learning about the common view within that organisation of 'the way we do things around here' – the organisation culture.

Although employees will learn a great deal in this informal way, it is also a good idea for organisations to try to ensure that they have the opportunity to learn things that will enable them to perform to their best ability. This will mean that the organisation will need to:

- assess what it thinks people need to learn in order both to do their jobs and to contribute effectively to the organisation's strategic objectives
- plan opportunities to facilitate learning experiences
- evaluate what has worked well, and what has been less successful.

CASE STUDY 9.1 Induction



Read the following story about a student, Ros, who hoped to improve her language skills and earn some money for university by working as a waitress in a hotel in France for the summer. She has just started work as a trainee and is telephoning her mother a few days after her arrival.

Read the story and answer the questions at the end of it.

- Ros Hello, Mum. I got here in the end and I've survived the first day, but it has been quite difficult. I'm not sure how long I will stay.
- Mum Oh dear! What has happened? Was the journey OK? Were you met by someone with a car from the hotel, as they had arranged?
- Ros No, the hotel car didn't turn up. I had to get a taxi and it was miles from the airport, so it cost a fortune. The human resource manager took me to my accommodation, but no one else seemed to be expecting me. I'm living in an apartment with about another eight people, but they were just going out when I arrived and no one had told them that I was also going to be joining them in their accommodation. They were really nice but had trouble finding a bed for me and the only spare bed is in the kitchen and it's broken.

- Mum Well, I expect you felt better when you found out what your job was and got your uniform.
- Ros Well, I'm still not sure what is happening. I got up early yesterday morning, because no one had told me when to start work, but when I got to the office I was told that I was not on duty until today so I'm still not sure what hours I'm actually working. I thought I would only be working for 35 hours a week in France, but some of the others told me that this can be averaged over a few weeks, so it may be more.
- I haven't got a uniform yet either, as the only one the HR manager had left was extra large, so was much too big for me. He suggested I wore a black skirt and white blouse until they can get a uniform in a small size for me. I spent the day on the beach with some of the other trainees, so at least that was good, but I had to borrow some clothes for work as the airline has lost my luggage.
- Mum Oh dear! Have you reported it? I hope your luggage will turn up soon. You'll feel a lot more positive when you have your own things.
- Ros Yes, I reported it at the airport and it will be sent here when they find it, but I wonder if I'll still be here by then. Everything is different to what I expected.
- The HR manager told me that I would be joining the receptionists rather than the waitresses. Then when I turned up for work again this morning, I was placed in the marketing department. Another girl, who had been working there, has been moved to help at another hotel this week, because the Tour de France is going through the town. Consequently that hotel is full, so a lot of the temporary staff have been moved there to help for the week.
- Mum You should get plenty of opportunities to improve your French working in marketing.
- Ros My boss in marketing is really nice and I have been phoning French and English hotels to check on competitors' prices and I'm going to be helping to do a customer satisfaction survey in both French and English. Mind you, they really need a staff satisfaction survey!
- Mum Well, at least the job sounds interesting.
- Ros Yes, my boss says she wants to keep me in the marketing department, as she has plenty of work for me to do, even when the other trainee returns. The HR manager was talking about me helping to clean chalets next week, so I'm still very confused about the job I'll be doing. I want to come home.
- Mum You're bound to feel unsettled for the first few days, but I'm sure you'll feel better when you get a bit more established and when you have your luggage. Have the meals been good? At least you get your board and lodging provided on top of your wage.
- Ros I hope I'll feel better soon, but today I missed meals so I've only had a baguette.
- Mum Oh dear! Why was that? I thought free meals were part of your payment and in France you would expect them to be good, even for the staff.
- Ros The office staff have breaks at a different time to the people working in the restaurant and the hotel, so there was no food left when I arrived. I'll have to buy something later. I thought I was being paid weekly in cash, as it said in the letter that I was sent. The others say we get paid at the end of the month and that I'll need to set up a French bank account for myself as we get paid by cheque. I hope my euros will last until I get paid. It is proving much more difficult than I thought. All the information I was sent has been wrong.

Questions

- 1 Comment on what happened.
- 2 What information should Ros have received before she left England?
- 3 What information could have been made available on the organisation's intranet site?
- 4 How could Ros's first few days have been made easier?



ACTIVITY 9.4

Imagine that you are the learning and development manager at the hotel in France where Ros had her summer job.

Design an induction course for Ros and the other students at this hotel.

- What will be your objectives for the induction programme?
- What would you want Ros to know at the end of the programme?
- What do you want her to be able to do by the end of her induction programme?

Induction

Induction is the process of helping a new employee to settle quickly into their job so that they soon become an efficient and productive employee. It also helps create a favourable image of the organisation in the mind of the new employee, and is therefore also a valuable public relations exercise. Part of the induction process starts at the time of interview, with the information and impression of the organisation that is given at that stage. Any letters or booklets given after this also form an important part of the induction process. Some of the induction may be completed online with materials and tests of knowledge provided on the company intranet site.

New employees need to learn a great deal of information when they join an organisation. This could be learned informally, but this may take a long time and the employee may learn the wrong things. It will be even more important if the person is working in another country or using a second language, and an intervention to help awareness of cross-cultural differences or in language skills may also be needed as part of the induction. New employees are each likely to have their own individual learning needs; establishing what these are during the induction process is important as is starting individual personal development reviews and setting times for individual interviews to review progress regularly.

When new employees actually start work, they will need also to get to know people with whom they will be working, become familiar with their surroundings, learn about their new job and learn about the organisation in which they will be working. Although there is a great deal of information to impart to the new employee, not all of it is needed immediately and in fact there is a danger of overloading the individual with information if it is all given at once. If formal induction courses are run for all new starters then these could be spread over parts of several days, imparting first the most urgent information, such as the geography of the building, canteen arrangements and introductions to supervisors and work colleagues. It may be that the formal courses do not even need to start on the first day, especially if recruitment is

sporadic. Small groups of employees may be gathered, perhaps once a month, for the formal induction course, providing of course that their immediate induction needs such as information on safety rules have been adequately covered.

A formal induction course is useful, as several new starters can be given information at the same time. However, the new employees are likely to be starting different jobs in various departments, so that there is still an important role for their line managers to play in their induction, particularly in carrying out personal development reviews and then tailoring individual learning and development initiatives to meet the specific learning and development needs of the individual in that department. A checklist indicating which topics will be covered, when they will be covered and who will cover them is also extremely useful. This can be signed by the employee when they have gone through all the topics and then stored with their training records. It also provides a useful reminder to all of the need to cover these topics.

Table 9.3 gives an indication of the type of things that need to be covered during an induction period. It is useful to indicate who is responsible for dealing with each topic and when it should be covered. A section for the trainee to sign to say that they have completed each topic would also be useful.

Table 9.3 Sample induction checklist

Topic	Person responsible for covering this topic	Day 1	First week	First month
Reception	Human Resource Manager	★		
Documentation and introduction to manager	Human Resource Manager	★		
Hours, clocking on, flexitime, lunch breaks, overtime	Human Resource Manager	★		
Layout of department, outline of function and introduction to staff	Supervisor	★		
Tour of main work areas, staff restaurant, toilets, fire exits	'Buddy' or person delegated by the supervisor to look after and befriend the new starter	★		
Health and safety rules	Supervisor	★		
The organisation – products, services, the organisation's handbook	Learning and Development Officer or on company intranet			★
Rules and procedures – discipline and grievance	Human Resource Manager and on company intranet site		★	
Payment, holiday pay and sickness pay	Human Resource Manager Support materials on intranet system		★	
Communication and consultation	Learning and Development Officer			★
Training and development	Learning and Development Officer			★
Performance appraisal and set-up of personal development plan and reviews	Learning and Development Officer Additional materials on the intranet system			★
Pensions	Learning and Development Officer Additional materials on the intranet system			★
The trade union and trade union-appointed learning representatives	Shop Steward			★

Some of the information will need to be given in a written form, perhaps in a handbook, although increasingly nowadays organisations will keep much of this information also on their intranet system. Although much of this information may also have been given verbally in the formal induction course, it is useful to have a source of reference for things such as who to notify when you are ill. This might not have seemed particularly relevant to a new starter, and indeed may not be needed for a year or two, by which time it may have been largely forgotten unless there is a loose-leaf handbook to refer to or preferably an intranet site where the information is easily accessible and kept up to date.

Since it is important not to give too much information, as the new starter may feel overwhelmed, it is better to spread the information over a period of time and alternate with periods where the person is introduced to their new job and given a chance to settle into this. After all, that is the reason they have joined the organisation. Some organisations may give information on their intranet site prior to the person actually joining the organisation and may test the person's understanding by a quiz. There will still be some things which it is necessary to deliver face-to-face and in some organisations new recruits are asked to arrive later than the rest of the workforce on their first day, so that those who will be involved in their induction can get things organised and deal with any crises that may occur, and then have time to spend on the new recruit.

If the new employee comes from another country, or if the work is in an international organisation where workers come from many different countries, there is also likely to be a need to deal with cross-cultural issues to encourage greater understanding and increase tolerance of different ways of working. The induction period would provide a useful foundation for this and progress could be reviewed during subsequent personal development reviews.

How do people learn?

Did you know?

Henry Ford said, 'Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to stay young.'

In a knowledge-based economy, where there is constant change and where people are regularly required to develop new knowledge and skills, perhaps the most useful skill of all is knowing how you and others learn, as well as understanding the key principles involved in designing learning and development programmes.

In this section a range of learning and development and training techniques will be discussed which may also help you to learn more efficiently as well as preparing you to help others to learn.

Henry Ford's statement, above, is becoming even more relevant today, not just so that we all stay young but so that as retirement ages increase we can continue to lead productive and enjoyable lives as we continue to update our skills, knowledge and learning, whether for work purposes or for leisure. According to Age Positive (2007), a team working on strategies and policies to support people making decisions about working and retirement for the Department of Work and Pensions, 'Employees of all ages are benefiting from training and development' and organisations are benefiting too as 'employees of all ages have a variety of skills which make the organisations more effective'.

Factors affecting learning and development

In view of the change of focus to individual learning and talent development a good place to start is to consider your own approach to learning which you can do by completing Activity 9.5.



ACTIVITY 9.5

Make a list of a range of situations where you feel that you have learnt something.

- In each case consider what was your drive, or motivation, to learn.
- Was there a stimulus to increase your drive to learn? What was this?
- Was there any form of reinforcement of your learning? What was this?

Discussion of Activity 9.5

People are motivated to learn by a variety of things, so you may have listed quite a few drives to learn. These may take the form of incentives, encouragement or rewards. Some people may be motivated by the need to do well in an examination or they may perhaps be motivated to learn a new skill because it may provide an improved opportunity for getting a better job or more pay. In other cases the motivation may be the pleasure of learning something new for its own sake or for the respect that other people may feel towards you when you have learnt something impressive. Other people may be motivated to learn by a sense of curiosity or by anxiety or fear of failure and your motivation may change at different stages of your life as you continue with life-long learning.

The tests and exercises in this book and on the associated web pages at www.pearsoned.co.uk/foothook should help you to prove to yourself that you are learning. They are one way in which you can show your response to learning.

Learning theories

Psychologists have always been interested in how people learn and there are far too many theories of learning to discuss them all here. Besides, you will undoubtedly study some of these theories of learning in other subjects such as organisational behaviour. However, it is important to consider some of the common issues that occur in these theories as they may give us insights into how we learn and how we can help those in our organisations to learn so that we create high-performing organisations or nations. In particular, drives and motivation and knowledge of results or feedback are important.

The drive and motivation to learn

Behavioural psychologists such as Pavlov and Skinner referred to the instinctive need that led to learning as 'the drive'. In animals this was normally provided by a desire for food, but in people the drive or motivation might be to pass an exam or just to achieve the satisfaction derived from mastering something new. This aspect of their work points to the importance of considering people's motivation to learn. If we can

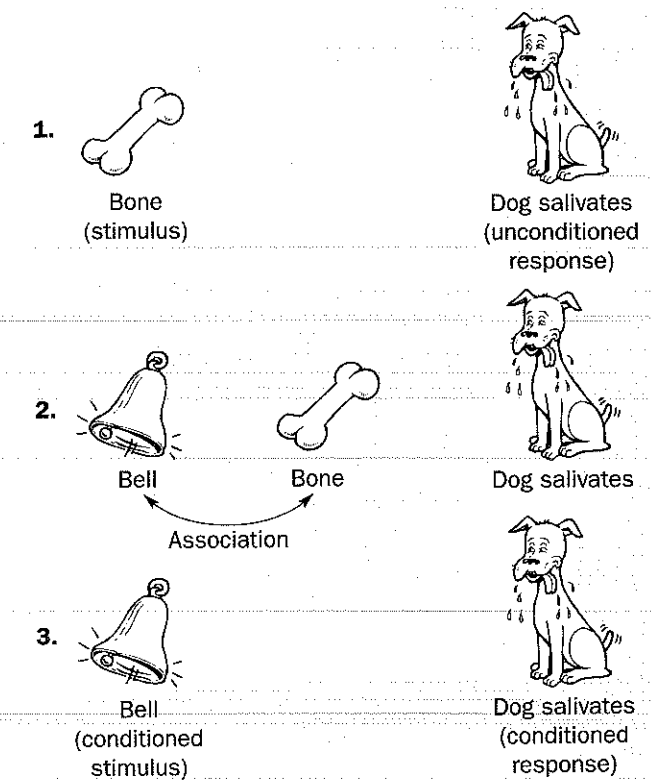
find out what makes people want to learn we should then be able to tailor our instruction better and be more likely to create better performance at work. In Activity 9.5 you identified your own drives and motivation to learn but if you compare them with those of your friends you may find that they are motivated by different factors. Organisations also need to be aware of what will motivate their worker to learn as part of their approach to performance management and need to ensure that other HR policies such as that for reward clearly support their approach.

Behaviourist concepts

Although work with pigeons and dogs may not appear at first sight to be very relevant to learning that occurs within organisations, this work does, in fact, raise a great many important issues, of which those specialising in learning and development should be aware.

Early in the last century Pavlov (1927) trained dogs to salivate when he rang a bell. He noticed that dogs salivated naturally as a reflex response when food was put in front of them. For his experiment he rang a bell every time the dogs were fed; after a time, the dogs would salivate when the bell was rung, whether there was food or not (Figure 9.3). He deduced that the dogs had learnt to salivate by associating the bell with the food, and came to see the learning process as the development of responses

Figure 9.3 Conditioned responses: Pavlov's dogs



to the new stimuli given by the world. He called them conditioned responses, as opposed to the unconditioned or natural responses that came before. His term for the process of learning was 'conditioning'.

Later, Skinner (1953) took the theory further. The limitation of Pavlov's work was that it showed that animals (or people) could learn to apply instinctive responses to new sets of circumstances, but it did not show how totally new responses could be learnt. Skinner in fact succeeded in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong by a process that he called operant conditioning. In this process, the pigeons were watched for any patterns of behaviour that might be useful when playing ping-pong, and whenever they performed they were rewarded with food. Not surprisingly, the birds soon learnt to do certain movements, and they retained their learning better if the reward was repeated regularly, a process Skinner called 'reinforcement'. In human learning, Skinner believed, reinforcement mainly took the form of feedback – information telling the learner whether they are getting the task right.

Skinner believed that all learning took place in this associative manner, and that all complex patterns of behaviour, such as learning ping-pong or learning to speak, could be broken down into small steps that could be taught one by one in a simple fashion. He applied this theory both to training workers and to the education of his own children, and his work is still very influential. It obviously makes sense to break down routine tasks into their component parts, and to provide methodical training to cover them. In addition, his emphasis on the visible or objective side of learning led to the practice of setting learning objectives or statements of what a learner had to achieve in terms of action.

On the other hand, you might be wondering whether Skinner's account of the pigeons' learning process was complete. Did insight play no part in their grasp of the rules of the game? In human learning insight often seems to enable people to cut the corners on the road to knowledge, and experience of behaviouristic attempts to teach complex matters suggests that they can lead to a slow, mechanical set of activities. Many psychologists have challenged Skinner's view, particularly with regard to the learning of complex behaviour such as speech.

Reinforcement and feedback of learning

The behaviourists used reinforcement to indicate a correct behavioural response. The reinforcement could be negative or positive. Rewards such as food for animals or praise for people are positive forms of reinforcement of the desired behaviour, while punishments aim to eliminate incorrect behaviour. Research suggests that positive reinforcement is generally more effective than negative reinforcement in gaining a change in behaviour in the long term, as with negative reinforcement the desired change often occurs only as long as there is the threat of punishment. When this threat is withdrawn then behaviour often reverts to the original behaviour.

Reinforcement of your learning could occur by your reading or viewing something and being tested on this and praised by your tutor for your efforts, or by you completing a self-check exercise and giving yourself a pat on the back if you have done well. This will reinforce correct behaviour or show you that you have the right answers, but won't necessarily give you any detailed understanding of what you have done well or of what you did wrong. For that you also need knowledge of results or feedback.



ACTIVITY 9.6

Go to this book's website at www.pearsoned.co.uk/foothook, and complete exercise 9.6 to check and reinforce your own learning in this chapter.

What feedback did you get for this? Was it of use to you? Did this help you to reinforce your own learning?

Knowledge of results or feedback is important if we are to learn effectively. In a training situation this could be by the trainer giving comments on the person's progress, or perhaps by a manager appraising the work of one of their staff as part of the performance management process.

When giving constructive feedback one should start with the positive, and focus first on the behaviour that has been done well before giving feedback about behaviour that has been done less well. Feedback about incorrect behaviour, if given skilfully, is extremely important; it doesn't have to be destructive, and here it is important to focus on specific aspects of behaviour that can be changed. General statements such as 'that was awful' are much too vague to be helpful in changing behaviour. It would be easy for the person receiving the feedback to feel that they are just being criticised unless the person who is giving the feedback also suggests alternative ways of behaving. For example, you might say, 'The fact that you seemed pre-occupied with your paperwork when Rosalind walked into the room, and took some time before you greeted her, seemed a very unwelcoming start to an interview. I think that if you had acknowledged her presence immediately and got up and walked towards her to greet her, it would have been a much more welcoming start to the interview, and would have been likely to have made Rosalind feel much more at ease.'

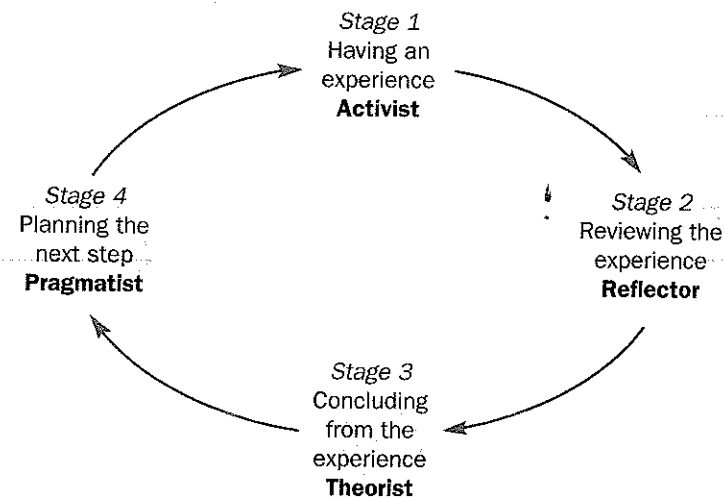
Feedback is a very important part of the learning process. The saying 'Practice makes perfect' could well be modified to 'Practice with appropriate feedback makes perfect', since without the feedback the person could just carry on with the same inappropriate behaviour over and over again.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning, or learning from experience, is particularly useful for learning and development in the workplace situation. It is derived from the work of Kolb *et al.* (1974) in America, and of Honey and Mumford (1992) in Britain. Honey and Mumford's approach to experiential learning can be illustrated by the learning cycle shown in Figure 9.4. Their theory also suggests that different people may have different preferred styles of learning and this is an important factor to consider if we want people to learn effectively.

The learning cycle

People learn in a variety of ways, and over the years may develop certain learning habits which enable them to benefit from certain types of experience more than other types. Students in college and people learning in the workplace are both likely to meet a range of different learning opportunities. Most full-time students nowadays will also work to support themselves to some extent while studying and will themselves have a

Figure 9.4 The learning cycle

range of work experiences from which they can learn. Some will be mature students who have already worked for a number of years, some will be part-time students combining study with a career, and yet others will be on sandwich course degrees where they have the opportunity of gaining work experience in a placement for a period of time. Knowing about your own learning preferences may help you to understand and you may become more efficient in learning from these experiences.

Stage 1: Having an experience

Most people have plenty of experiences from which they could learn, but age does not necessarily mean that people have learnt more. Some people do not use the experiences that they have. One way of learning is to let experiences come to you (reactive), and the other is to deliberately seek out new experiences (proactive). Anyone who provides learning development opportunities whether as a specialist or a line manager needs to provide suitable experiences from which people can learn (in the form, for example, of case studies, role plays and other simulations), but learners also need to appreciate the need to be proactive and seek for themselves suitable experiences from which to learn. The use of suitable individuals who are willing to act as mentors, or forming a supportive study group of friends, can assist in this process by:

- helping to identify suitable experiences from which to learn
- reviewing with individuals what they have actually done and helping to draw out what they have learnt
- encouraging the individual to be proactive and to seek for themselves suitable learning experiences.

Stage 2: Reviewing the experience

If we are to learn from an experience it is important to review what has happened. Unfortunately we are often too busy to do this, and some people never develop the habit of reflection. The individual should be encouraged to:

- think about what actually happened
- think of other ways in which the situation could have been handled

- make comparisons with what happened in other similar situations
- read about the subject
- compare theory and practice.

Stage 3: Concluding from the experience

There would be little point in reviewing the experiences unless we then drew some conclusions from them. This involves scanning the raw material for lessons to be learned and reaching some conclusions. The individual should be asking:

- What have I learnt from this?
- What could I have done differently?

Stage 4: Planning the next stage

Having reached a conclusion, it is important to try to do things better next time. To be able to do this we need to be able to plan, and this involves translating at least some of the conclusions into a basis for appropriate action next time. The individual should be encouraged to:

- state what they would actually do next time
- draw up a plan of action for handling such a situation again.

The four stages in the process of learning using experiences are mutually dependent. The whole process is summarised in the learning cycle (Figure 9.4).

Learning styles

Honey and Mumford have developed a questionnaire so that individuals can establish their preferred learning style. They developed this approach as a result of their work with managers, as they became concerned to discover why one person will learn from a particular experience but another does not appear to learn anything from the same experience. Further details of their approach are given in the recommended reading. Most people only use one or two learning styles although these are not fixed and can change over time. They say that there are four differing learning styles that clearly link with the four stages of the learning cycle: activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists.

Activists

Activists like to get fully involved in whatever is happening. They seek out new experiences and tend to be enthusiastic about new ideas and new techniques. They tend to be open minded and not sceptical, and are often enthusiastic about novelty. They tend to act first and then consider the consequences later. Their days are filled with activity and they often tackle problems by brainstorming.

Reflectors

Reflectors prefer to stand back and observe experiences from different perspectives. The thorough collection and analysis of data are important to them, so they try to avoid reaching definite conclusions for as long as possible. They would rather take a back seat in meetings and discussions and get the drift of the discussion before

making their own points. When they act it is as part of a larger picture which includes the past as well as the present and takes into account other people's observations as well as their own.

Theorists

Theorists tend to adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step, logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories, and tend to be perfectionists who will not rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They value rationality and logic.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen to try out new ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search for new ideas and take the first opportunities to experiment with applications. They are the type of people who return from a training course full of ideas that they want to try out immediately. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas. They hate long ruminating discussions.



ACTIVITY 9.7

- 1 Read the description of the four learning styles again or go to www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/ourlearning/whatlearner.asp (accessed 6.8.2010). This site provides some clear explanations about Honey and Mumford's learning styles as well as hints on how to make learning more effective for each style of learner. It also provides lots of useful information about ways to learn more effectively.
- 2 From the descriptions given, which learning style do you think you use most frequently?
- 3 Try to discover your learning style. You could do this by testing whether how you think you learn matches an analysis of your learning style by using Honey and Mumford's online questionnaire at <http://www.peterhoney.com/content/LearningStylesQuestionnaire.html> (accessed 6.8.2010). There is a charge for this which at the time of writing was £10.00. Alternatively you could use a shorter online version which claims to provide similar results in a rough and ready learning styles questionnaire: http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/A2_LEARNSTYLES/pages/learningstyles.htm (accessed 6.8.2010).
- 4 Reflect on your findings. Examine the theory by rereading the description of the styles outlined earlier and on these websites.

Discussion of Activity 9.7

You may have discovered that you are equally at home learning in each of these styles. Two per cent of the population use all four styles. The majority of the population – 70 per cent – tend to prefer to use just one or two learning styles. You can use the understanding that you have gained about your learning styles in various ways. You might choose to seek out opportunities to use the learning styles that you generally use less often, and in this way you may become a more rounded learner who is able to make use of a wider range of learning opportunities.

You might, on the other hand, choose to make use of the learning styles that you know you prefer to use, so that if learning opportunities are presented to you in ways

that you don't like, you may look for alternative ways to learn about the topic which are more in line with your learning style preferences.

Did you know?

It is generally believed that the two sides of the brain are used for different things. The left side of the brain is used mainly for analysis, words, planning and dealing with things in a logical, rational way. The right side of the brain is better at the synthesis of ideas, presenting information in pictorial form, spatial competencies, and creativity and the generation of new ideas.

Other approaches to learning styles and methods

There are many different ways of analysing approaches to learning. We have already mentioned the Honey and Mumford learning styles inventory and that of David Kolb *et al.*

However, other approaches are used. For example, are you a visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learner? This is sometimes referred to as VAK.



ACTIVITY 9.8

You can check whether you are a visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learner (VAK) at www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstyletest.htm (accessed 6.8.2010).

If you like to visualise, seeing things in colour and using pictures such as mind maps, then you are probably a visual learner. If you prefer to listen to the sounds of things then you are probably an auditory learner, and if you like to move around while learning and link learning with movement then you could be a kinaesthetic learner.

Practical issues relating to individual learning

Whenever we are designing training for individuals or groups, we need to consider learning theory and build into the learning experience as many conditions as we can to ensure effective learning. Not only is it important when learning from experiences for the individual learner to be aware of their preferred learning style, it is also important that the L&TD specialist or the line manager should be aware of differing learning styles and cultural preferences in order to provide a learning experience which will be congruent with the way in which each individual learns best.

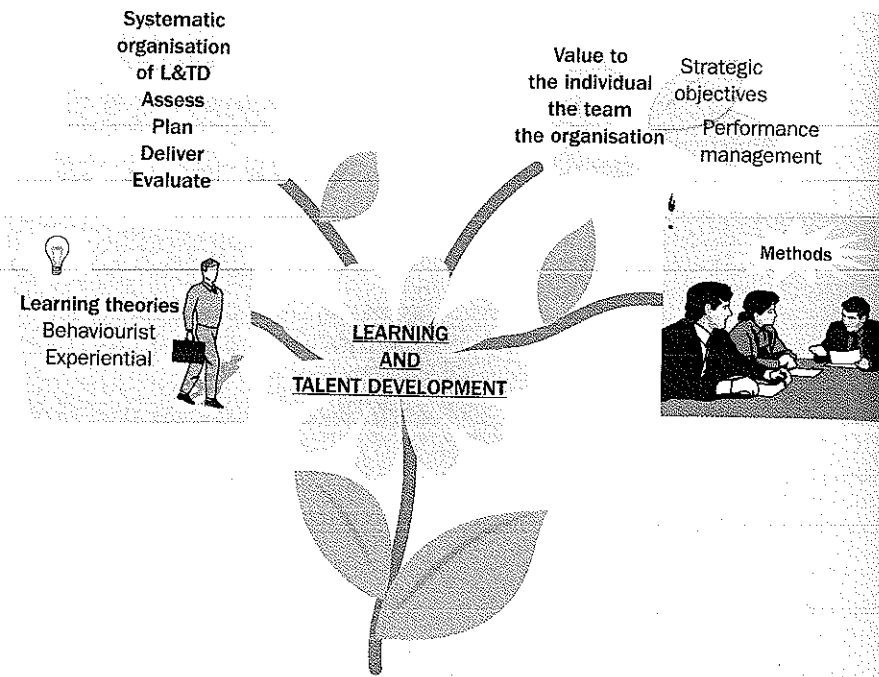
Recent approaches to learning and development

Mind mapping techniques

Psychologists are finding out more about the ways in which we think and learn and psychologists now say that our minds work in patterns and that several ideas can be developing at once. The brain then goes through a process of integrating ideas, but this doesn't necessarily happen in a linear order.

Tony Buzan (1982) developed the idea of mind maps to allow people to express themselves freely and encourage creativity, without being necessarily governed by the linear form. Many people, when presenting information in the form of a mind map,

Figure 9.5 Partial mind map of learning and talent development chapter



show a very detailed grasp of the subject which they were not be able to demonstrate in a traditional written form. The mind maps (some examples are used as chapter summaries in this book) start with the central subject, which can be presented pictorially. Lines then lead from this subject to other connected topics. This gives more freedom for ideas to appear without worrying at first about the connections, and it allows for several links to be made between related parts of a topic.

The mind map shown in Figure 9.5 illustrates our view of the key points with which this chapter has been concerned so far. Mind maps encourage creativity, and if they are to be used in a way that helps someone to remember and learn effectively then they should be very visual. The central topic should be written clearly, preferably in capital letters, and underlined. A pictorial representation of that topic is also useful, as it encourages easier recall. Lines should then be drawn from this key word, and the main areas relating to the subject area should be drawn.

Further diagrams or pictures can be useful to make the mind map of the topic memorable. Further lines and words should branch from each of these, and the pattern is then developed. Groups of ideas can be linked by the use of different colours. Links can be made easily, by using arrows or lines, between related topics. Relationships and links with other subjects can also be made and identified at the edges of the mind map.



ACTIVITY 9.9

The mind map in Figure 9.5 is incomplete, since it is being used part-way through this chapter. When you have read the rest of this chapter, complete the remainder of the mind map in a way that will make it memorable for you. Draw links with other subjects or topics around the edge of the mind map.

Discussion of Activity 9.9

After reading the whole chapter you may want to include more things that you consider relevant such as e-learning, bite-size learning and blended learning, and international learning and development so you can continue to build your mind map and add further topics to make it relevant to you. In order for it to be useful and memorable you should try to make your mind map as visually attractive as possible.

ACTIVITY 9.10

Consider each of the techniques listed in Table 9.1. Make four new lists as shown below, naming the learning and talent development techniques you think will suit activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists. (Some of the techniques may suit more than one style of learning.)

Learning and talent development techniques to suit people who prefer each of the four learning styles

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist

Discussion of Activity 9.10

Your list is likely to include a variety of different learning techniques, some of which we listed earlier and some that you have added for yourselves. We will consider in turn each of the preferred learning styles.

Activist

The techniques that allow activists to participate fully in the learning experience will be the ones that appeal most to them. These could include: role play, group discussion, project work, case studies, computer-based learning and in-tray exercises. The role play is especially likely to appeal to the activist, as it provides plenty of opportunity for them to become involved in a leading role. Activists are likely to be bored by the lack of involvement required from them in techniques such as lectures, videos or films.

Reflector

Reflectors are likely to appreciate learning techniques where they are presented with information that they can then think about, so lectures, films, videos and guided reading are likely to appeal to them. They will probably also appreciate to some extent group discussions and case studies, as long as they do not have to take too active a part and have plenty of time for reflection afterwards. Computer-based training courses, in which they can progress at their own speed and go back to examine again points that they want to look at in more detail, may also prove popular.

Theorist

Theorists welcome opportunities to examine new theories and compare them with other points of view. Lectures and guided reading are likely to appeal most to them

as training techniques. Lectures with a fairly academic content are preferred, so that ideas gained can be compared with other ideas and theories. If the guided reading covers a suitable range of material this could also be useful to a theorist, although if the material is not extensive or theoretical enough for them, they are likely to want to delve further into other areas.

Pragmatist

The pragmatist wants to know how things will really work in practice, so they are likely to find training techniques that are close to reality useful. Case studies, role plays and in-tray exercises will appeal to them if they think that they are realistic and of immediate use to them at work.

Bite-sized learning

Some of you may have experienced bite-sized learning for yourselves as the BBC's revision programmes for GCSE use this approach. Octavius Black, managing director of the Mind Gym (2004), says that:

People often thought that the more time they spent on learning, the better their knowledge would be. In fact, they could learn equally effectively – if not more so – in short bursts. Research shows that we remember and apply much more knowledge when we learn little and often than when we learn lots in one go.

This fits very well with what we said earlier about remembering information. You are likely to be more successful in remembering information if you are frequently spending small amounts of time going over what you have learned.

According to Crofts (2004), one of the most common barriers to learning cited by CIPD members is the amount of time it takes and as workers in the UK work increasingly long hours, bite-sized training certainly fits a need. However, trainers are likely to need to develop different skills to deliver material in a fast-paced way, with exercises taking only a few minutes to complete. This view is supported by a survey of line managers conducted in 2010 where ongoing accessible learning using bite-sized modules on a regular basis and the 'ability to dip into learning' was seen as being one important factor which contributed towards the success of training for busy managers (Wolff, 2010).

However, concerns have also been raised recently about the appropriateness of using bite-sized learning in all circumstances. Woolcock (2010) reported claims that students were sometimes taking A levels in bite-sized chunks and that this was helping them develop short attention spans and was proving inadequate preparation for the more in-depth approach to study needed for university work.

Blended learning

Another type of learning and development that has proved popular is the concept of blended learning. According to Allison Rossett and Felicia Douglas (2004):

A blend is an integrated strategy for delivering on promises about learning and performance. It involves a planned combination of approaches as varied as coaching by a supervisor, participating in on-line class, self-assessments, and in on-line attendance in workshops and in on-line discussions.

We have already advocated that there should be a mix of learning and development methods to suit the needs of the learners, and blended learning involves planning this into the learning in ways that will suit the needs of particular groups. A blended learning approach is attractive to organisations as it is claimed that it may help to reduce the costs of delivery while at the same time improving the quality of the learning though there is little firm evidence to support this (Hofmann, 2008).

In many instances, online learning forms part of the blend and this may cut down the need for time spent on classroom-based learning, but every organisation has to reach its own blend of learning and development ingredients to suit the needs of the organisation and the participants in the learning and development programme. According to Blain (quoted in *Training and Coaching Today*, 2008), 'the effectiveness of any blended mix hinges on agreeing goals and recognizing the outcomes that the company, individual and the trainer is looking for – with senior management sponsors forming another crucial element.' Blain further advocates that a blend does not have to include technology-based methods but could use any mix of the methods including those currently proving to be most effective with CIPD members, which are in-house development programmes and coaching by line managers (CIPD, 2010c). This approach is in line with the view we have advocated throughout this chapter and shows once again that the blend of approaches to learning must be appropriate to the situation.

Mentors

Rather than just leaving learning experiences to chance, many organisations now use mentors to help individuals to learn. Mentors need to be prepared to guide and suggest suitable learning experiences for their protégé. They may encourage reflection on these learning experiences by asking for reports, and may suggest books to read on the subject. They may also sometimes provide opportunities for the individual to demonstrate what they have learnt by, for example, reviewing a presentation before the learner makes it to the target audience. While their main aim is to encourage individuals to learn, mentors are also likely to learn a great deal themselves by their involvement in this learning experience. In effect, mentors will be encouraging the individual to learn in different ways according to their development needs and to practise using different learning styles and different stages of the learning cycle.

Coaching

Coaches help individuals or groups to perform better, rather like a sports coach. They could be external to an organisation or internal although, according to the CIPD's (2010c) survey of learning and talent development, coaching by line managers is currently the second most popular approach to developing talent with 56 per cent of organisations in the survey reporting using this approach.

According to Sol Davidson (2002), there are three types of coaching: traditional, transitional and transformational:

- Traditional coaching is closely related to training and involves a coach who is an expert in a subject helping to improve the skills and knowledge of an individual or group.

- Transitional coaching is useful where large changes are about to be made in an organisation. Here the coach does not necessarily know all the answers, but will help the group to find successful new ways of working.
- Transformational coaching is targeted at senior management but is aimed at helping the whole organisation move to new ways of working. It could be appropriate when an organisation is faced with a great deal of change.

Pause for thought 9.1 Which of these forms of coaching are most likely to be carried out by internal coaches who are not the person's line manager? Which are most likely to be conducted by line managers and which by external coaches?

Learning logs

Another way in which individuals may be encouraged to learn from their experiences is by the use of a learning log. A learning log is a way of keeping track of a person's development, with emphasis on unstructured, informal activities. This is likely to involve individuals in describing events that they feel are important for their own development process. They would then need to comment on what they had learnt from the experience and how, if a similar situation were to arise again, they would handle that situation. The idea is that because individuals have to write up their learning experiences, they will be likely to do things better in the future. Learning also ceases to be a haphazard process, as it becomes conscious and increasingly learner-centred and puts them in charge of developing their own talent and abilities. This means that the individual will have used several of the stages of the learning cycle.

Keeping a learning log should encourage activists to be more reflective and encourage reflectors/theorists to take action and to do things after reflecting on them. This could be undertaken with a mentor or as a totally self-directed method of gaining insights into your own learning processes. This method is very subjective but tends to encourage an analytical approach to problems. It can also be helpful to get a problem sorted out on paper, with clear targets for how you would handle a similar situation in the future.

Nowadays the pace of change is rapid and people who studied 20 years ago, or even a couple of years ago, may find that their skills and knowledge are outdated. In order to update their members, many professional groups have introduced the concept of continuing professional development (CPD) and they often use learning logs as one way of recording the learning that has occurred and for planning for future learning.

Trade union learning representatives

As part of the shift from training to learning, and in order to promote learning at all levels and within all organisations, the Employment Act 2002 established a new group known as learning representatives. These learning representatives are appointed by trade unions and have several statutory rights. These include the right to time off work in certain circumstances in order to:

- analyse learning and training needs
- provide information or advice relating to any learning or training issues

- organise specific learning or training
- consult with the employer about learning and training issues
- participate themselves in training for their role as a learning representative.

The ACAS (2003) *Code of Practice on Time off for Union Duties and Activities* gives further details of these rights. Union members also have the right to time off to discuss issues or attend learning activities organised by trade union-appointed learning representatives, although they do not have to be paid for this.

Pause for thought 9.2 Compare the role of the union learning representative with what you consider to be the role of the learning and talent development specialists within an organisation. To what extent do the roles differ? To what extent do the roles overlap?

Both the L&TD specialists and the trade union learning representatives are concerned to promote learning so to that extent their roles do overlap but their focus will be different. The specialists, according to Harrison (2009), will be concerned that learning and development adds value to the organisation and to make the link between learning and development and the organisation's strategic objectives. They will be concerned to operate at a strategic level and may take on roles such as promoting L&TD, managing knowledge, or generating income from L&TD activities: there will still be many other L&TD specialists involved in running specific learning and talent development activities and in training managers to do this.

Learning representatives will also be concerned to promote learning but they are operating at a different level as they try to encourage more of the workforce to become involved in learning. As they are a part of the workforce their role is to reach and inform workers who might not normally get involved in learning and development activities to do so: to encourage and discuss options with workers who might have been put off by having to discuss their learning needs with management. If life-long learning is to become a reality then their role should help to kick-start some learning and development activities for all workers.

The learning representatives have a role to play in fostering a positive attitude towards learning and development and increasing motivation to learn. It has also been claimed that large numbers of workers lack basic skills in numeracy and literacy but have successfully hidden this from their employers for many years. In many organisations L&D specialists are now working with learning representatives to reach groups of workers who have not traditionally participated in learning and development and who may have poor basic skills which could be holding back their career progression, so the roles of the L&D specialist and the union learning representative are in many ways complementary to each other.

International differences in learning and development

Cross-cultural issues will be of importance to many HRM or LTD practitioners, particularly if they work in multinational organisations or come to study HRM away from their home country. Therefore, it is important to consider to what extent there is a cultural dimension to learning. Hofstede's (2006) work does enable us to gain some insights into cultural effects on learning and these cultural differences do need to be taken into account when learning or designing learning materials for others.

Did you know?

A question of how you concentrate and eating while learning divides Europe.

In a survey conducted across Europe less than 20% of respondents in Spain, Italy and France think that eating snacks helps them to concentrate while learning, whereas in Holland that figure rises to 58% while 33% of Germans and British feel a snack and drink aids concentration.

(Source: Skillssoft, 2010)

What do you think about this?

Do you think there are differences between countries in the way people try to concentrate while learning?

Do you snack while learning?

These cultural differences may influence individual learning styles since in countries where it is normal for the learning to be very tutor/trainer-centred and for the learner just to absorb knowledge without questioning, individual learners are less likely to have opportunities to develop an activist or pragmatist approach to their learning. It is likely that trainers will have to adjust their approach for learners who are used to being less participative and hold more formal training sessions than would be necessary in countries and cultures that have moved to being more learner-centred.

E-learning is a popular approach when learning needs to be provided for a multi-national organisation across several countries but once again the appropriateness of this needs to be assessed. Weekes (2009) points out that although in many ways the Internet has helped to shrink the world, one

issue that still remains in any learning and talent development provision is to adapt this to local situations and that thinking globally and acting locally is still important in international learning and talent development.

The roles of learning and talent development specialists in international organisations

However, while there may be differences in styles of learning, according to Sloman (2007), 'It seems that the issues faced by learning, training and talent development professionals are pretty much universal – whether they are in Britain, Bulgaria or further afield.' The CIPD carried out a survey of the changing role of the trainer involving 300 trainers and assembling '50 case studies from 19 different countries, and investigated how trainers in the United States, "old Europe", new emerging Europe, China, India and South Africa saw their roles'. They concluded that 'overall we found more similarities across the world than we thought we would.' There was no single approach that illustrated best practice but lots of approaches were found that showed good practice. Trainers and learning and talent development practitioners were proving that thinking globally and acting locally was effective and were adapting learning approaches to the context of the country they were working in and to the learning styles of the learners in that country. The approaches identified in the CIPD (2007) survey as good practice were:

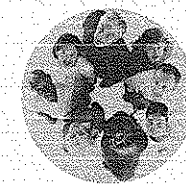
- showing a clear understanding of the business drivers in their organisation;
- helping their organisation add value and move up the value chain;
- establishing a clear vision and strategy for people development;
- involving others and engaging shareholders in a transparent and open way;
- having both a good overview of what is needed to advance in the long term and also of the short-term priorities;
- using processes and techniques appropriately – without being overcommitted to any one method of delivery;
- applying metrics to demonstrate value; and above all
- understanding the legacy that learners bring with them and adjusting their interventions accordingly.

The factors identified here in an international context by the CIPD survey fit well with our model of the learning and talent development cycle described earlier in this chapter with the emphasis on adding value and contributing to the strategic objectives. It also clearly emphasises the importance of adapting techniques to the learning styles and culture of the people being trained as we discussed earlier.

In the CIPD's 2010 survey the most popular methods for promoting learning and talent development in international organisations are coaching and mentoring with 83 per cent of international organisations mentioning this, followed by on the job training which is used by 74 per cent of the international organisations. This is very similar to the approaches identified in the same survey in non-international organisations where the most effective learning and talent development strategies were first the use of in-house development programmes, used by 56 per cent of the organisations, and secondly the use of coaching by line managers, used in 51 per cent of organisations (CIPD, 2010c). Specific talent management programmes for those identified as having high potential tended to be used by larger organisations and are used across all countries in which they operate.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have provided an introduction to learning and talent development and have emphasised the need for a systematic approach which helps the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives. We have also shown that people learn in a variety of ways and that specialist L&TD managers and line managers will need to adapt the learning experiences they provide to suit individuals and groups. However, while individuals often use only one or two preferred learning styles these are not fixed but will vary over time and will be affected by the culture within an organisation or indeed a country. While the concept of the learning organisation may still be aspirational, organisations wishing to improve learning and develop and retain talent do adopt a wide range of approaches including formal and informal methods. There is an emphasis throughout such organisations on all aspects of learning and talent development and of identifying and agreeing the learning needs with the people concerned. All programmes also emphasise the difference that learning and talent development can make to an organisation by adding value to that organisation and as a powerful means of attracting and retaining talent.

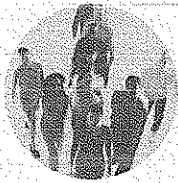


REVIEW QUESTIONS

You will find brief answers to these review questions on page 494.

- 1 Use the Internet or Government publications to find out more about one of the following topics: Investors in People, apprenticeships, New Deal or flexible New Deal. Using this information, describe how you would persuade a sceptical line manager of the benefits to be gained from introducing the chosen initiative into an organisation of your choice.
- 2 Interview a manager about their organisation's strategic plans and objectives and try to assess the extent to which learning and talent development in that organisation contributes to the achievement of those strategic plans.

- 3 Many organisations do not provide an adequate induction programme for new employees. Comment critically on the benefits to be gained from implementing a good induction programme, and outline what should be contained in that programme.
- 4 Evaluate the relative effectiveness of on-the-job training and off-the-job training.

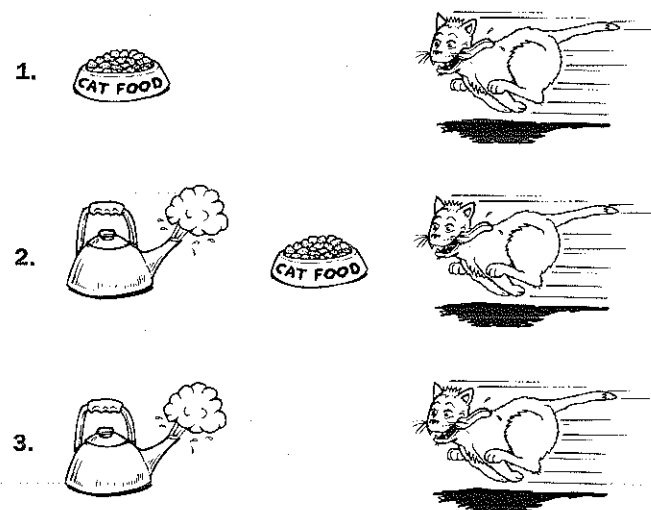


SELF-CHECK QUESTIONS

Answer the following multiple-choice questions. The correct responses are given on page 494 for you to check your understanding of this chapter.

- 1 Which of the following is true?
 - (a) Once individuals have been employed for at least 26 weeks in an organisation they have a legal right to request time off for training.
 - (b) Individuals who have been employed for at least 26 weeks in an organisation must be granted paid time off for training.
 - (c) Once individuals have been employed for at least 52 weeks in an organisation they have a legal right to request time off for training.
 - (d) There is no right of appeal against an employer who does not grant an employee's legal request for training.
- 2 The illustration in Figure 9.6 shows what happens when Caroline makes a cup of tea. She often chooses to feed the cats at the same time as putting the kettle on. Thus the kettle and the tin of cat food being opened are linked in the cats' minds.

Figure 9.6 Caroline's cats



© Minky 2001

Sometimes she puts the kettle on but she doesn't open a tin of cat food. However, the cats now appear when they hear the sound of the kettle.

- (a) What is this effect known as?
 - (b) According to Pavlov, how should we label the cat food at point 1 in Figure 9.6?
 - (c) According to Pavlov, what is the link between the kettle and the cat food known as? Label point 2 in Figure 9.6.
 - (d) According to Pavlov, what should the kettle be labelled as at point 3 in Figure 9.6?
- 3 When there are very few new recruits to an organisation, should induction be left for several months until there are sufficient to form a group? YES or NO
 - 4 Which of the following is not a coaching technique advocated by Sol Davidson (2002)?
 - (a) traditional coaching
 - (b) disciplinary coaching
 - (c) transitional coaching
 - (d) transformational coaching
 - 5 Are mentors always training managers? YES or NO
 - 6 Which of the following is true, according to Honey and Mumford?
 - (a) Learning has occurred when knowledge has been acquired by study.
 - (b) Learning has occurred when a person knows something that they did not know earlier and can show it, or is able to do something that they were not able to do before.
 - (c) Learning has occurred when a person knows something that they did not know earlier but can't show it, or is able to do something that they were not able to do before.
 - (d) Learning is shown by a change in behaviour that occurs just as a result of experience.
 - 7 According to Honey and Mumford, a pragmatist is someone who:
 - (a) seeks out new experiences and is open-minded, not sceptical, and who is enthusiastic about anything new
 - (b) integrates and adapts observations into logically sound theories
 - (c) is keen to try new ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice
 - (d) collects data in a very thorough way and then analyses it.
 - 8 Which of the following is not one of the stages in the systematic training cycle?
 - (a) assessing learning and development needs
 - (b) having an experience
 - (c) planning the learning and development activities
 - (d) evaluating the learning and development.
 - 9 Does CPD stand for continuing professional development? YES or NO
 - 10 Which of the following learning and talent development methods, according to the CIPD (2010c), was found to be the most popular in international organisations?
 - (a) sitting by Nellie
 - (b) e-learning
 - (c) traditional off-the-job training
 - (d) coaching and mentoring.

HR IN THE NEWS



FT Report – Managing employees through the recovery: Eye on the future

By Ian Wylie

Porters, housekeepers and reception staff at the Malmaison hotel chain are used to keeping up with fast-living guests, from pop star Lady Gaga to John Terry and his Chelsea Football Club teammates. But they are not as familiar with the slower pace of 'consolidation' that parent group MWB, which has earned a reputation for rapid growth, has instituted as it put expansion plans on ice for a second year.

Between 2006 and 2009, MWB, which also owns the Hotel du Vin brand, opened 16 hotels across the UK, offering staff a fast-paced working environment with plentiful opportunities to move into new roles or fresh locations. In boom times, staff motivation, development and engagement can almost take care of themselves.

It is a different story since the recession. 'There hasn't been the same breadth of new development opportunities for staff,' admits Sean Wheeler, group director of people at Malmaison. 'It's more of a challenge to maintain motivation and retain the best staff in our business. One year can feel like a long time in the hospitality industry, and we knew that to do nothing could make our top talent feel like their careers were stagnating. We had to ensure they felt like they were continuing to develop their careers.'

In previous downturns, staff training and development budgets were an early target of corporate cutbacks. In this recession, however, the Confederation of British Industry, the employers' body, found evidence that many companies were trying to protect training and staff development budgets, despite cost pressures.

Malmaison, for example, ensured that all staff had an online appraisal to create a personal development and training plan. It set up a wine academy for managers and supervisors, as well as a training programme for kitchen staff.

According to research by Kingston Business School for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), a third of employees say their manager never discusses their training or development needs. Yet employee satisfaction surveys suggest the desire for more skills is an important influence on retention and engagement. Most workers recognise that job security now depends on what they bring to the workplace, not their seniority or tenure. They seek learning opportunities and ways to acquire new skills.

'Forward-looking employers have continued to invest for the future in training,' explains Richard Phelps, human resource management leader at PwC, the consultancy. 'The common theme has been a review of which programmes are critical for developing staff, with a focus on improving their content and results, while less essential programmes have been dropped. Organisations have also focused on getting better value from training suppliers by negotiating discounts or deals, while interest in less costly ways of training – e-learning, for example – has grown. There is also an expectation that staff will study for some of their development outside normal work hours.'

Mr Phelps says employers that depend more heavily on the capabilities of their people, such as professional services firms and R&D companies, have shown greater commitment to engaging staff through training. 'Some UK supermarkets are great examples of where brave people-management decisions have paid off to help them secure and develop the next generation of leadership cadre and pick up top performers at all levels from different industries,' he says.

Other examples include DHL Exel Supply Chain, the transport and logistics group, which has continued to deliver its 'Active Leadership' skills development programme for managers. Hewlett-Packard UK, the computer group, runs road shows for staff presented by its managing director in tandem with a leadership training programme.

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But while engagement experts accept that training and development encourage greater employee engagement (and vice versa), there is debate over how that link works. 'I subscribe to the view that it is employees' perception of organisational efforts to provide them with training, rather than their actual training experiences, that drives employee commitment,' says Mike Emmott, employee relations adviser at the CIPD. 'In other words, what matters is evidence of the employer caring for the employees and helping them forward their career.'

Training and development provider Maynard Leigh agrees. 'Most employee engagement is based on feelings,' says Stuart Mackenzie, managing director. 'Employees "feel" engaged, and that relies to a large extent on the trust they have in the management's promises. Because the downturn made a lot of promises impossible to deliver, trust has been affected. We have not just been through a financial recession, but through a trust recession as well – and the latter will take longer to fix.'

Training tips in a downturn

'There needs to be a discussion so that training and development reflect the needs of staff as well as the business,' says Sean Wheeler, group director of people at Malmaison hotels.

- Make training employee-led

'There needs to be a discussion so that training and development reflect the needs of staff as well as the business,' says Sean Wheeler, group director of people at Malmaison hotels.

- Tailor training to individuals' needs

'In addition to training from vendors on product launches and initiatives, we also offer in-house training covering everything from time management to negotiation skills as well as desk-side coaching to help with specific needs,' explains Anushka Davies, training and development manager at Softcat, a software company.

- Create a central system for capturing training costs and business impact

'Annual reviews of the purpose of each programme and how the behaviours or skills of staff who have been through the programme positively affect the business are essential,' says Richard Phelps, human resource management leader at PwC, the consultancy.

- Do not assume learning or development has to be long, formal or expensive

'All our staff appreciate our 10-minutes-a-day approach,' says Mr Wheeler. 'We encourage them to take just 10 minutes out of their working day to learn something new – it could be anything from the history of the hotel brand to how we source our coffee or choose our wines.'

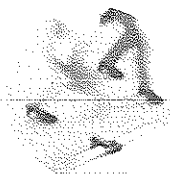
- Deliver what you have promised

'It is hugely demotivating to promise employees career development and then not deliver,' says Mr Wheeler.

(Financial Times, 22 March 2010, Ian Wylie. Reproduced with permission.)

Questions

- 1 Why is training so popular in the organisations referred to in this article?
- 2 What approaches to learning and development did Malmaison use to try to ensure the continued motivation of its staff?
- 3 What are the advantages and disadvantages of these methods?
- 4 How did the training methods discussed here contribute to retention and talent management?



WHAT NEXT?

- 1 ACAS provides some excellent opportunities for you to experience e-learning on its website at www.acas.org.uk (accessed 6.8.2010). It has developed a range of free e-learning resources and you can undertake short e-learning courses and test your understanding of several topics covered in this book, such as discipline and grievance, informing and consulting, and absence management and redundancy.
- 2 Listen to the following podcasts from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development to examine some of the current issues in learning and development at www.cipd.co.uk/podcasts (accessed 6.8.2010):

The value of learning – episode 11. This examines the contribution that learning and development makes to an organisation and links with a key theme of this chapter.

Pushing the boundaries of learning and development – episode 42. This discusses the findings of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's 2010 survey of learning and development issues.

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Books

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (2006) *Recruitment and Induction*, ACAS.

A very useful guide to this subject.

Harrison, R. (2009) *Learning and Development*, 5th edition, CIPD.

An excellent textbook for those who wish to study the subject of learning and development in more depth.

Reid, M., H. Barrington and M. Brown (2004) *Human Resource Development*, 7th edition, CIPD.

Another excellent textbook that covers various aspects of learning and development.

Stewart, J. and C. Rigg (2011) *Learning and Talent Development*, CIPD.

This textbook aims to provide a thorough guide to the whole subject of learning and talent development.

Articles

There are many specialist journals covering the subject of learning and development including the following:

- Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*
- Development and Learning in Organizations*
- Human Resource Development International*
- Human Resource Development Quarterly*
- Training and Coaching Today*

Internet

Apprenticeships (England and Wales)	www.realworkrealpay.info
Apprenticeships (Scotland)	www.scottish-enterprise.com/modernapprenticeships
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	www.cipd.co.uk
Department for Children, Schools and Families (formerly the Department for Education and Skills)	www.dfes.gov.uk
The Information Network on Education in Europe	www.eurydice.org
Investors in People UK	www.iipuk.co.uk
Learn Direct	www.learnirect.co.uk
Learn Direct Scotland	www.learnirectscotland.com
The National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the UK	www.naric.org.uk
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	www.qca.org.uk



CHAPTER 10

Pay and reward systems

Objectives

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

- explain the main factors that influence the choice of a particular pay and reward system and the advantages and disadvantages of different types of systems
- explain the importance of developing a pay and reward strategy for an organisation
- explain the process of job evaluation and how to use particular job evaluation systems
- identify current issues relating to equal pay in organisations
- identify issues relating to pay and reward systems in international organisations
- identify potential ethical and environmental issues about pay and reward.

We have indicated in previous chapters that human resource management is concerned that people should work as effectively as possible for the organisation, and that one of the ways in which the organisation attempts to achieve this is by using an appropriate system of pay and reward. The system that is adopted must, as stated in Chapter 2, be in line with and support the key elements of the strategic plan and organisations should develop a pay and reward strategy that suits their particular organisation and the mix of generations of staff within it.

Pay and reward is a key element in performance management and is a vital part of an organisation's HR strategies for the attraction and retention of staff. As we have already discussed in earlier chapters the economic situation and social and demographic changes mean that organisations have to be flexible to respond both to changes in the financial environment and to the expectations of different generations of workers, so the pay and reward system should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to achieve its aims. In the past this has sometimes been an area of HR that was neglected, with some organisations not thinking about the strategic impact of their pay and reward systems or the message they give to employees. The economic situation and scandals over excessive bonuses has helped to focus attention on this area so more HR departments