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Tuija Hytönen

Exploring the Practice of
Human Resource Development
as a Field of Professional Expertise



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2002

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To my grandparents

ABSTRACT

Hytönen, Tuija

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Finnish summary

Diss.

The study examined the practice of human resource development (HRD) as a field of professional expertise in Finland from the point of view of a group of practising HR developers. The report is based on six articles published in 1997-2002. The point of departure in this study was that, despite the increase in the employer-sponsored forms of learning in the workplace, HRD, the activity which would take responsibility for such learning has remained ill-defined. The study addressed three main questions: 1) What is the nature and content of the practice of HRD? 2) What is the nature and content of the professional expertise deployed in the practice of HRD? and 3) How is professional expertise in the practice of HRD developed and constructed?

The view of professional expertise as experienced performance and as an experiential relationship between the practitioner and the job that he or she is doing generated the constituents through which professional expertise in HRD was explored. The study tested one established model, *Models for HRD Practice*, for the description of HRD work in the Finnish context as a part of a European comparative survey (n=164). Secondly, the study explored the experiences of twenty HRD practitioners through a semi-structured interview. The analysis of the survey data was descriptive and statistical while a narrative approach was adopted in the analysis of the interviews.

The main findings suggested that despite the diversity found in its practice, the role of agent of organisational change was the most widely reported characteristic of HRD. In terms of knowledge and skills HRD was perceived as centred on people and the processing of knowledge. In sum, practical knowledge played an important role. The processes of constructing professional expertise focussed on employing participatory practices, gaining an understanding of the process of change and adopting an active approach to continuous development. To become a HR developer does not mean travelling along a single continuum; several routes of HRD career centred on people or on the organisation, centred on personal career or holistic in approach are possible. The study concludes with four suggestions for further research, development and debate: 1) HRD is open and flexible in nature; 2) HRD is characterized by inclusiveness, practicality and common sense; 3) understanding the processes of change and learning are at the heart of HRD; and 4) social interaction is central to HRD.

Keywords: human resource development, professional expertise, HRD practitioner, HR developer, learning at work

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PREFACE

“A person who is looking for something does not travel very fast”. John Irving’s latest book, *The Fourth Hand*, begins with this quotation from a children’s book by E. B. White. I read this book after I had submitted the manuscript of this thesis to the Faculty of Education in March 2002. This has helped me to understand and accept the seven years that it took from the start of my PhD studies in 1995 until where I am standing at this moment in June 2002. It also corresponds with the development of my understanding of the nature of professional expertise and the practice of HRD as long term processes based on experience and on how it is interpreted. Both are about looking for something: new challenges, greater heights to climb and innovative ways of thinking and doing things. Certainly the same goes for the building of academic expertise through doctoral research. Nevertheless, the old American Indian saying, later also adopted in all HRD-related debate, that it is the process that counts, not the end result, is also true in my case. However, there is also a time for stopping and reflecting on the journey made so far and thinking about future directions. Above all, there is a time for thanking one’s fellow travellers. This is now that moment for me.

First, I want to thank Professor Tapio Vaherva for introducing me to the world of HRD already during my Master’s studies in the late 1980s in the Department of Education. Several years later, after I had been working as a teacher in the Open University of Jyväskylä, he encouraged me to take up doctoral research. Professor Vaherva is a supervisor who expects and counts on independence in a PhD student. Despite being a sought-after expert in the field of adult education in working life, his door is always open to the novice researcher in quest of advice and reassurance.

Secondly, I want to thank Professors Juhani Kirjonen and Anneli Eteläpelto who introduced me to the collaborative project with the University of Twente and invited me to join the research group on Learning and the Acquisition of Professional Expertise in the Institute for Educational Research. Without their interest and trust in my work it would had been difficult to continue after the first year. Professor Kirjonen, the director of the research group, and Professor Eteläpelto have both supported and supervised me along the way with discerning comments on my research papers.

Thirdly, I want to thank Professor Wim Nijhof for the opportunity to collaborate in such an interesting research project in the University of Twente. My thanks go especially to Linda Odenthal and Kemp van Ginkel for making the experience of international co-operation and research work so agreeable. In this connection my thanks also go to Dr. Rob Poell of the University of Nijmegen and Professor Geoff Chivers of the University of Loughborough.

As regards the final period of writing the summarising report I want to express my gratitude to Professor Päivi Tynjälä for her thoughtful comments which helped in getting this work done. The review reports by Professor Michael Eraut and Professor Juha Varila were encouraging and yet critical, showing me points which could be further developed in this report as well as in future research. In addition I want to thank the director of the Department of Education,

Professor Sirkka Hirsjärvi for providing the conditions which were needed for this process to be finalized in 2001-2002.

An individual can not have professional expertise in all fields – and certainly not in all the fields needed during doctoral research. One needs also the knowledge of colleagues. Here, the research group on Learning and the Acquisition of Professional Expertise has played an important role. I wish to thank the whole research group as well as the Institute for Educational Research for co-operation. My special thanks in the research group go to Tarja Hämäläinen and Raili Puranen for their practical help in data gathering and in transcribing the interviews. In addition, I owe a big vote of thanks to Pekka Penttinen, at the Department of Education for his knowledgeable and patient guidance which helped me to make the decisions needed in statistical analyses. Above all, I am grateful to Michael Freeman, at the Department of English, for taking the major role in correcting and polishing my English. His work made my texts accessible to readers, and most of all, helped me to improve my scientific English.

I also want to thank the directorates of the Henry and Julkishallinnon kouluttajat associations for their co-operation in this research as well as the individual members of both associations for their participation in the survey and interviews.

For financial support I wish to thank the University of Jyväskylä, the Faculty of Education of the University of Jyväskylä, the Academy of Finland, the Finnish Work Environment Fund, the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Ellen and Artturi Nyyssönen Foundation.

Even though the work of a researcher tends to be centred around individual, it is nonetheless done in the academic community. In many cases colleagues are among the first to share one's moments of joy and disappointment. The Department of Education has provided me with this kind of community. My sincere thanks for such cheerful and educative moments go to all present and to all my ex-fellow workers. Special thanks for their friendship, support and practical help at and outside work go to Susanna Paloniemi, Tuija-Leena Saikkonen, Jani Ursin and Sari Virtanen. I also wish to thank Dr. Tarja Tikkanen of the Norwegian Institute of Adult Education and Dr. Matti Meriläinen of the University of Joensuu.

As researchers and doctoral students we are, I believe, private persons first and only secondly professional workers. Therefore, the support which I have received from my family and friends has been invaluable. For their unique friendship, including efforts at keeping my feet on the ground, I want to thank Kaija Collin and Sari Salojärvi, my irreplaceable "sister-witches". During the past seven years Tuula Hauta-aho has always been there for me. From time to time we have kept each other away from our professional and domestic responsibilities. For me it has been a life-line without which I would not had survived this far. Sincere thanks go to Martti Valkeavaara, who, most of all people, has backed me up in the highs and, especially, the lows of this research process, even during the most challenging phases we have gone through in our lives. Finally I am deeply grateful to my parents Hertta and Eero Hytönen. The interest and respect they have shown in and towards the progress of my research and the care they have taken over their daughter's well-being have sustained me throughout this project.

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents. They are not here to share this moment with me but they surely believed that I would get there some day.

Jyväskylä, June 2002

Tuija Hytönen

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

The thesis is based on the following articles, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I Valkeavaara, T. 1997. HRD practitioners analysing their work: what does it tell about their present role in working life? In P. Remes, S. Tøsse, P. Falkenkronne & B. Bergstedt (Eds.) *Social Change and Adult Education Research. Adult Education research in Nordic Countries 1996*. Jyväskylä: Institute for Educational Research, 14-40.
- II Valkeavaara, T. 1998. Human resource development roles and competencies in five European countries. *International Journal of Training and Development* 2 (3), 171-189.
- III Valkeavaara, T. 1998. Exploring the nature of human resource developers' expertise. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 7 (4), 533-547.
- IV Valkeavaara, T. 1999. "Sailing in calm waters doesn't teach": constructing expertise through problems in work - the case of Finnish human resource developers. *Studies in Continuing Education* 21 (2), 177-196.
- V Hytönen, T. (forthcoming) The career stories of human resource developers. To be published in J. N. Streumer (Ed.) *Work related learning*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002.
- VI Hytönen, T., Poell, R. & Chivers, G. (forthcoming) HRD as a professional career? Perspectives from Finland, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. To be published in W. Nijhof, A. Heikkinen & L. Nieuwenhuis (Eds.) *Shaping flexibility in vocational education and training: insitutional, curricular and professional conditions*. Dordrecht/Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.

Copies of the articles are appended to the report.

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The recent research interest shown in HRD as a field of professional expertise derives from the need to increase our understanding of the ways in which human learning in the workplace can be recognized and promoted and, specifically, of the skills and knowledge which are needed to do that job. In the workplace the challenge to develop this knowledge has been encountered most directly by management. Furthermore, especially in the larger enterprises and public sector organisations, the challenge has been delegated on the one hand to the desks of line managers and team leaders and on the other to practitioners who specialise in taking care of the management of human resources, and human resource development (HRD) in particular¹.

At the core of this research process, which began in 1995 was the conflict between rhetoric and practice. At the same time as the promotion of various employer-sponsored forms of learning in the workplace context were being increasingly called for and given a central role in management rhetoric, HRD, the activity which would take responsibility for the learning endeavour in the workplace, was and has remained an undefined and vague field of organisational activity as well as of professional practice. The characterizations of HRD that emerged have implied that its role is not so central after all, but it belongs to the margins of organisational management and is best treated as merely a subset of human resource management activities (Filander 1996; Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle 1999; Walton 1999, 141-143).

A second motivation for undertaking this research process is that in the second half of the 1990s there was an increasing call in the educational literature for specialised knowledge in HRD to support the learning endeavour in the workplace (e.g. Longworth & Davies 1996; Nijhof 1996). Moreover, the increased importance and change in the role of HRD within the practice of adult education

¹ Throughout this report the use of the terms *HRD practitioner* and *HR developer* meaning *henkilöstön kehittäjä* in Finnish refer to the same thing, i.e. to practitioners who are responsible for the practice of HRD in organisations.

was brought up (Hämäläinen 1997) both in the European and Finnish contexts, while knowledge and understanding of the nature of HRD work remained vague. Even now, HRD as a recognised field of professional expertise within organisations or within the professional education system has still not received very much acclaim. In Finland, HRD as a basic field of professional education has lacked unified curricular thinking and training schemes. Nonetheless, a rich variety of further professional development courses and programmes centred on managing human resources, developing human resources, organisational development or on trainer training can be found.

Since the beginning of this research process in Finland in the second half of the nineties, its economical and political context has been affected by the recovery from the severe recession earlier in the decade, by the calls for the development of a learning society in the European Union, and by the rise of the discourse on learning in the workplace and learning organisations as well as the ever-increasing volume of employer-sponsored training and other developmental interventions in the workplace. Accordingly, during the same time period attention was also directed at those practitioners who had been hired explicitly to deal with HRD issues. The emergence and wide application of learning-initiated concepts in the workplace clearly justifies the closer investigation into whether the practitioners applying those concepts in fact have professional expertise in the field of learning and development or whether their expertise is to be understood from some other point of view. The vagueness of the field challenges also contemporary HRD practitioners themselves to critical self-evaluation of the nature, contents and boundaries of their professional expertise. Given that HRD, as the term used to refer to a certain set of practices and body of knowledge, originates from the USA, the problematic of HRD work as a professional field in its own right has already been extensively addressed in the USA (e.g. Rowden 1996). A similar interest has emerged strongly in the European context during recent years, and has been actualised in the increasing number of studies and discussion which has attended to the issue of HRD as a field of professional work and expertise.

This is a report on a research process which aimed at exploring HRD as a field of professional expertise in Finland from the point of view of a group of HRD practitioners themselves. The purpose of the research was to describe and understand what professional expertise in this specified, but ill-defined field of professional practice entails and how it might be developed. Here by the practice of HRD was meant a collection of activities which takes place in a certain organisational context in order to achieve certain aims and which is performed by certain practitioners who are equipped with certain kinds of knowledge, tools and techniques and which entails various ways of working, routines and challenges, including opportunities for learning. (Ericson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer 1993; Schön 1987, 32-36.) The general understanding is that HRD is a field of activity aimed at maintaining and developing knowledge and skills in the workplace. Thus the central activities in HRD are related to training and development and to the management of an organisation, with increased emphasis nowadays being put on various forms of on-the-job learning and supporting management strategies (Walton 1999, 52-61). Nevertheless, the point of departure in this study was the

uncertainty and vagueness surrounding the various definitions of HRD as a field of professional practice and expertise encountered in the current debate and the question as to whether HRD is in fact to be regarded as a defined field with a legitimate place in organisations. Hence the research interest was in exploring what kinds of knowledge and experiences HRD practitioners have. Furthermore, if HRD as a field of professional education is to be further developed, it can be asked what curricular objects would be accentuated in such an effort.

Given the view of professional expertise adopted in this study, comprising both experienced performance and an experiential relationship between practitioners and their jobs, it was not automatically assumed that HRD practitioners in general, or those who were studied here, would be professional experts in the traditional meaning of the concept, that is, excellent top-rank performers. This was also due to the fact that no unanimous criteria exist for what constitutes excellence in the performance of HRD activities. Rather the view of expertise as experienced performance was the starting-point for conducting this exploration of the experiences of HRD practitioners. The view also provided the constituents through which professional expertise in HRD could be explored, that is, practitioners' self-evaluations and descriptions of their performance in the job, knowledge and skills needed, and the learning challenges encountered in everyday work and through the career.

Consequently, the study tested one established model, *Models for HRD Practice* (McLagan 1989a; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989), for the description of HRD work in the Finnish context as a part of a European comparative research project. In addition, the study adopted a more interpretative approach to the exploration of the experiences of the HRD practitioners. The research aimed at describing the practice of HRD as seen through the eyes of HRD practitioners as well as producing suggestions for understanding the nature and contents of HRD as a field of professional expertise. The results need to be tested in further research, in professional education in this field, and in the evaluation of their HRD practice by the HRD practitioners themselves as well as by other interest groups.

This research has been reported in separate articles between 1997–2002. This summarising report is based on six articles which are appended to it. The articles are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals, I–VI. This report was written during 2001–2002 and it summarises and reflects on the theoretical underpinnings, accomplishment and conclusions of the research. Since the summarising report is written towards the end of the research process, it has also been possible to reflect on the process in the light of the debate which has been carried on during the research.

The headlining of this summarising report and the research process itself as an exploration is based on the idea put forward by Kvale (1996, 3-7), who has compared the (interview) research process to a journey and the researcher to a traveller. In this metaphor the researcher wanders through the landscape and explores it either as a completely unknown territory or with the help of a tentative map based on the interest aroused and assumptions as to what might be found. There are always reasons for why some landscapes and the subjects acting in it arouse the traveller's interest and curiosity to take on the exploration. The

landscape exists whether or not it will be visited by the researcher, but through the journey and the contacts and conversations with the subjects encountered on the way, the exploration can be reported on during the traveller's return. Thus, the traveller's account implies a potential for development since it may produce new knowledge and understanding as well as have practical implications for many audiences: for the traveller and her or his community, the people who were deliberately sought out and the wider community of the people who were encountered en route. Accordingly, the research process can be understood also as a developmental process which can touch all these audiences (Reason & Marshall 1987).

As a researcher I have experienced the present research process as a planned and intentional exploration which was based on my interest in the complexity of HRD as seen from the point of view of adult education. This interest was aroused during my university studies in education, and later as an adult educator and university teacher as well as a member of my own working community, and thus as a target of HRD activities. Being given the opportunity to participate in the European research project on HRD opened the door to the world of HRD practitioners in terms of the questions currently being debated on HRD and adult education in the European context. Participation in the research programme on Learning and the Acquisition of Professional Expertise provided a perspective on the existing research on professional expertise. Accordingly, I use the traveller metaphor primarily as a way of describing my experience of the nature of the research process and the character of this report. The report brings out and suggests features by which HRD can be understood as a field of professional expertise but at the same time seeks to leave room for the continuous development of experiential understanding that may be stimulated as a result of reading this report.

In chapter 2 the background to the present research is discussed in the light of the international and Finnish debate on defining HRD, HRD practitioners and current changes and developments in working life. This chapter also discusses the view of professional expertise adopted in this study. Furthermore, some quantitative descriptors of Finnish working life and participation in staff training are presented in order to characterize the context of HRD work as well as of this research. Thus, the aim is briefly to describe the characteristics of the landscape in which research was carried out, and to reflect on the theorizing which guided it. The rest is left to the HRD practitioners themselves as they present their self-evaluations and describe their experiences. In addition, each of the published articles provides a more detailed presentation of the various steps taken in the research process. Chapter 3 introduces the map used in conducting this exploration, i.e. it describes the purpose of the research and details the research tasks. It also includes a description of the study design and of the articles included in the report. A researcher also always has a plan of inquiry, incorporating certain methods, which will be used during the exploration. The making and actualization of that plan can be characterized as a process of making choices and finding a balance between the numerous possibilities for the production of knowledge and understanding. In chapter 4 these methodological choices, accompanied by their theoretical underpinnings, are presented. This

chapter includes also the description of the *Models for HRD Practice* which was used for self-evaluation in the study. Chapter 5 summarises and reflects on the main findings from the different phases of the research process in a way that goes also beyond the presentation in the articles. The results can also be found in more detail in the appended articles I–VI. The role of chapter 6 is to draw together and critically reflect on the exploratory work done along this journey. Thus, it presents suggestions and working hypotheses for describing and understanding the nature, contents and development of HRD as a field of professional expertise.

2 STARTING POINTS OF THE EXPLORATION – MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE FOR THE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1 The contemporary workplace as the context for the practice of HRD

During the last decade, numerous articles and speeches in the field of education and social sciences have started by referring to the world-wide changes in technology, economy, politics and demographics which have reshaped the ways in which working life is being led. In this discussion the concepts of the learning society and lifelong learning have become central means of responding to these changes. In practice, individuals in the workplace have experienced new management ideologies and practices such as the learning organisation, lean production or team work, as well as new demands on the development of their skills and knowledge. It was during the second half of the 1990s, along with the rise of the learning society and lifelong learning, that employer-sponsored training and other developmental interventions began to occupy a central position in the running of the everyday working life (Nijhof 1996). At the same time, the traditional understanding of training and development activities as nothing more than formal training courses was gradually extended by the new ways of thinking, even to the support other ways of embedding learning opportunities present in doing one's job. These new trends highlighted activities which were seen to contribute to the transformation of the workplace into a learning place. Such trends included the connection of HRD activities to business strategies, learner-centred and self-directed approaches, team learning, internal consultancy, knowledge management and the learning organisation (Walton 1999, 67-73). As the scope of developmental activities broadened, this activity taking place in organisations was more and more often described as human resource development (HRD) or staff development rather than staff training, and training efforts were increasingly seen as one opportunity among many of

conducting developmental work in order to promote human competence in the field of work.

Nevertheless, even though continuous, universal change seems to be the zeitgeist in the world of work, empirical evidence on the experiences of people shows the reverse. The impact of changes in the workplace is not necessarily evenly experienced, but varies according to occupational group, organisational status, firm, sector or country (Warhurst & Thompson 1998). Furthermore, beside the self-evident fact of change, the contestability of change is a word much more rarely heard in the debate. However, as far as embedding learning in the change process is concerned, it is necessary not only to adapt to change but to have the capability to learn in order to contest and shape change (Edwards 1997, 25). This gives us a reason to be critical when talking about change programmes and implementing new learning-initiated HRD activities as all-around solutions in the workplace.

Warhurst and Thompson (1998), however, believe that the experience of work and workplace will maintain its centrality in most people's lives. When this argument is complemented by the debate in the field of education which foregrounds the workplace as one of the primary sources of learning in people's lives (Gerber & Lankshear 2000; Dirks 1996; Longworth & Davies 1996), we are also at the heart of this study. For instance, according to a survey conducted among the Finnish workforce at the beginning of this research process in 1995, approximately 50% of those questioned said that they had many or rather many opportunities to learn in their present jobs. However, such opportunities were unevenly experienced, since well over half of the white-collar workers said they had many or rather many learning opportunities, while for blue-collar workers the corresponding figure was less than half of the respondents. Furthermore, the same survey showed that there was confidence that experience gained at work would lead to the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed in the job. More than 90% of all the respondents valued the impact of work experience positively, while the impact of basic education was positive for approximately 40% of the sample (Statistics Finland 1997).

Recent studies of the nature and quality of people's experiences of their learning at work across several fields of professional activity have unanimously shown that learning opportunities are to be found even more in the everyday occurrence of problematic situations or mistakes, special challenges and tasks, social interaction between colleagues and customers, special projects or events than in formal training situations (Cheetham & Chivers 2001; Eraut et al. 1998; Gerber et al. 1995). Furthermore, an interesting comparison can be made between the actual HRD activities and the ways in which individuals reported learning while working. A list of potential HRD activities would include training, seminars, team work, internal consultancy, mentoring, coaching, job rotation, special projects, special assignments and excursions (e.g. Hätönen 1998, 58). Eraut et al. (1998) showed that the same activities as those on this list are mentioned when individuals describe how they learn at work. Even though much of the recent debate based on researching learning in the workplace suggests that the nature of learning in the workplace is being informal, social, continuous, flexible, bound to managerial and organisational contexts and experience-based (Garrick

2000; Marsick 2001; Tynjälä & Collin 2000), implying that learning at work is not a very organized form of activity, it seems clear that HRD as a field of organisational activity is an important contributor in producing the opportunities for such learning experiences.

However, despite the fact that scholars and practitioners in both the educational and management fields unanimously regard learning in the workplace as an important resource making for well-being and encouraging development among the workers and organisations alike, so far the debate has been conducted in a conditional tone. For instance, Billet (1999) believes that workplaces are only on their way towards being environments which offer opportunities for extending one's expertise, provided that the right supportive actions are taken. This implies that transforming the workplace into a site of learning does not happen by itself, but requires thinking and actions which take people's learning into account in a new or otherwise different way. The core questions are how and by whom such an informal and many-sided phenomenon as learning at work can be recognized and supported and made usable in the workplace. In addition, it can be asked what kind of professional expertise such an effort would demand on the part of practitioners taking up this challenge.

2.2 HRD – an organisational activity with many homes

A very general characterization of HRD in the current debate would be that it is a field of organisational activity aimed at maintaining and developing the knowledge and skills of the people working in an organisation (Walton 1999, 52-61). HRD entered the European and the Finnish training and development terminology from the USA where Leonard Nadler introduced and began elaborating the concept in 1960s. According to Nadler (Nadler & Nadler 1989; Nadler 1992) HRD can be defined as organised learning experiences provided by employers within a specified period of time to bring about the possibility of performance improvement and/or personal growth. HRD consists of three areas of activity: training, education and development. Training includes learning focussed on the present job of the learner, education is learning focussed on a future job for the learner, and development is learning without a focus on the job. Nadler places the notion of organised learning experiences at the core of HRD by saying that the uniqueness of HRD compared to other human resource activities in an organisation is in its adoption of learning to reach individual and organisational objectives. The rationale behind this definition can thus be related to the theory and practice of adult education. Although in the critical debate in the USA this view of HRD has been connected to a narrow understanding of adult education which has been based on behaviorism and systematic instruction, with later trends extending the understanding of HRD, this definition has provided the most constituents towards defining the rationale behind HRD (Walton 1999, 57-58; Watkins 1991).

In the literature however, HRD has been related to various fields of activity. HRD is variously seen as part of adult education or as part of vocational

education and training (VET) or as part of organisational development, or as part of human resource management (HRM), or, to a increasing extent, as an emerging field of its own. Accordingly, the various disciplines behind these fields of activity, including theories of education, work and organisational psychology, sociology, social sciences, economics, management and administration, have contributed to the rationale and underlying models for the definition and practice of HRD (Barrie & Pace 1998; Gilley & Egglund 1989; Rothwell & Kazanas 1994; Sarala 1988; Walton 1999; Varila 1991). In sum, the literature on HRD clearly points to the existence of many parallel definitions of HRD. However, the two strongest views, at least in the influential USA-based debate can also be seen as representing two competing approaches, one of which defines HRD as a performance-based part of HRM and the other as a learning-based part of adult education. Nevertheless, there are also voices which call for a holistic and inclusive understanding of the rationale underlying HRD (Barrie & Pace 1998; Kuchinke 1998; Watkins 1991). Given that the primary interest of the present study is in HRD as a field of professional expertise and its practitioners as promoters of people's knowledge and skills and their learning in the workplace, no attempt is made here to consider the many possible disciplines behind the definition of HRD. Instead, in the present study the point of departure is centred on HRD both as part of adult education and as an emerging field of its own.

From the practical point of view, in the workplace HRD is often organised merely as a subset of HRM and is viewed primarily in relation to the management (e.g. Kauhanen 1996, 136-150). For instance, on the basis of the literature Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle (1999) have summarised the development of variations of HRD as an organisational activity related to management by reference to three major strands. Traditionally speaking, the dominant view has been of HRD as a *reactive activity* which is expected to provide possible HRD solutions when requested by the management. The second strand emphasises a HRD which has an independent and proactive position as a *provider of opportunities* to develop competencies at different levels within an organisation. The use of HRD solutions may show good tactical thinking from the management side, but such solutions may not necessarily be integrated with larger strategic plans. Accordingly, the third and perhaps the most recent and now predominant strand emphasises HRD as *strategic activity* which has strong linkages to the management of the organisation. Therefore, the provision of various HRD solutions is designed in close integration with strategic planning. In addition, Garavan, Heraty and Barnicle (1999) mention a fourth, *integrative and learning-oriented view* of HRD, one which has more recently emerged in the literature, especially in the second half of the nineties. Interestingly, these four strands resemble with the three distinct discourses identified by Sambrook (2000) in her study of how HRD practitioners talk about HRD. Sambrook labelled these discourses as "tell", which refers to the traditional provision of training services, as "sell", which refers to the business-oriented selling of training and development within the organisation, and "gel", which refers to the facilitation of various forms of learning on both the individual and organisational levels.

Another, less management-oriented thread in defining HRD has been to start by investigating what is meant by development. For instance, in the recent

HRD literature, definitions of HRD have been sought in relation to different perspectives on human and adult development rooted in different philosophical and political traditions (Kuchinke 1999) or in relation to different approaches to development (Lee 2001; cf. Varila & Kallio 1992, 96-105). Kuchinke (1999) suggests that for the professional practice of HRD there is *a person-centred view* which aims at self-realization and is grounded in humanistic psychology and liberalism, *a production-centred view* focussing on organisational goals and which is grounded in behaviourism and libertarianism or *a principled problem-solving view* which is based on cognitive psychology, progressivism and pragmatism. Kuchinke emphasises, that an informed professional practice of HRD requires an understanding of the premises of each approach. Furthermore, Lee (2001) identified the ways in which the word *development* was used in the literature aimed at HRD practitioners. Accordingly, development was used in the sense of *maturation*, which is a pre-determined and inevitable stage-by-stage progression in people and organisations, *shaping* which is the externally defined shaping of people to meet the needs of an organisation, *a voyage* where individual people can construct their own development, and *emergence* meaning that development arises out of and is constructed by social systems and communication. Instead of seeing these identifications as exclusive, Lee (2001) points out that each developmental process contains these elements but in each case one element can act as the focal point and thus, moulds professional practice.

Consequently, HRD as a field of organisational activity can be characterised either as “homeless” (Filander 1998), or rather as a field with many home bases. This evidently means that the definition of HRD as well as its every-day practice is highly complex. The many homes are maintained by the fact that working life is a continuously changing stage for HRD, one which is getting ever more challenging, and which requires that problems be tackled from several perspectives simultaneously. Another explanation may be that because, as a field of professional expertise, HRD can be rooted in various disciplines, the home base will vary according to the educational background and experience of the individual practitioner in question.

Complexities in the practice of HRD

The complexity of HRD as an organisational activity can be seen as due to its relatively short history as a distinctive field of practice in the management of organisations. As history of HRD in the USA shows, the human factor was discovered during the 1920s through the Hawthorne studies which originally aimed at increasing productivity through improvement in the physical conditions of the workplace. In practice, the special attention accorded to people while improving the physical environment was estimated to be the crucial factor in the study. Consequently, increasing productivity accompanied with the objective of increasing satisfaction among employees became a new corner stone in the management of organisations. This gradually prepared the ground for the increasing adoption of learning-initiated interventions with a broader focus than merely that of job or task-specific training. After the Second World War the concept of employee satisfaction was complemented by that of employee

enhancement. This meant that the concept of employee satisfaction was broadened from the creation of a pleasant work environment and employee benefits to include opportunities for employees to improve their performance and skills both on and off the job. This shift led to the introduction of the concepts of introduced HRD and its subsequent role as an educational endeavour in the workplace. (Pace, Smith & Mills 1991, 24-33.)

Since the 1920s, economists, work and organisational psychologists, psychologists, social scientists and educationalists at least have operated in the field of HRD and brought in their own concepts and models. In the fifties Whyte (1951) saw developmental work focussed on people in organisations as in an early state of development, requiring time before the diversity of the practice could become unified. In the beginning of the 1980s in Finland, Tuomisto (1986, 1) addressed the theoretical immaturity of the field and the richness of the various approaches from the point of view of employer sponsored-training in working life. Moving forward to the present day, however, we see that the numerous disciplines and approaches used in efforts to define HRD continue to survive. In fact, the only consensus there seems to be, is that regarding the multi-faceted nature of HRD and its many definitions (Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle 1999; McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson 2001; Varila & Kallio 1992, 96).

In the contemporary world of work HRD is labelled as a crucial strategic activity in various organisations from private enterprises to public-sector organisations. It is also to some extent steered by legislation and labour contracts. Despite this the complexity of HRD can also be seen in practice in the relationship that exists between financial investments and strategy formulations. For instance, in last half of the 1990s companies in industry in Finland invested about 3% of their personnel budgets in various forms of training (Cedefop 1997). Despite this investment in training and development, evaluation and evidence for the learning outcomes or their contribution to the bottom line of an organisation's results has not conclusively been found. Paradoxically, although HRD is seen as a key factor to the promotion of learning in enterprises, it has traditionally occupied the margins of organisational activity (Kantanen 1997; Keep 1989). On the one hand HRD is a branch of organisational activity which is conducted through concrete actions and requires investment, while on the other it deals with very abstract needs, processes and outcomes, such as learning and development. Given that the quality of learning is dependent on the time resources allocated to it in everyday work (Eraut 2000), the evaluation of the outcomes of learning and development need to be based not only on immediate control, but also on a long term perspective. Thus, HRD seems to be under constant threat of being under-resourced, dependent on the overall economic success of the enterprise, rather than based on the success of long-term learning outcomes, especially if there is neither time nor interest to evaluate them in the long term. Moreover, the difficulty of finding methods of evaluation which would put HRD on the same level as other investments can lead to a situation where it is characterized as an activity which is being talked rather than acted on in practice (Sambrook 2000).

Furthermore, the attempt to build HRD according to the idea of developing individuals' knowledge and skills within a utilitarian business environment is likely to provoke criticism. Integrating the aims of improving organisational

performance and supporting individual learning needs can be understood from many perspectives. This inevitably creates conflicts for the field, and leads also to the question of why managers should bother with individual learning needs and development at all (Legge 1995, 205). Given that as an organisational activity HRD is also a part of the human resource management rhetoric, the aims of training and development are accompanied by or can be translated as, for instance manipulation, outplacement or uncertainty (Legge 1995, 312-324; Silvennoinen & Naumanen 1998; Sisson 1993).

Accordingly, the complexity of HRD can and should be understood through the different interest groups in the organisation and the views they represent (cf. article VI, pp. 2-3; Walton 1999, 188-189). HRD is, above all, working with humans, that is, men and women, younger and older, less educated and highly educated, and whether managers, workers or labour union representatives. In practice, for instance, managers, workers and labour union representatives rarely come to a shared understanding of the purposes of HRD. They all have their own understanding and will, according to the situation, give their own interpretation of it. In Finnish workplaces these differing interpretations are seen rather as barriers to HRD activities than a richness of perspectives which can be utilised to promote developmental work. This seems to be due to the low degree of mutual trust and unequal dialogue between the different interest groups despite all the good intentions (Kevätsalo 1999, 320). For instance, if we take staff training, at the management level the interest is in improved performance and efficiency, while workers seek improved competence, better wages, career development and job security. In addition, the interests of labour unions are in obtaining better contracts and wages and in securing the status of their occupations through staff training. Thus, how the specified aims of each HRD activity are actualised depends on each stakeholder group in the workplace. (Rinne, Silvennoinen & Valanta 1995, 37-74; Silvennoinen & Naumanen 1995; see article VI, pp. 2-3.) Interestingly, the voices of HRD practitioners have been absent from this kind of mapping.

Finally, seeing HRD as a field of professional expertise implies that it is a complex issue. Because HRD is primarily counted among the lesser activities and sub-cultures in an organisation, it seems that understanding learning and development is consigned to the vague domains of professional expertise, where everyone can act as an expert on the basis of, for instance, what they experienced at school. It can be assumed that this is the situation in many enterprises where the responsibility for HRD is given to line managers, to persons who are experts in their respective fields, but rarely have any formal or practical knowledge, let alone professional interest in learning or human development. They are given the job because strategically and organisationally it looks good. However, the empirical evidence shows that managers continue to lack the motivation or sense of responsibility needed to institute employee learning. Furthermore, finding a commonly understood language and terminology for the discussion on HRD issues between managers and HRD people appears to be difficult (Kantanen 1997; Tjepkema, Horst, Mulder & Scheerens 2000, 43).

2.3 The Finnish perspective on HRD

Although this study recognizes that HRD has many homes, its chief concern is with the field of adult education as a distinctive basis for HRD. In Finland the history of HRD can be read primarily in the history of work-related training, and especially employer-sponsored training (Tuomisto 1986). Employer-sponsored training in working life, that is, staff training, has from the outset been closely connected to the practice and system of adult education. The concepts of HRD or staff development were first heard in the 1970s when the terminology used in the USA was rapidly adopted in the Finnish context. In the adult education literature HRD has been defined very broadly as those activities which are planned on the basis of the organisation's business strategy, and are aimed at maintaining and developing the professional competence of the staff in order to support both personal and organisational growth, change and success² (Aalto, Hätönen & Vaherva 1993; Kauppi 1989, 29, 104; Ruohotie 1995, 237-238; Sarala 1988, 91; Tuomisto 1986, 11; Varila 1991, 57-58; Varila & Kallio 1992, 96-100). Accordingly, the maintenance and development of professional competence implies learning and the development of personal and organisation-specific knowledge and skills comprising vocational, social, cultural and ideological dimensions (Tuomisto 1986, 29-53). As can be seen from the various definitions, the scope of HRD extends to a variety of activities from different forms of organized training to various development projects, special tasks and arrangements related to the management of an organisation as well as to everyday work. Nevertheless, even though HRD implies a broad range of developmental activities, formal training has had and still has the most visible role in the actualization of HRD.

Looking back at the historical development of adult education in Finland, the connection with employer-sponsored training and the needs of business life came into the picture in the late 1940s, during the considerable post-war economic and industrial development in the country. Nevertheless, the skills of the workers and craftsmen were developed informally on the job and within craft and trade associations, as they had been since the 17th century. Thus, the historical roots of learning in the workplace go back to long before the introduction of the learning society. Employer-sponsored training for the basic vocational skills needed in industry as well as the vocational education system started in the early 1900s. The idea of widening staff training to further training of the workforce, to training at the managerial level, and to continuous education and the development of human resources on the large scale in order to improve efficiency, or the idea that

² In Finnish human resource development (HRD) and staff development have been used as synonyms, staff development being the more established term in the literature and in practice (Sarala 1988). It has also been claimed (Varila 1991) that the term HRD, used in the USA, is narrower in meaning than staff development, and that HRD should be seen as one perspective on staff development beside the perspectives of organisation, qualification-theory and vocationalism. A comparison of prevailing broad definitions of HRD/staff development in Finland with those in the international HRD literature (e.g. Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle 1999; Walton 1999) shows that various perspectives are embedded in the definitions of HRD. In this study the terms HRD and staff development are used as synonyms.

managers should have some understanding of the learning of the managed did not appear until the 1940s. (Heikkinen 1995, 171-186, 260-297; Tuomisto 1986, 103-112.)

Around the 1940s the public administration also took an active role in implementing educational perspectives in the world of work. For instance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry participated in the development of staff training by publishing a book on applying psychological and educational perspectives to the supervision of work (Niininen 1948). Supervisors in companies were issued the challenge to be first and foremost educators in the workplace. In addition to a good knowledge of their field and industry, supervisors should have a knowledge and understanding of human relations, learning and teaching. Thus, this view defined staff training rather broadly. Even though this book was directed at supervisors, it was also emphasised that other managerial levels should become aware of these issues. In sum, in the 1940s-50s responsibility for HRD was devolved to the supervisory and other managerial levels, a trend which can also be seen in the more recent literature (Ruohotie 1995, 237-308).

In the 1960s the rapid growth in business and industry expanded work-related training further, leading to its division into separate activities both within the educational system and in work organisations. The expansion of staff training departments in the larger companies started in the 1970s, when HRD practitioners were hired in the larger private and public sector organisations. During the sixties and seventies employer-sponsored training was also supported on the policy level as a special part of the adult education system. This special status was developed through the work of the Committee on Adult Education I (Anon. 1972, e.g. 84-122) and II (Anon. 1975, e.g. 23-25, 102). It is likely that the establishment of separate staff training departments and training centres was due to the increased interest in the possibilities of HRD as well as to the poorly realised aim of involving HRD issues in supervision and management. Furthermore, transformation in the relationship between education and work in the seventies appeared to emphasise the separation of these two worlds. Interestingly, the latest trends in the workplace, for instance, the learning organisation, include the devolution of HRD back to the managerial level and to the practice of everyday work.

Starting from the extensive growth of employer-sponsored and work-related training in the 1960s the common concern, that is, the processes of human learning, both in adult education and in work-related training was recognized. Accordingly, to meet the needs of staff training, models for instructional design and training and guidebooks for systematic training based on a behaviouristic framework were actively developed and published. The systematic design of training, especially in the public-sector rapidly led to new theoretical frameworks for understanding learning. From a behaviouristic educational technology design thinking shifted towards the adoption of cognitive psychology and thereafter to the application of views which emphasise the latest strands in the learning debate. (Kauppi 1989, 27-72; Miettinen 1985; Tuomisto 1992, 53-57, 68-84.) Even though the systematic training design is still visible as a basic model in the handbooks for HRD practitioners (e.g. Hätönen 1998, 24-27) experiential, constructivistic, humanistic, contextual as well as social approaches to learning are emerging in

the recent discussion on, for instance, promoting the actualization of the learning organisation or in the introduction of various forms of learning at work (e.g. Järvinen & Poikela 2001; Varila & Viholainen 2000).

In sum, the historical development of HRD in Finland during the last decades shares similar developmental ideas to those which can be discerned in the international debate (cf. Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle & McGuire 2002). HRD can be described as a quantitatively expanding activity and investment and as a qualitatively transforming process where the emphasis has been extended from the formal training of job and task-specific skills to the promotion of continuous learning and development in the workplace. In the 1960s and 1970s when the world of work was less complex and learning needs were clear, formal training served the developmental purposes required by a rapidly growing business and industrial sector. The more complex the world of work has become since the eighties, the more blurred has become the justification of learning needs and the less relevant the traditional forms of training. Consequently, HRD is increasingly understood as the facilitation of the ability to learn and develop on the job on the individual, group and organisational levels and to meet change in a creative way. Table 1 summarises the two major developmental threads and transitions which can be discerned in the HRD debate. Even though the various shifts may seem rather extreme and are presented as a dichotomy, the aspects characterized both in the *more traditional* and the *more recent* views of HRD do not necessarily exist exclusively, but also in tandem or crosswise according to the organisational context.

TABLE 1 Developmental shifts in defining and practising HRD

| | <i>more traditional</i> | <i>more recent</i> |
|---|---|--|
| focus | performance improvement of job, organisational and individual needs separated | continuous development of competence, organisational and individual needs integrated |
| change, learning, time perspective | quantitative, adaptive, short term | quantitative and qualitative, adaptive and transformative, long term |
| organisation | a machine | a flexible system |
| organisational context | static, predictable | dynamic, surprising |
| status of HRD | support | integrated |
| placement of HRD | training center, external course, external consultancy | management, strategy, everyday job, internal consultancy |
| HRD activities | focussed on training | various developmental interventions |

2.3.1 Placing the practice and study of HRD in the Finnish context

Practice always takes place in a certain context, and thus, the professional expertise of HRD practitioners cannot be examined without paying attention to its context, which is, particular organisations in the world of work. In order to build a practical framework and to gain a deeper contextual understanding of the results of this study, some of the characteristics of Finnish working life and adult education, as these are related to HRD practice, are described through descriptive statistics in the following section. The description utilises statistics from the years 1995 to 1997, which is the period when the data was gathered from the HRD practitioners studied. In addition, statistics from years 1998-2000 are also presented where available, in order to illustrate the post empirical phase. Naturally, the participants' experiences are also rooted in earlier periods, but the figures illustrate the conditions in which the HRD practitioners studied here evaluated their work and reflected on their experiences.

2.3.2 Some of the characteristics of Finnish working life

The demographic context for HRD in Finland is a population of about 5,2 million people, of whom approximately 2,5 million are in the labour force. Most directly, HRD involves those employed in various companies and organisations in both the private and public sectors. As can be seen from Figure 1, at the time of the data collection in the present research the Finnish economy was recovering from the severe recession of the early 1990s, and thus employment was increasing. This increase in economic well-being offers, as usual, more fertile ground for investment in HRD as can be seen in the increasing number of employees participating in staff training. From 1995 to 2000 the amount of employed persons increased from approximately 2 to 2,3 million. Those on wages and salaries increased from 1,7 to 2 million while the number of self-employed persons fell from 325 000 to 319 000. (Statistics Finland 2000a; 2000b.)

In the time of the data collection the majority of the employed worked for companies in the private sector while the public sector, that is, the state and the municipalities combined employed approximately 600 000 persons. In the private sector the largest occupational groups were manufacturing, construction and mining (27,3 % of all employed persons in 1995) and managerial, administrative and clerical work (16,9 % in 1995). The amount of the latter had slightly increased by 1999 while the former remained the same. In the public sector in 1995 one third were employed in health care and social work and one fourth were in occupations in technical, scientific, juridical, humanistic and artistic fields. In the public sector the proportion of the latter slightly increased from 1995 to 1999. In industrial terms organisations and companies in the public sector services and other services, in mining, manufacturing, energy and water supply, and in trade comprise the three biggest groups of employers. This distribution remained unchanged in the last half of the nineties. Consequently, approximately one third of the employed work in the public sector services and other services, one fifth in manufacturing and about 15 per cent in trade. (Statistics Finland 2000; 2001.)

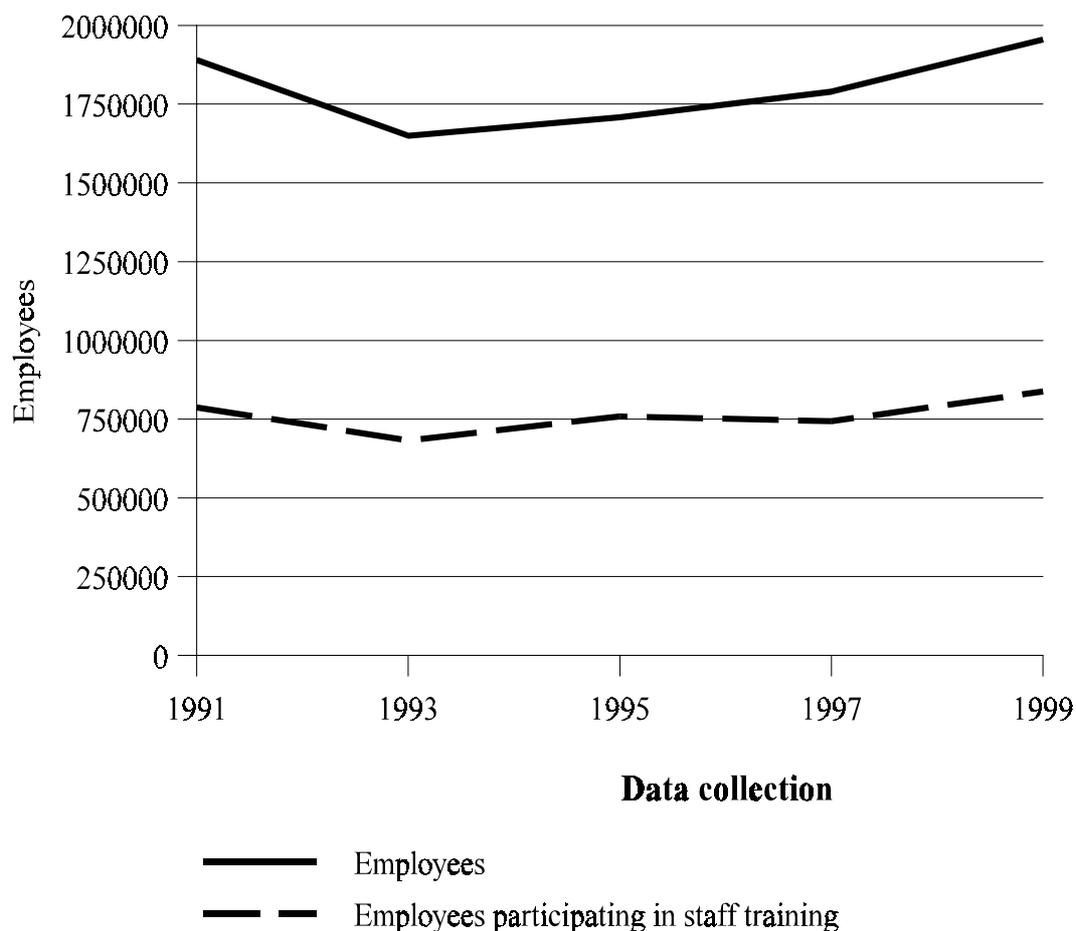


FIGURE 1 Number of employees, number of employees participating in staff training and time of data collection

Finnish working life is characterized by a large number small and medium-sized enterprises. Persons employed in the private sector work largely in small and medium-sized enterprises of less than fifty employees (98,8%). Only 1,2% of companies are large and have more than 50 employees (from 50 to more than 500). However, these large enterprises employ more than half of the labour force (56,3%) in the private sector. (Statistics Finland 1999.) HR developers hired in full time jobs are typically found only in the largest private enterprises (more than 500 employees) and within large public (state and municipal) organisations. In the small and medium-sized enterprises the owner-managers are usually the only persons who pay attention to staff training and development, which activity is then mainly bought from independent training and consultancy companies. Thus, given that this study focussed on HRD practitioners employed as HRD personnel in their organisation, the target population was recruited mainly from the larger enterprises in the private sector and from various public sector organisations.

Another characteristic of Finnish working life to be mentioned here is the relatively high level of education among the labour force. Given that HRD is about developing the professional knowledge and skills of employees, in Finnish working life the target population for HRD already possesses a good initial professional education. Thus, the role of HRD is to help in increasing the professional knowledge and skills of the labour force outside and after exit from

the formal education system. In general, in 1995, about 30 per cent of all employed persons possessed tertiary education, that is a university or polytechnic degree, and about 40 per cent upper secondary education, that is, initial vocational education. Only about 30 per cent had not gone beyond the basic compulsory general education. However, between occupational groups there are big differences in educational level. Among the technical, scientific, juridical, humanistic and artistic occupations the proportion of tertiary-level educated is the highest (about 72 per cent), while among the occupations in manufacturing, construction and mining it is only about five per cent. Upper secondary level education is most prevalent within manufacturing, construction and mining (about 58 per cent) as well as in health care and social work (about 42 per cent). (Statistics Finland 2001.)

2.3.3 Some figures on the scope of HRD in Finnish working life

Given the assumptions that HRD practitioners' work is focussed on the processes of organisational change, it is interesting that the results from the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (Lehto & Sutela 1999, 16-20) showed that in 1997 well over one third of wage and salary earners had noticed that clear changes had taken place in their places of work over the preceding two years. A similar proportion of people also expected clear changes to come in the next two years. Both women and men shared this experience, but persons employed in management and administration, most likely including HRD practitioners, had noticed but also expected more changes than did the other occupational groups. A more detailed classification of the different kinds of changes occurring in working life showed that in 1997, for instance, assessment of work on the basis of its profitability and productivity had become increasingly common. However, this assessment of work was not accompanied by the introduction of payment by results. Instead, the introduction of work done in groups or teams seemed to have become more widespread. Interestingly, as far as the worth of HRD practitioners is concerned, only 41 per cent of the wage and salary earners surveyed reported that they had been informed about the changes relating to their work in the planning stage. Only 35 per cent claimed to have been informed shortly before a change, that is, when the decisions have already been made. One fifth reported being informed only at the implementation stage. (Lehto & Sutela 1999, 16-20.)

In 1997 only nine per cent of wage and salary earners considered their opportunities for advancement at work to be good. When asked about opportunities for personal development at work or for receiving training to improve professional skills, the evaluation is considerably more positive. Well over one third thought their opportunities were good in both these respects. As far as social relationships in the workplace are concerned, in 1997 factors like support and encouragement from superiors and co-workers were experienced positively by more over than half of the respondents. At the same time conflicts were part of everyday working life. Competitiveness, conflicts between superiors and subordinates and between employees were experienced by more than 60 per cent. Both are issues, it can be suggested, which have emerged with the introduction of team work. (Lehto & Sutela 1999, 16-20.)

The results from the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (Lehto & Sutela 1999) showed that in general, salary and wage earners considered their opportunities for staff training in a positive light. This notion is strongly supported also by the surveys done on staff training in general. It can be said that in Finland, staff training as one aspect of HRD has been increasingly recognized as an important and long-term investment. This increased importance does not reside only in intentions but can also be seen in various statistics. For instance, a survey among companies employing at least 250 employees showed that training costs as a percentage of wages increased during the 1990s from 2,3% (1993) to 3,9% (1995), and was forecast to increase towards 1997. By around 1997 internal staff training was estimated to be the most popular way of arranging training. Approximately half of staff training is arranged and conducted as internal training in companies, about one fifth is bought in and one third takes place as learning on the job. (Anon. 1997; Cedefop 1997, 80-82; Cedefop Panorama 1999, 62-63; see also Kokko 1999.) Adult Education Surveys have also shown a continuous growth in the number of employees who have been provided with training by their employer since the 1980s. Figure 1 shows the number of employed persons and employees participating in staff training between 1991 and 1999. For the majority of the participants interviewed in this study this was the period when they were active in HRD. Thus, their work experiences cover the periods of growth as well as the decline in the beginning of the 1990s.

When the results of the participation in staff training between 1995 to 1999 are analysed in more detail, differences in participation according to, for instance, age, educational level, occupational status and type of employer can be seen clearly. The opportunity (or demand) to participate in staff training as a part of HRD is not equal for everyone. Participation is highest among middle-aged, highly educated employees in top professions and expert positions with upper-level salaries. Among employers, the large enterprises and organisations with more than two hundred employees are the most active sponsors of training and they are found in the public sector in services and in financial, insurance and business services. The number of training days per participant shows that on average, those in the top professions have the highest number of training days, which suggests that their training is seen more as long-term training instead of separate training days and short courses. (Statistics Finland 1997a; 2000.)

In terms of the contents of staff training information technology, social and behavioural subjects including management and managerial skills, and business and marketing have been those fields of training in which participation has been most active. Training in information technology mainly concerns courses on taking advantage of different software programmes. Social, behavioural and managerial training is mainly concerned with the development of the organisation on the large scale. (Statistics Finland 1997.) Estimated from the point of view of companies the most important fields of staff training in the last half of the nineties were internationalization, research and development, co-operation and team work and customer service (Anon. 1997).

Staff training seems to be the most visible part of HRD, mainly due to fact that training is most often organised as clearly defined programmes, and thus, participation in them is also easily quantified. To give an example, the centrality

of various forms of training can also be seen in the numerous research and development projects in working life conducted within the Finnish National Workplace Development Programme (Kyllönen, Alasoini, Pekkala, Rouhiainen & Tervahartiala 1996; Ramstad 2001). This is a government programme which supports workplace-initiated projects, such as, on promotion of learning supportive forms of organising work, developing human resource management, improving work communities and equal opportunities in the workplace. The projects involve co-operation especially in companies in the metal and engineering industry and in the local municipal welfare and health sector as well as numerous research and training institutes as providers of training and development services. Nevertheless, despite the centrality of training as a working method, various forms of co-operation and participation, various organisational analyses and promoting learning on the job are also mentioned as activities of the projects.

However, there is empirical evidence to show that when employees are asked about their learning experiences in the workplace, other, informal forms of learning and development on the job emerge as even more important and crucial forms of HRD than training (e.g. Eraut et al. 1998; Statistics Finland 1997a). Still, these informal forms of learning and development are more difficult to put in figures than participation in programmes or projects accomplished. Furthermore, given the mainstream discussion on the workplace as a learning source and the centrality of learning on the job, one can with reason question the relevance of training statistics. How indeed it is possible to translate HRD activity in the company into figures like training days if learning and development are being built into everyday management and production.

2.4 HRD practitioners – what are they?

The mainstream discussion and research on HRD has been based on a description of HRD as an organisational activity, as a part of management or as employer-sponsored training, and on its evaluation from the point of view of the different beneficiaries. However, HRD as an individual's daily work, or as a field of professional expertise experienced by the practitioners themselves has been less studied. In Finland concern over HRD practitioners as one group of professional experts operating within the development of working life has been expressed in the long term, especially within adult education. These critical voices have paid attention to the vagueness and undefinable nature of HRD as a field of professional practice and to HRD's position as still an emerging field of professional expertise despite a continuous increase in the volume and importance of HRD (e.g. Haavio 1994; Hämäläinen 1997; Virkkunen 1980).

Questions concerning the lack of clarity and undefinable nature of HRD from the point of view of its practitioners began to be raised, especially in organisations within the public sector, in the late seventies (Virkkunen 1980). One valuable attempt to clarify and develop the definition and the professional education in the field of HRD through a research-based approach was made at the level of public

administration. Accordingly, this research effort contributed to the design and implementation of the specific training programme for trainers in the public administration. The programme's theoretical framework was focussed on adult education and its main content areas included knowledge about the organisation's field of activity, knowledge about the organisation and its administration, knowledge about occupation and job analysis and design, and knowledge about training design and learning and teaching processes (Launos & Peisa 1979; Miettinen 1984; Venna & Rautiainen 1990; Virkkunen 1980). Furthermore, in the mid-eighties within the framework of research into working life specific training programmes aimed at integrating knowledge of research and training into development work in the workplace were designed and implemented (Anon. 1987; Filander, Heiskanen & Kirjonen 1990). Nevertheless, the same questions of lack of clarity and vagueness remained unanswered when this research process began in 1995. Consequently, the increasing interest in development work as a field of professional practice can be seen in recent research, including the present study (cf. Filander 2000; Seppänen-Järvelä 1999).

A considerable body of research on HRD practitioners has been done in the USA from the perspective of job and role analysis. The role approach to the analysis of HRD practitioners' work was introduced in the sixties by Nadler (Nadler & Nadler 1989, 125-130). This extensive study of HRD practitioners' work was founded on the need to define the content and criteria for this emergent field. The purpose of the role approach was to define the performance and expected outputs in a job, including duties and activities. This line of research, especially, has been sponsored further by *the ASTD (American Society for Training and Development)* with the aim of defining the field and standards for HRD (see chapter 4.2 for a more detailed description). A similar approach has produced similar results in other countries, for instance in Australia and Great Britain (e.g. Garrick & McDonald 1992; Walton 1999, 153-179) and in various European countries along the lines of the research project presented in this report. The role studies by Nadler (Nadler & Nadler 1989, 127, 141) revealed several potential and parallel roles for HRD practitioners. These roles divide into three major areas: duties and activities related to learning, managing HRD and consulting in an organisation. For instance, the role of the learning specialist is a role concerned with the design and delivery of learning including the subroles of facilitator of learning, designer of learning programs and developer of instructional strategies. A similar listing of roles and major areas in the practice of HRD has also been presented in the ASTD studies, where the main areas of HRD activity are defined as training and development, organisation development and career development (McLagan 1989a; 1989b; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989). In addition to the role approach, HRD practitioners have been characterized from the point of view of different disciplines in the USA-based literature. Watkins (1991) reviews six discipline-based definitions, in which the HRD practitioner, within the framework of the ASTD studies is seen as a competent performer, while Nadler's view of the HRD practitioner is that of an adult educator adopting a systematic approach to training and instruction. Other characterizations include the HRD practitioner as developer of human capital, toolmaker, research and evaluator, and leader or change agent.

Organisationally speaking, HRD practitioners hold very different positions in the workplace. According to the categorization by Nadler and Nadler (1989) they can be found working, for instance, as internal part-time consultants, internal full-time practitioners, or as external short-term consultants. In Finland, the number of internal or in-house HRD practitioners is difficult to estimate due to the lack of unified work titles and organised professional associations in the field. HRD practitioners, for instance, the HRD manager can not be found among the standardised classification of occupations (Statistics Finland 1997b). However, the category of expert managers includes personnel managers whose work may include also HRD tasks. Furthermore, training managers, training designers and trainers can be found in the category of other experts in the field of teaching, which includes external HRD practitioners working in training and development services. Presumably, in-house full-time HRD practitioners can be found only in large enterprises and public-sector organisations, while there are around 600 small training and development businesses run by external consultants and trainers (Statistics Finland 1998).

It can be concluded that concern for the professional practice and expertise of HRD seems to have been continuous in the developed countries ever since the discovery of the human factor in industry. The starting point for the debate on these issues can be found for instance in the entry of new disciplines from social sciences and humanities into the field and in the extension of training to more broader conceptions of learning and development. As a result, for instance, questions were raised as to how managers are and should be coming to believe that the social sciences in addition to economics and psychology have much to offer in an organisation (Whyte 1951). The problem, which according to Whyte (1951) was how to distinguish the expert from the quack in developmental issues, sounds very up-to-date when compared to the recent debate on how to identify what is HRD and more importantly, what is knowledgeable HRD as well as on the risk HRD continuously faces of being interpreted as fad-driven organisational gimmicks or five-step models to happiness (Swanson & Arnold 1996). The present study aims to contribute to this debate from within the framework offered by adult education.

Given the connection between HRD and adult education within the Finnish context, HRD practitioners have usually been regarded as a specific group of trainers or educators of adults. This has been the tradition, especially in the public-sector administration, even though the educational background of HRD practitioners has not unanimously come from the educational sciences (Launos & Peisa 1979; Suurpää & Valkeavaara 1992). Furthermore, given that HRD activities contribute to the development of occupation- and job-specific knowledge and skills, HRD practitioners have also been seen to constitute a subgroup of professionals within the vocational education and training system (Heikkinen 1997). If we hold on to the concept of the adult educator as the starting point in describing HRD practitioners, we can see that the differing aims of adult education and the various "tribes" of adult educators presented by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982, 69-70) is a useful framework for this purpose (see also Edwards 1997, 166-167). In the light of the objectives of HRD they can be characterised as progressives coaching individual growth, as guerrillas creating

a new and better order, or as organisational maintainers promoting effectiveness. Perhaps the most current characterisation of HRD practitioners is that of a change agent or (internal) consultant rather than trainer, who works in the interests of organisations, industry, and the economy (see article VI, pp. 6-8).

In addition, Marsick and Watkins (1990, 101-106) have shown HR developers as problem-makers who have to raise and name problematic issues in an organisation and find possible solutions for them. Hansen, Kahnweiler and Wilensky (1994) identified a shared culture among HRD practitioners which emphasised employee well-being, individual development and communication, whereas Filander (1999) in her study of development work in the public sector at the time of the recession called HRD practitioners as experts in uncertainty. Thus, it seems to be typical of contemporary working life that HRD practitioners are also being challenged to operate in different tribes simultaneously, changing their orientation according to situational and contextual demands (Edwards 1997, 166-172). Furthermore, the utilitarian views which are embedded in HRD have given rise to a critique which labels HRD practitioners as traders in organisationally determined learning and efficiency rather than as representatives of the humanistic and democratic traditions of adult education (Cunningham 1993; Garrick 1994; Suoranta 1999). Given the complexities of HRD as an organisational activity, it is likely that HRD practitioners are personally struggling with similar enigmas between efficiency and humanity and trying to demonstrate the effectiveness and uniqueness of their practice as is done by personnel or human resource management practitioners (Legge 1995, 23-29). Another thing is, how do the HRD practitioners themselves interpret their situation? Are their interests only in supporting managerial needs or are they perhaps also in securing and strengthening their own status, or in defending individual learning? Is there room for rethinking the interpretation of HR developers as adult educators?

2.5 The view of professional expertise adopted in the study

As shown above, there hardly exists a shared conception of HRD or of the nature, contents and development of professional expertise in HRD despite attempts during recent years to bring these issues into the discussion. In order to study professional expertise in a specific field of practice several approaches are available. In this study, the starting point was not a sociological approach to HRD practitioners as a definable, modern profession. This was due to the fact that the defining characteristics of a profession, such as a unified and defined disciplinary basis, specific education and established credentials, legitimated practice, professional associations, and control standards are lacking (Konttinen 1997; Lassnigg forthcoming; see also Pirttilä 2002). Instead, HRD was seen as an emerging profession

- 1) which can be located in the performance of a specified, though broad field of tasks within working life,
- 2) which adopts varying disciplines and models,

- 3) which is performed by highly educated and experienced individuals, and
- 4) whose status as a specific group of professional experts in working life had increasingly come under notice but remained vague.

Thus, the practice of HRD was studied within the framework of professional expertise in which the starting point is not in the known characteristics of a profession but lies in the study of the nature, contents and development of performance and of the knowledge adopted among practitioners acting in a professional field of activity in working life (Tynjälä, Nuutinen, Eteläpelto, Kirjonen & Remes 1997).

In general, much of the understanding that we have today of the professional expertise has its origins in the research on expertise in the field of cognitive psychology. The main thread in this research has been the search for what constitutes excellence of performance and the cognitive qualifications needed for it in the varying fields of human activity. The characterizations which have guided the general definitions of expertise have been found in research focussed on expert-novice comparisons within various fields of professional or non-professional activity. The characterizations are summarized for instance by Eteläpelto (1998, 37-38) as follows: experts perceive large meaningful patterns in their own domain, focus on the relevant cues in the task, represent their domain problems at a deeper level than novices, have abstract high-level principles in problem solving, have coherent knowledge structures, have better self-monitoring skills than novices, and spend time analysing and constructing the problem before entering the solution.

Furthermore, Sternberg (1997) summarises the views of expertise produced by the research under three headings. Firstly, there is the general-process view, according to which experts are qualitatively different or more rapid problem solvers than others; secondly, the quantity-of-knowledge view, which emphasises the greater amount of knowledge that experts have; and thirdly, the knowledge-organisation view, according to which experts can organize their knowledge in more effective ways than others. Furthermore, analytical ability in solving problems, the ability to create new knowledge on the basis of prior knowledge and experience, ability to automatize skills and thinking and practical ability in one's field are conceptions which are attached to expertise. These conceptions present the prototype of expertise and in reality each of them serve in varying degree in defining and labelling expertise according to the field in question. Accordingly, in addition to the cognitively accentuated attributes of expertise Sternberg also foregrounds the processes of social labelling and legitimation in defining expertise.

Eraut (1994, 157) suggests that the tradition of the research on professional expertise (as presented in the above section) has focussed on formal knowledge with a high theoretical content. From the point of view of the study of HRD, this tradition is problematic since defined and general training schemes for the production and delivery of the formal knowledge of the field are lacking. More recent research on professional expertise has highlighted the assumption that expertise is based mainly on experience, and suggested that it should be studied as an experiential and personal process. As an alternative to knowledge-based

approaches, Eraut (1994, 123-157) has summarised the different theories of expertise on the basis of the study of the professional processes that lie behind the theories and models of development. Accordingly, professional expertise can be defined through models of progression from novice to expert, through processes of decision making involving memory and analytical skills, through a correspondence between cognitive processes and the characteristics of the task, or through processes of developing professional creativity and intuitive capacity in problematic situations. All these models are concerned with the question of how people approach their work, and they aim to define professional expertise along the continuum from skilful behaviour to deliberate action. Eraut (1994, 149-155) contends that when the nature of professional expertise in some specified field is to be studied and understood as a whole, it should be seen as deliberative processing. Deliberation includes or is moulded by the time resources which the specific work context provides, by the nature of the tasks which have to be dealt with, by having wide knowledge of the organisation, its policy or program, by being involved in cooperative working in various forms, and by taking into account the fallibility of professional expertise. Consequently, professional expertise cannot be seen only as knowledge and skills, but it should also be seen as performing the job, that is, as an experiential relationship between the practitioner and the job which he or she does. Furthermore, this relationship includes a potential for critical evaluation and development. (cf. Sandberg 1994, 45-51; Sandberg 2000; Sandberg & Dall'Alba 1995; Schön 1987, 22-40.)

In educational research the use of the term expertise has been two-fold. Firstly, it has referred to excellence of performance and to a definition of the varying degrees of expertise a person has to acquire before excellence is acquired. Secondly, the meaning has referred to experienced performance, which implies that an increase in practical experience leads to certain qualitative changes in practitioners' capabilities which then result in an enhanced sense of purpose in performance. (Tynjälä et al. 1997.) Expertise as experienced performance emphasises personal construing of expertise, which relates to professional expertise as an experiential relationship between the practitioner and the job at hand (cf. Eraut 1994; Sandberg 1994; Schön 1987). A third meaning which may be added here relates to contextuality. It refers to a selection process through which a community attributes expertise to a practitioner according to certain criteria, for instance, education, credentials, successes, power or personality (Agnew, Ford & Hayes 1997). In the present study the term professional expertise is used without attempting to define top performance or top attributes or to compare and define levels of expertise in HRD among the participants. Instead, the interest is on defining professional expertise in HRD according to the experienced practitioners' views and their descriptions of their performance in the job, the various kinds of knowledge and skills they report using in that job, and the learning challenges which they have experienced in the course of their daily work and during their careers (Tynjälä et al. 1997).

Another view of expertise which has influenced this research process is that of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, 9-37) who characterize expertise as an intentional, social and continuously developing process of performing, based on a combination of domain-specific and general knowledge, both formal and

practical in its nature. This view integrates the personal construing of expertise with social context such that expertise is more than just something residing inside one's head and thus is a process which cannot be characterized independently of how it is constructed and how it is used in social interaction. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, 43-75) understanding the forms of knowledge, or knowing as they refer to it, is at the core in describing the nature and development of expertise. Knowing is composed of formal knowledge and skills explicated as theories and concepts acquired mainly from books and through education, and of different forms of less explicated and tacit knowledge, which they term *hidden*. This hidden knowledge is actualized and acquired in the everyday activities of apprehending, analysing, communicating, and performing in different formal and informal situations, in making practical and theoretical judgements, and in reflecting on personal performances. Accordingly, Bereiter and Scardamalia present a holistic view of professional expertise, one which includes the formal and propositional, practical and self-regulative dimensions of knowledge, all of which are needed for knowledgeable practice (Edwards 1997, 148-172; Eraut 1994, 40-50; Tynjälä 1999).

In sum, and according to the view of professional expertise adopted in this study, both knowledge and the processes of dealing with it have to be taken into account. Thus, expertise comprises the specific knowledge and skills used in a particular professional field. However, the aim of this study is to go beyond the study of the knowledge and skills needed in practice. In addition, attention is paid to the relationship between the practitioner, the job, and the context which has to be included in the conception of expertise in any professional field. The relationship can be actualised as an understanding of the processes behind the activity, as a profound understanding of the ways in which the problems and complexity of the work are addressed and the materials used as well as the processes of continuous development of all of these through formal education and everyday experience.

Construction of professional expertise and the role of experience

One of the main topics which has been debated in recent studies of professional expertise has been the relationship between formal education and learning from experience in the acquisition of expertise (Tynjälä et al. 1997). If we are trying to locate the site of the development of professional expertise, we can assume that professional expertise can be viewed, on the one hand, as constructed in expert institutions. This means for instance formal training which produces and reproduces formal knowledge, that is, the explicit theories and techniques used in the specific field. On the other hand, professional expertise in some field can be seen as constructed through discourses and interpretations of practice which are conducted among the practitioners themselves (Eräsaari 1997).

In the case of HRD practitioners the so-called formal expert institutions are spread across many disciplines and there is no an unified conception of the modes of training needed for the preparation of expertise. Assumably, the lion's share of HRD practitioners expertise is made up of the interpretations of experiences they acquire when working in response to organisational and individual

challenges in various contexts. For instance, for the more well-defined and structured professions expertise has been shaped by a community of practice and built up upon a long history of trial and error (Hoffman, Feltovich & Ford 1997). This process has produced formal institutions as well as individual and collective interpretations where expertise resides and is nurtured. For “younger” and less defined fields of professional activity like HRD the outcomes of similar processes can be explored and disclosed by consulting experienced practitioners.

Professional expertise as experienced performance, however, has to be seen with certain reservations. The paradox of professional expertise is that even though both formal training and experience seem to increase the effectiveness of the many cognitive processes in work-related problem solving as well as the social recognition of expertise, they also have the potential to decrease, for instance, flexibility, critical reflectivity and opportunities for transformative learning (Desforges 1995; Eteläpelto 1994; Feltovich, Spiro & Coulson 1997). Thus, experienced performance does not necessarily mean that the practitioner has a superior knowledge of the field, but that with an increase in experience a practitioner may develop qualitatively advanced ways of making use of and extending her or his knowledge, analysing the field of work, solving problems, and transforming practice. Developing these ways of acting are typical of the career of experts while “experienced non-experts”, who may have acquired a similar education and amount of experience, adopt a much narrower approach to the tasks and problems of their work as well as to the construction of their career (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993, 17-20).

Another paradox in professional expertise is embedded in the idea of excellence. The career of an expert has been defined as a string of successes, even though the concept of success implies that its opposite, failure or disappointment is always an alternative outcome (Goldschmidt 1991, 108-109). According to Jarvis (1997), this can be presented as a learning paradox: in order to be experts we have to act as though we know everything and can provide answers, and thus, we cannot learn new things. However, in terms of professional expertise, learning challenges include problems or failures encountered in the routines of the job as essential triggers for the construction of expertise (see article IV, pp. 178-182). Thus, for the individual expert a career would consist of personally effective and rewarding ways of living at the edge of one’s competence. However, professional expertise is not based only on personal experience, but also on the experiences of others in the community. Professional expertise has both an individual and a societal aspect. From the societal point of view, for instance in the workplace, it would mean a culture that encourages and sustains the pursuing of expert-like careers (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993, 20).

Consequently, one basic question in understanding professional expertise concerns the process of becoming a practitioner in the field. Not everyone possesses a career which can be characterized as an expert’s career, even if he or she has acquired a great deal of training and experience. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, 18-20), in this respect it is useful to think of and analyse professional expertise as a career characteristic, that is, as the ways people pursue their educational and occupational careers. Viewing the construction of professional expertise as a career implies that a career is more than an objectively

definable, linear and largely hierarchical continuum of workplaces or tasks through which the individual moves. Rather in this study a career is defined as the subject's continuous learning process in a professional context. Thus, a career is seen as a relatively even progression punctuated by occasional crises through which the individual constructs and strengthens the knowledge and skills needed in its practice as well as the professional identity it bestows. Accordingly, the commonly used metaphor of a ladder for a career is not necessarily appropriate when a career is described as a continuous learning process. Rather, it is a series of choices and problems to be solved in a professional context through which the individual either reinforces or transforms her or his ways of being, in this case, as a HR developer. (see article V, pp. 2-4; Lähteenmäki 1995, 29; Nicholson & West 1989; Schein 1978, 36.)

In summary, it can be concluded that various attempts based on many disciplines or frameworks of varying fields of professional practice have been made in order to define and find the essence of HRD as a field of organisational activity or as a work done by a specialised practitioner. Despite the historical development of HRD and related debate on, for instance, HRD practitioners' roles, vagueness and uncertainty continue to exist in the ways HRD is defined and understood. Due to the vagueness surrounding what constitutes HRD as professional practice, the experiences of HRD practitioners themselves seem to have had only a minor role in building definitions and understanding in the field. This continuing vagueness may hinder the acknowledgement and development of HRD as both a legitimate field of organisational activity and as a field of professional practice and expertise. Consequently, this study adopted a many-angled perspective on the practice of HRD work as a field of professional expertise, as shown in Figure 2. The empirical interest was focussed on the practice of HRD work as seen through the HRD practitioners' interpretations of their experiences of performing their jobs, of the various forms of knowledge and skills needed, of learning challenges in the form of the problematic situations that crop up from day to day and of various events and processes relating to HRD encountered during their careers. Accordingly, the definition of HRD as a field of professional expertise is viewed through HRD practitioners' experiences of performing HRD work (see also chapters 4.3 and 4.3.1).

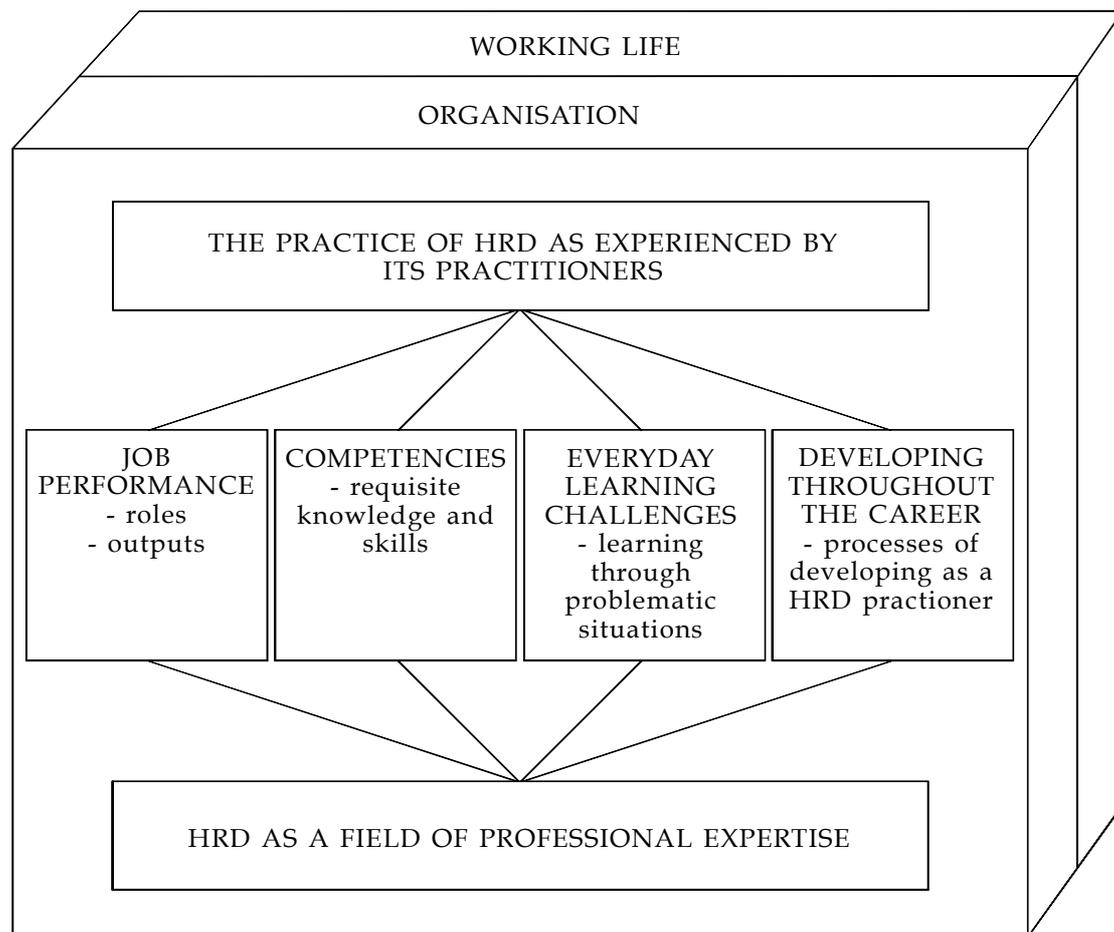


FIGURE 2 The framework for the exploration of HRD as a field of professional expertise

3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 Research tasks

Given the background motives and interests discussed in the earlier chapters, the vagueness and complexity of HRD as a field of professional expertise looms large. Consequently, it was the overall purpose of the research to explore the practice of HRD as a field of professional expertise in Finland from the point of view of its practitioners. The research aimed to describe and understand what professional expertise in this specified, but ill-defined, field of professional practice may entail and how it may be developed. Hence the research interest was in exploring what kinds of bodies of knowledge and experience exist among the HRD practitioners themselves. The research had two main focal purposes. On the one hand the study concentrates on describing the ways of performing as a HRD practitioner through testing a self-evaluative model for the description of HRD work. On the other hand the study focusses on understanding the processes of developing as a HRD practitioner through the experiences and interpretations of individual HRD practitioners.

The purpose of the study can be divided in three main research tasks:

- 1) What kind is the nature and content of the practice of HRD?
- 2) What is the nature and content of the professional expertise deployed in the practice of HRD?
- 3) How is professional expertise in the practice of HRD developed and constructed?

3.2 Study design

The study design is based on two phases of empirical inquiry, as shown in Figure 3. To start with, the cultural and geographical context for the study is Finland. However, the study also refers to other European countries. In the first phase, the study constituted part of the European comparative study *HRD profession for the 1990s*, coordinated and supervised by the University of Twente in the Netherlands (see e.g. Nijhof & de Rijk 1997). The main object of the European comparative study was to describe the activities of European HRD practitioners. The present study was conducted as a sub-study targeted on Finland, and thus, the survey method and the postal questionnaire were chosen in the same way as in the comparative study. The data gathering for the first phase was conducted in 1995-1996 in Finland. In the postal survey the focus was on the description of the practice of HRD and the nature and content of the professional expertise deployed and needed to do this work. According to the *Models for HRD practice* (McLagan 1989a) which was tested in the survey, the main constituents which the survey participants evaluated were their everyday working roles, outputs in the job and the competencies needed to perform in the job (see a detailed presentation of the *Models for HRD practice* in chapter 4.2). The Finnish results have been reported independently, for example in articles I and III appended to this report. In addition, a comparison of the results across five European countries including Finland, was conducted from the Finnish perspective in article II.

In 1996 the study was included in the research programme on *Learning and the Acquisition of Professional Expertise* in the Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä (Remes 1995). The main object of the programme was to analyse the process of becoming an expert in terms of learning processes, self-regulation, motivation, tutoring and various learning and working environments. The second phase of the study should be regarded as an independent project targeted on Finland. In this phase of the study, interviews were conducted in 1997. The primary purpose of the interview was to understand the processes of developing and constructing professional expertise in the practice of HRD, but the question of describing professional expertise was also touched upon. The thematic areas in the interview were everyday job performance, the organisational context, learning challenges encountered on the job, educational and working careers and two thinking-aloud tasks. The analyses of challenging and problematic situations faced at work and the careers of the HRD practitioners are reported in articles IV and V appended to this report.

| PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH | MAIN RESEARCH TASKS | METHODS |
|---|--|--|
| FIRST PHASE focussed on description | → 1) what is the nature and content of the practice of HRD? 2) what is the nature and content of the professional expertise deployed in the practice of HRD? | → self-evaluative analysis of everyday work using the <i>Models for HRD practice</i> (McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989) conducted in 1995-96 as a postal survey within the European comparative study project |
| SECOND PHASE focussed on understanding | → 2) what is the nature and content of the professional expertise deployed in the practice of HRD? 3) how is professional expertise in the practice of HRD developed and constructed? | → semi-structured interviews conducted in 1997 on HRD practitioners' experiences of their work, learning challenges encountered on a day-to-day basis and careers within the field of HRD |

FIGURE 3 The study design

3.3 Structure of the report

The main task of this report is to summarise, review and discuss the work that has been done as a whole. The report is based on six articles that have been published in the course of this research process. All the articles are appended to this report. Five of them have been written by myself alone and one is co-authored. Each of these articles presents a certain empirical phase of the research process, and addresses particular research tasks and presents conclusions in relation to the overall purpose of the study (see Table 2). This report can be read as an independent publication, but the articles provide a closer examination of each phase of the research. The report reviews the motives behind the research and discusses the contextual underpinnings in somewhat greater detail than the publication format in international academic reports and journals allows. Given that each article also had to function as an independent publication, a certain amount of overlap in the description of the theoretical and empirical aspects will be found in the articles. The theoretical underpinnings, methodological choices as well as the results are summarised and reflected on in this report. On the one hand the report is written on the basis of the theoretical and practical starting points chosen at the outset of the study. On the other hand the starting points, results and discussion are reviewed and presented in the light of the debate which aroused while the research was being done. Hence the report aims to contribute to the current debate on HRD as a field of professional expertise and to suggest topics which merit closer examination in the future development of the field.

TABLE 2 A brief description of the specific research tasks and the use of data and material in each article

| Research tasks | Data and/or material | Article |
|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are the people who carry out HRD work in Finland and what is their personal background (educational background and career path) and their organisational work context? 2. Which are the most typical roles, the most commonly produced outputs and the most important competencies involved in the work of a HRD practitioner? What kind of role profiles are to be found among HRD practitioners? 3. How are practitioners' personal backgrounds or their organisational work context related to their perceptions of their role? 4. What do the results tell us about the assumed transformation of HRD in working life? | Postal survey based on self-evaluative analysis of everyday HRD work in Finland (n=164) | I HRD practitioners analysing their work: what does it tell about their present role in working life? (1997) |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In which kinds of roles do the HRD practitioners in different countries perceive themselves working? 2. What kinds of products or services do the HRD practitioners' work provide in each country? 3. What kinds of competencies do HRD practitioners in each country consider important for their own performance? 4. How do the different elements of HRD work in different countries reflect the changes taking place in working life? | Postal survey based on self-evaluative analysis of everyday HRD work in Finland (n=164) and comparable postal survey reports from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, England | II Human resource development roles and competencies in five European countries (1998) |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the HR developer's conceptions of their work performance in terms of roles and outputs differ and how do these conceptions describe their expertise? 2. What can we say about the underlying structure of expert knowledge and interests in the continuous development of expertise on the basis of the evaluation of the importance of competencies and interests and how are they related to the nature of HR developer's performance? | Postal survey based on self-evaluative analysis of everyday HRD work in Finland (n=164) | III Exploring the nature of human resource developers' expertise (1998) |

(continues)

TABLE 2 (continues)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of problematic situations do HR developers encounter? 2. What kind of solutions have been sought in those situations? 3. What kind of broader themes emerge from the descriptions of what was learnt from the problematic situations? | <p>Semi-structured interviews with twenty full-time HR developers working in different organisations.</p> | <p>IV "Sailing in calm waters doesn't teach": Constructing expertise through problems in work - the case of Finnish human resource developers (1999)</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do HR developers explain their becoming involved in HRD work? 2. How do they interpret their interest in HRD? 3. What kind of personal efforts and other events do they see as having influenced their remaining in the field of HRD? | <p>Semi-structured interviews with twenty full-time HR developers working in different organisations.</p> | <p>V The career stories of HR developers (2002, forthcoming)</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the nature and contents of HRD as a field of practice? 2. In which ways can people become HR developers and how can they develop their expertise while on the job? | <p>Reports of the studies of HR developers from Finland, the Netherlands and UK.</p> | <p>VI HRD as a professional career? Perspectives from Finland, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom (2002, forthcoming)</p> |

4 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

4.1 Mixing methods

Given that the research process was conducted in a specific field of professional practice which has several conceptions of what it may entail, but which lacks a shared understanding of its nature and contents as a field of professional expertise, a holistic approach to the methodology was adopted. Researching a field like HRD forces the researcher to make choices, since a single research process can illuminate only a small part of the phenomenon under study. In order to capture and understand the essence of HRD as professional expertise through the view of expertise as experienced performance, the one methodological challenge was to identify and describe the particular elements of the practitioners' everyday job performance, i.e. their tasks, activities, behaviours, outcomes and adopted forms of knowledge (Ericsson & Charness 1994). Another methodological challenge was to identify and understand certain experiential processes related to performance, i.e., experiences of everyday problematic situations at work and during the occupational career, and to see how the practitioners attribute meaning to those experiences. Related to this was the challenge of analysing how this kind of interpretation contributes to an understanding of HRD as a field of professional expertise (Tynjälä et al. 1997). In contrast to studies of expert performance as salient and observable achievement this study focussed on evaluations and descriptions provided by the practitioners themselves (Ericsson & Charness 1994). Accordingly, the study aimed at building an experience-based description of professional expertise in the practice of HRD.

In order to answer these two methodological challenges, the study was conducted in two phases, each of which had its own methodological approach, and thus provided their own sets of data and means of analysis. Accordingly, the study adopted a between-methods approach, which means using different methods in relation to the research tasks of the study (see Brannen 1992). In terms of triangulation this approach can be labelled triangulation by method and data. Nevertheless, the adoption of the between-methods approach was not rooted in

the need to confirm findings through triangulation, even though such evaluations became also possible in the course of the research process. Rather, the use of multiple methods was aimed at producing an illuminating and many-faceted picture of the research object (see Brannen 1992; Denzin 1978, 301-302; Miles & Huberman 1994, 266-267).

In this study a postal questionnaire survey was combined with a semi-structured interview (both are described in more detail in the following sections). Thus, the material for the analysis consisted of two different types of data: 1) HRD practitioners' answers to a structured self-evaluation questionnaire and 2) HRD practitioners' answers to semi-structured interview themes concerning the scope of their work, challenging and problematic situations encountered in their daily work and their educational and occupational careers. The aim behind integrating the two types of data was to capture both the structural (describing) and processual (understanding) aspects of professional expertise (Bryman 1992). In relation to research on expertise in general, both answering the self-evaluation questionnaire and the interview were direct methods which asked the practitioners themselves to identify and explain the features of their work as well as of their professional expertise. Each procedure was based on a different form of verbalization. Thus, the practitioners were asked to verbalize their performance in terms of specific questions of what it constitutes as well as in general terms of how and what kind of processes it includes. The purpose of these direct methods was to elicit the different forms of knowledge embedded in the practitioners' experience (Gordon 1992; Reitman-Olson & Biolsi 1991). It might be asked, how much do questionnaires and interviews help in describing the different forms of knowledge of the practitioners, and especially the tacit knowledge embedded in experience (Sternberg 1999). Hence an alternative would have been to add observations of performance in general or the performance of special tasks. However, the vague knowledge and understanding of the field under study supported the choice of starting the exploration with questioning and interviewing. Both forms of verbalization aimed at activating the practitioners into describing the doing of their actual everyday jobs in all their many aspects.

The structured questionnaire provided numerical data for the descriptive analyses, whereas the interviews resulted in texts for interpretative analysis. Accordingly, the study design can also be described as a combination of two different approaches to scientific research: the theory-driven and the data-driven (cf. Tynjälä 1999). While the analysis of the survey data followed the structure of the questionnaire, which adopted the categories defined in advance for the self-evaluation of HRD work (McLagan 1989a; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989), the analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in themes and groupings not determined prior to the analysis. Thus, both methods provided their own way of telling the story of HRD as a field of professional expertise (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). Using the questionnaire enabled a detailed description of HRD according to a taxonomic model, while the interview was planned to obtain an understanding of the field by giving space to the data, i.e. the interpretations of HRD practitioners themselves.

Furthermore, mixing methods meant that the empirical phases of the study also differed as to the selection of the participants. Given the exploratory nature

of the study, in both phases the sampling of the participants was purposive and more theory-driven than done on a random basis (Arber 1993; Glaser & Strauss 1967, 45-49; Miles & Huberman 1994, 27-30). In the first empirical phase of the study, the participants were two large groups of members of two professional associations who were assumed to be experienced HRD practitioners and thus representative of the subject area of the study. In the second empirical study, the twenty participants were deliberately chosen according to certain criteria based on studies of professional expertise. The participants were chosen from among the respondents in the first phase to strictly represent experienced performance in HRD.

The first, practical, reason for mixing the methods in this study was the fact that in its early phase the study formed part of a comparative survey project utilising a questionnaire. Thus, the research process began as a commitment to a specific study design and model of description. How well this model was suited to the description of professional expertise is elaborated on in the following sections. However, an early decision was made to enlarge the methodology and combine methods in order to find answers to the research questions. This decision helped in the overall conduct of the study during the design, data collection and analytical phases in several ways, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994, 41, 267). For instance, the survey helped in finding an appropriate sample and suitable cases for interview. The survey also yielded a broad overview of HRD practitioners and provided background data valuable in planning the interview themes. In turn, the interview data helped by deepening the survey results and enriching the empirical picture gained in the study, and by providing an interpretative approach to the research questions. It can be problematised, however, whether a theory-driven start with defined categories in the questionnaire was the optimal choice for the study. Nevertheless, had the model used in the survey not been available, the holistic approach to the methodology could have been completed the other way around. Namely, first conducting an interview adopting an interpretative approach in order to build an empirical and theoretical model for understanding, and then testing the model through, e.g. a questionnaire (see Horvath et al. 1999).

In sum, the research process seen as a whole took advantage of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which were used in interaction and regarded as mutually complementary rather than as mutually exclusive (Brannen 1992; Kvale 1996, 69). Given the purposes of describing and understanding and the adoption of the between-methods approach, the research process was not committed solely to a single paradigm within scientific research. In using both structured and interpretative methods and theory-driven and data-driven analyses, the emphasis was, however, laid on the subjects' understanding of reality rather than on the objectivistic probability of reality, on individuals' constructions rather than on approximation, and on providing constructions for further evaluation and reconstruction rather than on providing nonfalsified facts and criteria regarding the phenomenon under scrutiny (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Table 6 in the end of this chapter provides a summary of the methodological choices in this research.

4.2 Studying professional expertise as an analysis of roles, outputs and competencies in the practice of professional work – *Models for HRD Practice*

The first empirical phase of the research process can be described as the documenting of workplace expertise where the aspects of job and the embedded expertise that emerged were analysed through a self-evaluative process (McLagan 1989a; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989; Swanson 1994). This evaluation was part of the European comparative survey project on HRD practitioners, which has applied the same role-based model of job analysis in several countries in Europe. This model of job analysis was developed in the USA under the title the *Models for HRD practice* (McLagan 1989a; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989). This analytical model, as well as the rich tradition of studying and defining the roles of HRD practitioners was commissioned in the main by the *ASTD (American Society for Training and Development)* (McLagan 1989a; McLagan & Bedrick 1983; Nadler & Nadler 1989; Pinto & Walker 1978; Sredl & Rothwell 1987). The *Models for HRD Practice* is the result of the research which aimed at producing a model for HRD practice that would identify work and competency requirements in various roles in HRD. In addition, the research process was developed to recognize future trends, quality requirements and ethical questions facing HRD work (McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989, 7-14). Thus, *Models for HRD practice* can be regarded as one possible set of criteria defined from the perspective of the future at the end of the eighties for a description of HRD as a field of professional expertise.

The European comparative research project *HRD Profession for the 90s* was supervised and carried out at the University of Twente in the Netherlands (see articles I, II and III; see e.g. van Ginkel, Mulder & Nijhof 1997; Nijhof & de Rijk 1997; Odenthal & Nijhof 1996; de Rijk, Mulder & Nijhof 1994). The project started in the Netherlands in 1993 and was joined by the present study in 1995 with the promise to collect comparable data from Finland. The whole comparative research project was an attempt to describe the activities of European HRD practitioners according to the *Models for HRD practice* and, especially, to advance development and education in this field. In addition, the aim was to assess the validity of the USA-based *Models for HRD practice* in the European context.

The starting point of the *HRD model*³ is that work done by professional practitioners can be described in terms of *roles, outputs and competencies*. In this research project the descriptions of these three groups of terms of are adopted and taken straight from the original reports (e.g. McLagan 1989a; 1989b). Firstly, professional work can be described by the *roles* that the practitioners perform in their jobs. A role is a functional title and it comprises a set of closely related behaviours and activities associated with an individual's job, and thus indicates

³ *Models for HRD practice* is the collective title of a set of four publications which consist of a research report, conclusive report and guide books written on the basis of the research effort and published by the ASTD. In the present report the shorter term *HRD model* is used to refer to the analytical model consisting of descriptions of roles, outputs and competencies in HRD work found in the publications.

a personal approach to the job. (McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989, 69; Pace, Smith & Mills 1991, 12-13; Sredl & Rothwell 1987, 57-58.) However, in this context roles are seen from the perspective of the individual practitioner. A role expresses the parts that an individual is playing in the organisational setting, and thus it serves as a starting point in understanding that individual's performance in the organisation. For individual practitioners the evaluation of roles is a means by which to reflect on their own work and thus roles can be used to enhance our understanding of a professional field. The HRD model identified and described eleven potential roles for HRD practitioners: administrator, evaluator, HRD manager, HRD material developer, individual career development advisor, instructor or facilitator, marketer, needs analyst, organisation change agent, program designer and researcher (see also chapter 4.5.1 and Appendix 1, p. 124). Consequently, individual jobs may be described by one role or a combination of several roles (McLagan 1989b; McLagan & Suhadolnik 1989).

In the HRD model each role is associated with certain products, services and information. These are presented as *outputs* (McLagan 1989a; 1989b). Outputs are seen as key dimensions in HRD work and as potential and controllable outcomes from performing HRD work. Products are countable and immediately usable items, such as information material, learning material, plans, budgets or measurement tools. Services and information refer more to doing or acting than to concrete products. They are more implicit than countable products and may or may not have the intended effects. These include for instance recommendations, facilitation and models for change. The HRD model consists of seventy-four outputs, which have been indicated as the most critical contributions across the HRD field and grouped according to roles (see also chapter 4.5.1 and Appendix 1, pp. 125-127). Thus, each combination of role and outputs describes the characteristics of performance and its outcomes in a professional field. (McLagan 1989a; 1989b.)

The HRD model also combines roles with certain *competencies*. The thirty-five competencies which are listed in the HRD model are defined as the dimensions of knowledge and skills potentially important in performance across the full range of HRD work (McLagan 1989a; 1989b; see also chapter 4.5.1 and Appendix 1, pp. 128-130). Competencies are defined as knowledge, skills and understanding which relate to the design, implementation, evaluation, and management of HRD, to communication and interaction and to the acquisition and use of information for HRD purposes. The HRD model groups competencies into technical, business, interpersonal and intellectual competencies. By their descriptions competencies can also be located in the various forms of knowledge suggested as constituting expert knowledge in some professional field (e.g. Tynjälä 1999). Thus, the HRD model implies that job performance in HRD includes both the adoption of formal, practical and self-regulative dimensions of knowledge, such as understanding training and development theories, knowing how to do cost-benefit analysis or give feedback and possessing self-knowledge.

In sum, in the present study the HRD model was applied as a menu for the self-evaluation and understanding of one's job performance and of the knowledge and skills which enable that performance. Hence it offered a means for the analysis of HRD practice and a starting point for the analysis of professional

expertise in HRD. It can be asked, however, how well the elements of the model, i.e. roles, outputs and competencies correspond with the view of professional expertise as an experienced performance and as an experiential relationship between the practitioner and the job. Roles and outputs present descriptions of behaviours and activities as well as controllable products and services, which were identified as the most critical contributions across the experts in the HRD field. Consequently, in terms of seeing professional expertise as an active process of doing the job, roles and outputs can be seen as manifesting the nature of that process (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993; Blackler 1995). In this view professional expertise is also seen as an intentional process which is led by individual and contextual aims, purposes and challenges. It can be argued, however, whether this model neglects the contribution of aims and purposes to the ways in which a range of behaviours and activities and products and services can be accomplished. Aims and purposes are not directly asked about in the adoption of the HRD model, but in the present study they were added to the questionnaire (see chapter 4.5.1 and Appendix 1, p. 4-5). Nevertheless, in the numerous phases of the research effort by McLagan and Suhadolnik (1989) the reviewing processes of roles and outputs took into account the future challenges and quality requirements of HRD work. Thus the aims and purposes are indirectly embedded in the evaluation and definition of the most critical outputs and roles in this occupational field.

Another critical question can be posed to the approach to the construct of competency in the HRD model. One can ask how well it corresponds with the definition of professional expertise and the types of knowledge which comprise expertise adopted in this study. As mentioned in the earlier paragraphs in this report, in the HRD model competencies are defined as knowledge, skills and understanding that enable the practitioners to do their jobs. Hence competencies can also be grouped according to roles (McLagan 1989b). In general, the debate on the construct of competency in the study of professional knowledge and training has been broad and has been productive of several approaches. Hager and Gonczi (1996) have summarised these approaches in three categories: competency as task-based, as an individual attribute and as an integration of individual attributes and specific characteristics of a task. In the definition of competencies *task-based approach* clearly follows a behaviourist tradition and is therefore concerned with identifying discrete behaviours associated with specific tasks in a certain job. The most well-known adoption of this approach is competency-based training where the curriculum is designed to ensure that practitioners can perform the right tasks in the defined job. (Hager & Gonczi 1996; cf. Eraut 1994, 168-172.) The approach to competency *as an individual attribute* focusses on those general attributes of the practitioner that enable him or her to do the job. Thus identification of competency concentrates more on general personal and cognitive attributes, which are seen as context-free, than on formal domain-specific knowledge. In terms of professional training this approach faces problems in defining whether the generic competencies actually exist and whether they are trainable or inherited attributes. (Hager & Gonczi 1996; cf. Eraut 1994, 172-177). The third, most recent approach in the debate on competency starts from the idea that job performance and what it results in always interacts with the individual's potential

abilities to carry out the job in a certain context. This *holistic or integrated* approach to competency is relational as it brings together practitioners' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and the particular situations and contexts in which practitioners work. Hence competency cannot be actualised until the relation between the practitioner and the job exists. (Hager & Gonczi 1996, cf. Ellström 1997; Sandberg 1994; Stevenson 1996.) Accordingly, a holistic understanding of competency can be seen as analogous to the view of professional expertise adopted in this study.

Consequently, the general definition of competencies presented in the HRD model seems to reflect the generic approach to the construct of competency. For example, *intellectual versatility* or *self-knowledge* can be seen as underlying the individual attributes which enable the practitioner to do the job. However, a closer look on the list of competencies suggests that descriptions of behaviours and activities are also included, e.g. *feedback skill* and *writing skill*. Furthermore, the study design settled upon in the comparative survey project asked the HRD practitioners to evaluate competencies in terms of the role chosen by them to best describe the focus of their actual activity in their jobs. Hence the holistic approach can also be used here. In all, the mixture of all the approaches found in the HRD model may reflect the manifold and flexible nature of HRD work; the competency descriptions attempt to offer as broad picture as possible of the nature and scope of the work (Eraut 1994, 164-167). Similarly, a wide picture is seen if the list of competencies is read from the point of view of the different types of knowledge embedded in professional expertise, as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs. On these grounds, taking the first step in studying professional expertise in HRD work as an analysis of roles, outputs and competencies as presented in the HRD model was seen to meet the purpose of the research.

Finally, a short note is also in order on the distinctions between the terms *competency* and *competence*. The term *competence* is also widely used in the literature on the subject. Both words are used interchangeably and sometimes they are used in the same source without a distinction being made. The major distinction between these words is in their origin: in UK English, *competence*, and in US English, *competency*. However, a conceptual difference has also been made between these two terms in the literature. In general, *competence* is given a holistic and overall meaning, *competency* being more specific and referring to specific capabilities (Ashworth & Saxton 1990; Eraut 1994, 179).

4.3 Studying professional expertise as learning from experience

The second empirical phase of the research process draws on the view that the ways in which the job is performed and experienced by a practitioner constitutes the foundation of professional expertise. Accordingly, research on expertise has suggested that to be an expert in a field means deep engagement in the relevant tasks, and thus also requires emotional involvement from the practitioner (Holyoak 1991; Scardamalia & Bereiter 1991). While the first phase of the research process emphasised the evaluation of attributes describing job performance and various forms of related knowledge of an individual, the methodological decisions in the second phase aimed at describing and understanding the different ways of engaging in and experiencing the job that combine with the relevant knowledge to form the distinctive nature and content of expertise. (Dall'Alba & Sandberg 1995; Sandberg 1994.)

The view of professional expertise as experienced performance (see chapter 2.5) implies that expertise is not a final, attainable stage of linear development, but includes processes of continuous learning, where individual experience and individual explaining and interpretation of experience have an important role to play. Thus, understanding those processes of learning becomes essential. According to Malinen's (2000) analysis of theories of adult experiential learning, experiences are to be understood as passed and lived through, as imported into daily activities and left tacit if not required to be verbalized, and as true and meaningful for the individual him/herself. They may be incomplete and inadequate in relation, for instance, to some model or practice, but nonetheless constitute a holistic unity for the individual him/herself. These kind of first-order experiences form the basis for learning, including the development of professional expertise, since they influence the way the practitioner understands and acts in her/his job. However, in order to understand where learning actually begins we need to look at the interplay between first-order experiences and second-order experiences, which are identified as disturbing and arousing doubt, for instance towards one's understanding of some aspect of one's job, as generating negative feelings or confusion, and as putting a person in the situation of facing a choice while being oriented to continuity. (Malinen 2000, 59-68.) Following the previous characterization of experiences, in this research process the focus was on the one hand on the basic structure behind the practitioner's performance formulated by first-order experiences, i.e. for instance on her/his verbalizing about the job and the knowledge and skills which are used in it. On the other hand, the research interest was in second-order experiences, i.e. for instance in problematic situations in the daily round or on occurrences during the career that have been immediate and included a potential for learning.

The importance of personal experience both in the private and work contexts, instead of formal education, for the development of professional expertise has been indicated in studies on well-educated professionals. Furthermore, studies have pointed to the nature of experience as tacit and implicit, contributing to the hidden aspects of knowledge as constituents of professional expertise (Dominice 1990; Eteläpelto 1994; Horvath et al. 1999;

Marchant & Robinson 1999). The idea of continuous learning from experience in the social interaction as well as in a variety of, especially, challenging situations encountered on a day-to-day basis and during the career is interwoven in the recent debate on professional expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993; Engeström 1992; Lave & Wenger 1991; Schön 1987; Tynjälä et al. 1997). Furthermore, learning from experience can be understood in a constructivist framework, where learning requires a process of constructing, i.e. actively interpreting and making sense of one's experiences (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1993; Jarvis 1995, 75-80; Kolb 1984, 26-38; Malinen 2000, 46-54; Schön 1987, 22-40). Consequently, here certain aspects of theories of experiential learning and of recent approaches to professional expertise were found to share similarities, as shown in Table 3. The correspondence between the two was used as a starting point for the methodological choices in the second phase of the study (see articles IV, pp. 180-185 and V, pp. 2-8).

TABLE 3 Summary of corresponding propositions for experiential learning and professional expertise

| Propositions for experiential learning (see, e.g. Boud, Cohen & Walker 1993; Jarvis 1995; Kolb, 1984; Schön 1987) | Propositions for professional expertise (see, e.g. Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993; Engeström 1992; Lave & Wenger 1991; Schön 1987) |
|---|---|
| Learning is... | Expertise is... |
| a continuous process, not a final outcome | a continuous and evolving process, not an endpoint or static state |
| potentially based on every experience and constructed through the active processing of experiences | constructed through experiences and individual careers, where knowledge is used in solving practical problems and problems of understanding |
| the resolution of conflicts which arise through adaptation to various contexts and critical reflection on one's knowledge | an intentional process of tackling, identifying and solving new problems |
| a holistic process which combines different forms of human knowledge | comprises both formal knowledge and hidden knowledge actualised in performance, emotions, judgements, decisions and self-regulation |
| socially, culturally and emotionally constructed interaction | a social process of applying and constructing knowledge according to the contextual demands |
| the creation of new knowledge | a progressive process in which the practitioner adopts problem solving strategies which extend her/his expertise |

To explore development of professional expertise as learning from experience and in a constructivist framework sets another focus on the processes of explaining and interpreting experience. Here individuals' interpretations of their experiences are taken as a point of departure (Schwandt 1994). In the experiential approach it has to be accepted that experience as such does not change humans, nor can it be analysed by direct observation. As Robinson and Hawpe (1986) state, it is reflecting on experience that provides the opportunity for developmental change, and by that reflection people make meaning of experience. Processes of reflection and interpretation have been regarded as the central constituents of the development of professional expertise. As a part of the construction of professional expertise these processes are always seen as retrospective; they cannot change what has happened but they have the potential to direct the forthcoming development which is to be assessed, again retrospectively (Eraut 1994, 146-149; Schön 1987, 26-32). The underlying idea is that individuals can build up their professional expertise through reflection, which can be seen as the stories told about lived situations where selves and worlds within the occupational framework are simultaneously and interactively created, maintained and transformed (Cortazzi 1993, 5-24; Edwards & Usher 1996). Accordingly, stories can be seen as verbal expressions of experience. Stories can also be seen as a form of textual material which can be analysed in order to illustrate and understand the nature and the content and the construction of professional expertise (Cortazzi 1993, 5-24; Edwards & Usher 1996; Horvath 1999; Kelchtermans 1993). Consequently, as a methodological choice, the narrative approach to the study of development of professional expertise was chosen (see articles IV, pp. 180-185 and V, pp. 2-8).

4.3.1 A narrative approach to the development of professional expertise

The narrative approach to development is grounded in the idea that we live our lives as we tell our stories. Thus, the life as lived and life as narrated interact in a mutual process of informing and transforming (Bruner 1987; Elbaz-Luwisch 1997; Widdershoven 1993). The narrative approach is interested in the stories which people tell and in their own valuation of the events in their lives. Thus it emphasizes a subjective and retrospective interpretation of how one has developed. This means that development can be narrated and understood only in retrospect, after one has arrived at a position from which to judge how and why one has become to what one is now (Rossiter 1999). In sum, narrative research is interested in the unique ways in which individuals have structured their experience, and thus it focusses on the complexity of human motives, thoughts and feelings which are revealed in the stories told. Accordingly, narrative is seen as a natural and central way of organizing and recording our social and personal experience. However, stories are not replicates or literal recreations of experience, but expressions of it and a means through which the individual can make sense of it (Schwandt 1994; Singer 1996).

Rossiter (1999) states that the dominance of stage and phase models in descriptions of adult development could usefully be complemented by a narrative approach to development which would give due weight to the experiential

context. According to Rossiter (1999), stage models in adult development suggest certain starts and endpoints and the direction of development. Similarly, when the term narrative is adopted, for instance, in theories of learning or cognitive development, a progressive narrative is implied (Gergen & Gergen 1996). The dominance of progressive stage models is analogous to the models of development of professional expertise. This can be seen, for instance, in the novice-to-expert model by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) and in its many applications in various professions (e.g. Benner 1989; Berliner 1988). Narrative research on the acquisition of professional expertise implies an alternative which sees development as a dynamic and open process of construction, and knowledge as something which exists in many forms and which can be elicited by various means such as verbalization (Elbaz-Luwisch 1997). In addition to the progressive approach to the study of professional expertise, the narrative approach has largely been adopted in educational research, especially in the study of teacher development (e.g. Acker 1997; Feuerverger 1997; Kelchtermans 1993; Syrjälä, Estola, Mäkelä & Kangas 1996), but also in many other fields of professional practice, for instance, in entrepreneurship (Rae & Carswell 2000), military leadership (Horvath et al. 1999) and the fields of HRD and human relations in organisations (Hansen & Kahnweiler 1993; Hansen, Kahnweiler & Wilensky 1994). Furthermore, the narrative approach has been adopted in the organisational context, for instance in studies of organisations' learning histories (Roth & Kleiner 1998).

In addition, from the point of view of studying the construction of professional expertise in a practice like HRD it may be asked why the choice of narrative approach was seen as particularly appropriate. Given the complexities in the practice of HRD, starting points and positive ends or progressiveness are problematic topics. Furthermore, the generalizability of developmental stages to a field like HRD which lacks an established structure and training schemes for its development may be difficult. The narrative approach to development implies that development has a never-ending character and thus removes the ceilings from the process of development and questions pre-defined and fixed criteria. Consequently, it corresponds to the view of professional expertise adopted in this study as well as to the professional practice in question, HRD. However, on the general level, in order to adopt a narrative approach certain targets and evaluative directions or starting points for the analysis of the development of professional expertise need to be found (Gergen & Gergen 1996). In this study these were drawn, firstly from job performance and the understanding of problematic situations as the resource for learning in daily job. Secondly, evaluation was directed to career-building through the everyday course of work. The focus of the characterization of career-building in terms of professional development has been, for instance on engagement or on how one relates oneself to work (e.g. Olesen 2001), on the nature of work activity (e.g. Poikela 1999, 196-203) or as was done in the present study, on the motivational themes which seem to lie behind individuals' decisions and actions during their careers (McAdams 1993; Singer 1996).

4.4 Participants and selection procedure

4.4.1 First phase – postal questionnaire

The target population of the study was defined as HRD practitioners, that is, persons working in various organisations in Finland and occupying positions where they are responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating the development of human resources, that is, the people employed in those organisations. In terms of the reachability of the target population for the postal questionnaire, HRD, given its unspecified nature, was a somewhat problematic field of professional practice. Selection of the participants could not be based on alumni registers or on trade union membership. Therefore, to ensure the availability of as appropriate a group of participants as possible two professional associations were approached: *Julkishallinnon kouluttajat ry. (Association of Trainers in Public Administration)* and *Henry, Henkilöstöjohdon ryhmä ry. (The Finnish Association for Human Resource Management, see <http://www.henryorg.fi>)*. Both associations are concerned with the practice of human resource development and management in various organisations and operate on the basis of personal interest and voluntary initiative. Both associations were contacted in order to acquire membership information and contact addresses and to ensure their support for the research effort.

Given the problems in finding suitable representatives of the target population, as many potential representatives as possible from each association were selected as participants. Six-hundred and ninety-nine (N=699) members were selected from the two voluntary professional associations: all the members of the Association of Trainers in Public Administration (N=238) except those who were also members of the other association studied, and 461 members of the Finnish Association for Human Resource Management. In the latter case the selection of members was confined to those who had left a contact address for non-association purposes. Those who were found to have been in the pretest groups were left out. In this phase of the study no distinction was made between internal specialists working on HRD activities either full time or on a part-time basis, and practitioners involved in organisational development schemes as private trainers or consultants external to the organisation or working for a training company, as this would have been impossible on the basis of membership directories. Despite the risk of obtaining a biased group, the use of these associations as representatives of the defined target population as a whole was considered a benefit, since the members can be assumed to be people who are involved in HRD, recognize HRD as their field of professional practice, and are also interested in evaluating their own work. The postal survey was conducted on the assumption that it would not meet a high response rate but would be a means to making contact with persons who identify themselves as HRD practitioners.

After reminders and encouragement from the directorates of the associations the total number of participants in the survey was 164 respondents. Thus, the final response rate was 23.5 % (16.8% among the members of the Association of Trainers in Public Administration and 26.9% among those of the Finnish

Association for Human Resource Management). When compared to large postal surveys based on clearly identifiable target populations and systematic sampling the response rate can be considered moderately low (Newell 1993). It was, however, common to the comparable postal surveys in the other EU countries participating in the project. It was possible to compare respondents in gender and age to the total memberships of the associations. This analysis indicated in both cases that they were representative of their respective Finnish associations. Similarly, comparison of response and non-response groups revealed no significant differences in this respect.

Given the purpose of the postal survey phase, the representativeness of the response group should not be evaluated on the basis of quantity. Instead, the descriptions of the respondents' education and work provides better evidence as to whether they can be regarded as HRD practitioners or not. As Table 4 shows, both women and men were fairly evenly represented in the data, the participating HR developers tended to have a fairly long education, especially professional further education linked to HRD, they showed involvement in HRD as their career and had long work experience in general, in HRD and in their current jobs. Table 5 indicates the good representativeness of the response group in terms of job titles and the evaluation of job content. It can be seen from Tables 4 and 5 that the participants were highly educated and experienced practitioners. In addition, the diversity of the field can be seen in the variety of disciplines the participants had previously studied as well as in the diversity of both their job titles and job content. Furthermore, when the participants were asked to evaluate the aims and purposes of HRD, the most valued of these were concerned firstly with integrating HRD into the management, strategies and aims of the organisation. Secondly, the most valued purposes and aims were concerned with people and reflected the importance of continuous learning and the learning capacity of individuals and groups (Valkeavaara 1997).

4.4.2 Second phase – interview

The selection of the interviewees was purposive and directed first at those respondents to the survey questionnaire who stated that they were full-time, in-house HRD practitioners spending half or more of their working time on HRD activities. Thus in this first step the criteria were based on the subject area of the study, HRD. This resulted in fifty-seven cases. The selection of the twenty interviewees was theoretically determined and targeted at those practitioners who could be assumed to maximise the attainment of the research tasks. There are no general rules for deciding the number of participants in a qualitative interview study, and thus, the decision should always serve the research objectives. In addition, in many cases the decision is grounded in the time and resources available for the research process. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 61-64; Kvale 1996, 101-103.) For these practical reasons alone the number of interviewees was limited initially to twenty cases. Hence the sampling was pre-determined and not primarily based on the attainment of theoretical saturation, i.e. the point where no new analytical insights are seen to emerge in the course of doing the interviews. Nevertheless, the data from the twenty interviewees appeared both to meet the

research objects and fulfill the point of saturation, which meant that there was no need to increase the number of interviews. (Arber 1993; Glaser & Strauss 1967, 61-62.)

TABLE 4 Characteristics of the respondents of the survey (n=164)

| Variable | Categories | f | % |
|--|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Gender | female | 77 | 47.0 |
| | male | 87 | 53.0 |
| Age | 25-34 | 6 | 3.7 |
| | 35-44 | 38 | 23.3 |
| | 45-55 | 97 | 59.9 |
| | >55 | 22 | 13.5 |
| Educational level | university degree | 147 | 90.3 |
| Field of education | economics/administration/law | 60 | 40.0 |
| | education/behavioural/social | 67 | 44.7 |
| | natural/technical | 23 | 15.3 |
| Professional further education in HRD | yes | 131 | 82.9 |
| Years of work experience in general | 5-9 | 91 | 5.5 |
| | >10 | 54 | 94.5 |
| Years of experience of HRD work | <1-4 | 10 | 6.2 |
| | 5-9 | 34 | 21.0 |
| | >10 | 118 | 72.8 |
| Years in present job | <1-4 | 54 | 33.1 |
| | 5-9 | 59 | 36.2 |
| | >10 | 50 | 30.7 |
| Future orientation in HRD | yes | 125 | 79.1 |
| % of working time spent in HRD | <10-24 | 33 | 26.9 |
| | 25-49 | 24 | 15.0 |
| | 50-100 | 93 | 58.1 |
| HRD position in relation to organisation | internal full-time | 77 | 52.4 |
| | internal part-time | 33 | 22.4 |
| | external | 37 | 25.2 |

The selection of the twenty interviewees followed the formal characteristics, e.g. experienced, educated and qualified, which are usually presented in the background of expert practitioners in a domain (Stein 1997; Tynjälä et al. 1997). In knowledge-rich and human-centred domains long professional experience tends to enhance the capabilities needed in explaining and evaluating personal work experience. Several years of experience seems, for instance, to enable better self-regulatory analysis of personal work performances in computer programming

(Eteläpelto 1993), to bring accuracy into foreseeing and dealing with possible problem situations in the work of physicists' (Glaser & Chi 1988), and to bring confidence in decision making and in the practice of interpersonal relationships in educational management (Bullock, James & Jamieson 1995).

TABLE 5 Description of the response group of the survey by formal job titles and main job content (n=159)

| | Job title | Main job content |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|
| | (f) % | % |
| HRD/training manager | (40) 25.2 | |
| human resource development | | 57.5 |
| human resource development and management | | 25.0 |
| consulting, training and management development | | 17.5 |
| other manager (executive, project, development, quality, research etc.) | (39) 24.5 | |
| human resource development | | 25.6 |
| human resource development and management | | 17.9 |
| human resource management | | 12.8 |
| consulting, training and management development | | 43.6 |
| HRM manager | (29) 18.2 | |
| human resource development | | 13.8 |
| human resource development and management | | 58.6 |
| human resource management | | 24.1 |
| consulting, training and management development | | 3.4 |
| trainer/teacher/consultant | (26) 16.3 | |
| human resource development | | 46.2 |
| human resource development and management | | 11.5 |
| consulting and training | | 42.3 |
| planning officer in HRD | (16) 10.1 | |
| human resource development | | 68.8 |
| consulting and training | | 31.3 |
| others | (9) 5.7 | |
| human resource development | | 44.4 |
| human resource development and management | | 11.1 |
| human resource management | | 11.1 |
| consulting, training and management development | | 33.3 |

In sum, the interviewees had more than ten years of work experience in general and ten years or more of experience in HRD. According to their job titles most of them worked as training or HRD managers. They also saw their future occupational orientation as within HRD. Furthermore, the participants were selected so that a) the content of their educational background varied from studies in education to studies in administration, business and technical fields and

b) so that roughly half of them were employed in the public sector (n=12) and half in private organisations (n=8). Participants were also deliberately chosen to represent the various HRD roles identified in the survey, e.g. change agents, HRD managers, designers and trainers. In addition, an equal amount of men (n=10) and women (n=10) were chosen.

The age of the participants ranged from late the 30s to the late 50s, the average age being in the late 40s. The interviews revealed that all the participants had started their working lives in their early twenties during or after their basic education and had thus accumulated work experience of various kinds ranging from thirteen to forty years. The participants had worked for their present employer from three to thirty-two years, average was 17 years. Their experience of HRD work ranged from nine to thirty years, average 18 years.

4.5 Methods used in deriving the data

4.5.1 First phase – postal questionnaire

The questionnaire employed permitted the investigation of the roles, outputs and competencies linked with HRD from the HRD practitioners' own point of view. The structure and the contents of the postal questionnaire were based on the *Models for HRD Practice* (McLagan 1989a), and followed a standardised format with some modifications in all the countries where the postal survey was conducted as a part of the European comparative research project *HRD profession for the 90s*. The questionnaire is attached to this report in appendix 1 (see also chapter 4.2). The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed and structured questions offering a list of categories or scales for the respondent to choose from. The layout of the questionnaire was designed as a leaflet and included an introductory letter and instructions (e.g. Newell 1993). The terms for roles, outputs and competencies were taken straight from McLagan (1989a). In the present research the terms were translated into Finnish. In addition, a section concerning values and aims in HRD was added. The questionnaire was pretested in Spring 1995 by interviewing four Finnish HRD practitioners working in various positions in different organisations and by a pilot group (n=27) consisting of the participants of a Programme Design Course for HRD practitioners. In autumn 1995 the translation of the English terms was also evaluated and discussed in co-operation with the researcher conducting a corresponding postal survey in Germany (Odenthal & Nijhof 1996). In addition, the pre-coding of the questions into a computer programme was accomplished in co-operation with the researchers in the University of Twente, the Netherlands.

Roles. Firstly, HRD performance is described by means of eleven role alternatives, which relate to training, organisational development schemes, planning and supporting an individual person's career development as well as to managing all these functions in an organisation. The role alternatives were: administrator, evaluator, HRD manager, HRD materials developer, career development advisor, instructor/trainer, marketer, needs analyst, organisation

change agent, programme designer and researcher. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to name one out of the eleven possible roles which was the most important in terms of the amount of time they spent on it. In addition, they were asked to name a role which they considered otherwise of particular importance and possible additional roles which would describe their performance better than those presented in the questionnaire.

Outputs. Secondly, the questionnaire listed seventy-four feasible work outputs and the participants were asked to name the outputs (yes/no) which they actually realised in their work from the viewpoint of their most time-consuming role. Outputs were seen as the actual products and services which were generated as outcomes of the work role. However, the list of outputs did not show to which role each output is assigned in the *HRD Model*. The roles together with the outputs were seen here as describing the HR developer's performance and thus reflecting the requirements and aims of the specific job. These descriptions may or may not constitute job's whole content.

Competencies. Thirdly, the participants were asked to assess thirty-five different competencies according to their importance (a four-point scale from very important to not at all important), by the level of their interest in further development in each competency (a four-point scale from very interested to not at all interested), and by the level of competency (basic, competent and advanced). The assessment was to be done according to the most time-consuming role. Competencies described the knowledge needed in HRD work in terms of cognitive, affective and motor skills and factors, personality traits and social skills, which thus covered both trainable, formal knowledge and skills and general, less explicit knowledge. The importance and level of the competencies referred to subjectively-determined knowledge and skills which the respondents believed contributed to successful performance of their job (Ellström 1997; McLagan 1989a; 1989b). Evaluation of interest in personal development in competencies referred to areas in which HR developers experienced a need for continuous development of their expertise. The evaluation of the importance of competencies and interest in personal development in competencies are reported in articles I, pp.28-34 and II, pp. 181-183, whereas this summarising report focusses on the importance attributed to the competencies.

In addition, the questionnaire listed fourteen statements of the aims and purposes of HRD work. The participants were asked to respond to the statements according to their own personal view of HRD (a five-point scale from totally agree to totally disagree) (for a more detailed report of the evaluation of the statements, see Valkeavaara 1997). Furthermore, a variety of personal and organisational attributes were studied.

Each participant received the questionnaire by mail and was asked to complete and return it to the researcher. Participants from the *Finnish Association for Human Resource Management* received the questionnaire in the beginning of December 1995 and those from the *Association of Trainers in Public Administration* in January 1996. Both associations encouraged their members by letters to participate in the study. A second request was also sent in order to remind the participants to respond. All the questionnaires included in the study arrived by the end of March 1996.

4.5.2 Second phase – interview

The selected twenty HR developers were informed that the purpose of the interview was to supplement the survey conducted earlier and to ask about their experiences and conceptions in order to investigate the quality and development of expertise in HRD work. The first contact was made by sending out a letter which included a summary of the survey results. The telephone contact which followed the letter generally motivated the HR developers positively towards participating in the research effort and, as a researcher, I was warmly welcomed. According to a study of public-sector practitioners involved in development work (Filander 1998), developers seldom have the opportunity to stop and deliberate about their work or the professional expertise they have constructed. Consequently, the acceptance of this invitation to participate in an interview, both in the public-sector and private organisations, may have been motivated by the need for space and time for reflection. An additional interpretation of the positive stance taken by the interviewee could be the lack of opportunities for discussion with fellow developers, which may be due to a small number of colleagues in the same organisation and/or the absence of a strong and clearly defined professional community.

This positive stance was subsequently manifested in the interviews themselves where the research interest in the interviewees' experiences and views of HRD was favourably received (Kvale 1996, 37). Each HR developer was interviewed individually for approximately one and a half to two hours. The interviews took place in the interviewee's personal office or in a separate negotiation room. One interview was conducted at the university and one at the interviewee's home. Thus, in most cases I had the chance to visit and see the interviewee's actual place of work. On some occasions I was introduced to colleagues, and when the interview took place in the interviewee's personal office, telephone calls or other people popping in interrupted the interview in few cases. All the interviewees agreed that the interviews could be audio recorded.

The research interview was viewed here as a form of conversation in which two people talk about a theme of mutual interest. In a conversation of this kind the interviewer is interested in asking about certain topics and the interviewee is (chooses to be) interested in providing the answers. As the purpose of the research was to enter into the landscape of HRD and into conversations with the HR developers in order to explore their everyday working experiences, the landscape was entered with a map deliberately pinpointing specific themes, as shown in Figure 4 (Kvale 1996, 3-5, 29-37; Patton 1980, 278-279). Figure 4 shows the themes which were to be touched upon. A list of the interview themes is also attached to this report in appendix 2. The interview can thus be characterised as semi-structured with a focus on particular themes to be dealt with in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. In practice this meant that the themes were not necessarily brought up in a fixed order or by using standardized questions, but the interview procedure could vary according to the situation. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 47-48; Kvale 1996, 29-36.)

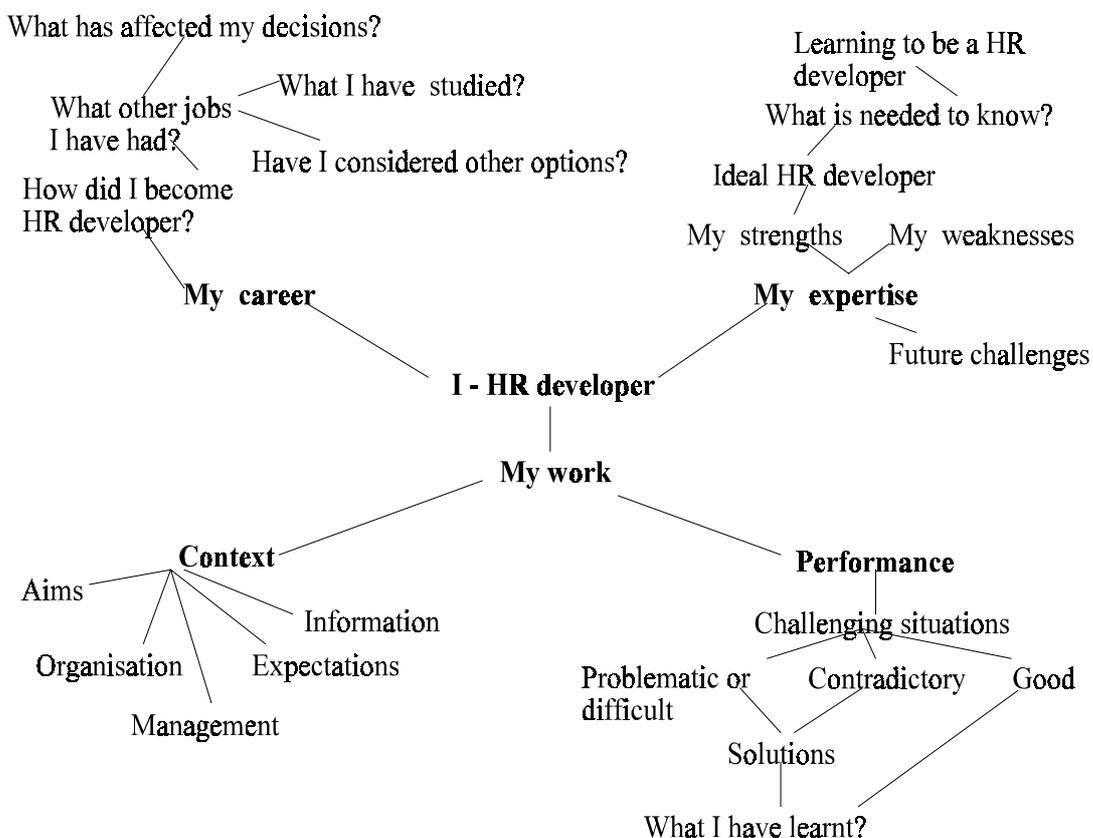


FIGURE 4 The map for the interview

Despite the fact that the interview phase adopted the narrative approach to development, the interviewees were not directly asked to “tell stories”. The narrative aspect can be brought in at various phases of the research process, including both interviewing and analysing, as well as reporting. In this study the interviewees were encouraged to talk about their personal experiences and conceptions vis-a-vis each theme of interest in the interview. Thus, they were asked to tell about what kind of things had happened to them and how, and encouraged to give anecdotal examples of everyday situations at work. If stories appeared spontaneously during the interviews the participants were encouraged to go on with them. (Cortazzi 1993, 19-20; Kvale 1996, 200.) If the interviews are seen as eliciting participants’ stories, which include their experiences of events and actions, and which are organized into a whole according to a certain plot, the plot for those stories was given by myself in the form of questions related to each theme, e.g. tell me about typical problematic situations that you face in your job,

or, how have you got to where you are now? The interviewees themselves then selected the issues, events, characters and settings they wanted to speak about (Polkinghorne 1995; Syrjälä 1994).

4.6 Analyses

4.6.1 Analysis of questionnaire data

The postal questionnaire was to a large extent structured, consisting mainly of closed questions with fixed answer categories or ranking scales. Consequently, the analysis was conducted using numerical data. Questions concerning complex issues, such as the job contents, further professional education and previous work experience were left open and categorised afterwards.

The data were described and analysed using the following methods (see articles I, pp. 19-20; II, pp. 175 and III, pp. 537-540):

- basic statistics to describe frequency distributions and means;
- cross-tabulation to describe frequency distributions between the role groups;
- the chi-square test in order to analyse whether personal and organisational background and the most typical outputs were significantly related to the role groups;
- one-way analysis of variance and the Sheffe-test
 - in order to determine whether the role groups significantly differed among themselves in the most important competencies;
 - in order to determine whether the role groups significantly differed among themselves in the competence dimensions; and
- explorative factor analysis, Principal Axis Analysis with varimax rotation, in order to reduce the number of competency variables and to explore the underlying dimensions in competencies.

4.6.2 Analysis of interview data

For the analysis the audio interview tapes were transcribed verbatim in their entirety. The transcription, which was done by research assistants resulted in about twenty-five one spaced pages of text for each interview. Thus altogether the data comprised approximately five hundred pages of transcription. All the interviewees were asked if they wished to read the transcript of the interview before the analysis began. No interest, however, was shown in doing this. Instead, the interviewees were promised copies of the publications based on the interviews. These copies were sent out in summer 2000. All the interviewees were given both a number according to the order of interviewing and a pseudonym. The first step in the analysis was to read through the transcripts of each participant in order to get an overview of the twenty cases under study. After that the analysis continued so far in two sequences: the first sequence was focussed on the experiences of job performance through the stories of challenging and problematic situations in everyday work (see article IV, pp. 183-185). The second

sequence focussed on experiences of the career and expertise (see article V, p. 7). The entire analytical process was carried out by myself.

The analysis of problematic situations in everyday work

The analysis of challenging and problematic situations in everyday work was emphasised according to the principles governing the analysis of narratives, which is one form of narrative inquiry employing a paradigmatic type of analysis (Polkinghorne 1995). Accordingly, the main aim of the analysis is to bring out broader themes and general characteristics from the stories, that is, from the whole of the data set. This form of analysis is usually based on a number of cases and stories which are handled as a whole. The themes or categories thus formed can be used as a complementary repertoire of the similarities and differences found in the data that describe the phenomenon under study. The first step in the analysis, after reading the whole transcription, was to identify and separate those parts which contained the descriptions of the challenging and problematic situations, resolutions and lessons learnt. Next, these parts were repeatedly read as a whole text. Since an individual interviewee told about a varying amount of problematic situations, resolutions and lessons learnt, it was not possible to mould the different events into coherent stories (Kvale 1996, 201). Thus, the analysis concentrated separately on anecdotes concerning problematic situations, resolutions and lessons learnt and these three entities were categorized according to the different themes emerging from them. The descriptive themes were not determined before the analysis, but identified and named inductively, on the basis of data. The outcome of analysis was the final descriptive themes for *problem stories*, *resolution stories* and *lessons learnt*, which were used as a repertoire of the different kinds of experiences which emerged in the whole data.

The analysis of career stories

The analysis of career stories was emphasised by the principles governing the narrative analysis of qualitative data which employs narrative reasoning in order to understand the differences of people's behaviour (Polkinghorne 1995). Thus, the main aim of the analysis was to understand individuals' behaviour and bring out the reasons for their different actions. In this respect differences and distinctive features are of particular interest in the analysis and may also suggest the name for each story or group of stories. In this study, the analysis resulted in *career stories* which refers to the way the HRD practitioner explains her or his experience in the occupational career as a story (see Nicholson & West 1989; Kelchtermans 1993). The analysis was also interested in the documentary description of the careers and thus also work histories were written for each participant on the basis of the data (see also Valkeavaara 2002). The analysis of career stories focussed on identifying certain thematic lines and the nature of narrative construction (McAdams 1993, cited in Singer 1996) running through each story and summarising the contents of the story. These kinds of thematic lines have previously been used in the analysis of life stories in the study of adult development. McAdams proposes for example two major motivational themes in

the life stories of adult development, that is, desire for independence, autonomy and mastery, and the desire to enter into relationships with others. These can exist as either complementary or in conflict. Thematic lines are connected with the nature of the construction of the narrative, which can be predictable and uncomplicated for some, and ambiguous and complicated for others. In the present analysis attention was paid to the motivational themes and the nature of narrative construction in the HR developers' stories of events or turning points during their careers. Analysis focussed on thematic lines was adopted in order to understand the reasons for individuals' actions and to explore the possible explanations for the processes of developing as a HRD practitioner (Polkinghorne 1995).

The first step, after reading the whole transcription, also in the analysis of career stories was to identify and separate off those segments of the transcribed texts which contained participants' descriptions of their careers and expertise. Next, these parts were repeatedly re-read in order to obtain an overview of the stories. These parts were first analysed as work histories, which meant that descriptions of the continuum and contents of education, workplaces and work tasks were extracted and a concise CV was written for each participant. Following this the texts were analysed as career stories. They were rewritten by drawing the descriptions of events and turning points in the course of each participant's career into an organised career story. The focus of the writing process was on the participant's explanations and interpretations as to their involvement in HRD work, interest in HRD and remaining in the field of HRD. Finally, these career stories were repeatedly re-read in order to characterize each story or a group of stories. In the reading process attention was paid to differences in the thematic lines of the stories in order to distinguish the variety of individual orientations in a career, and also to such similarities as might be found in some or all of the stories. The outcome of analysis was the identification of four different groups of thematic lines running through the twenty participants' stories. The names for these groups emerged from that process.

TABLE 6 Summary of the methodological choices

| Main focus in research | Methods used in deriving data | Participants | Data | Methods used in analysing data |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Description of the nature and contents of the practice and professional expertise in HRD. | <p>Postal questionnaire based on the <i>Models for HRD practice</i> for the self-evaluative analysis of roles, outputs, competencies in the practice of HRD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-test interview about the questionnaire - pre-test questionnaire - consulting the comparable study projects about the translations - final questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - four in-house and external training managers from public and private sector organisations - 27 training designers - researcher colleagues - 124 respondents from the Henry organisation, 40 respondents from the Finnish Association of Trainers in Public Administration | Numeric data for SPSS program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - descriptive statistics - chi-square test - one-way analysis of variance - Principal Axis factor analysis |
| Understanding the development and construction of professional expertise in HRD. | <p>Semi-structured interview concerning the HRD practitioners' personal conceptions and experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-test of semi-structured interview - final semi-structured interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 in-house training managers - 20 experienced in-house HRD practitioners selected from the respondents of the postal survey | Tape-recorded interviews transcribed in verbatim in about 500 pages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis and categorization of descriptive themes within problems stories, resolution stories and lessons learnt - analysis focussed on identifying certain thematic lines and the nature of narrative construction of career stories |

5 RESULTS – SUMMARISING THE JOURNEY

5.1 A window on HRD as a field of professional expertise

This chapter summarises the main findings of the explorative journey into the world of HR developers. To start with, Table 7 provides a summarising window on HRD as a field of professional expertise. It presents the main components through which HRD as a field of professional expertise was analysed and hence is described and understood. The main components include roles, outputs, competencies, everyday learning challenges in the job and career processes. In the following sections the findings from the analysis of these components are dealt with and reflected on. The results obtained using the *HRD model*, i.e. HRD practitioners' self-evaluations of their jobs through roles, outputs and competencies for the description of the practice of HRD are presented in sections 5.2 and 5.3. These results can be found in more detail in articles I - III. The summary of the results of the analysis of problematic situations in everyday work and the analysis of careers are provided in sections 5.4 and 5.5. The findings from these analyses are presented in more detail in articles IV - V. In addition, a summary and the conclusions drawn from the results of both phases of the research process will also be found in article VI.

5.2 Evaluating roles and outputs: similarities and diversities in the practice of HRD

This section presents the main findings from the analysis of roles and outputs in the job. The analysis aimed at describing the nature and contents of the practice of HRD. The results are found in more detail in articles I, pp. 24-34; II, pp. 177-183

TABLE 7 A window on HRD as a field of professional expertise

| JOB PERFORMANCE | | COMPETENCIES | | EVERYDAY LEARNING CHALLENGES | DEVELOPING THROUGH CAREERS | |
|------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Prevalent role groups | Shared outputs | Top competencies | Competence dimensions | Learning through problematic situations | Types of work histories | Career stories |
| 1. Change agents | 1. Client awareness of relationships within and around the organisation | 1. Understanding organisations | 1. Analytical competence | 1. Promoting participatory practices by: -involving people in co-operation in developmental work; -creating dialogue and acting in dialogue | 1. HRD as original occupation in the same organisation | 1. Humanists 2. Company guys 3. Careerists |
| 2. Designers | | 2. Data reduction skill | 2. Managerial competence | | | |
| 3. Managers | 2. Recommendations to management regarding HRD systems | 3. Feedback skill | 3. Coaching competence | 2. Understanding the process of change by: -understanding the nature of change; -contesting and promoting change; -securing time resources for change | 2. HRD as original occupation in several organisations | 4. Holistic |
| 4. Trainers | | 4. Understanding adult learning | 4. Developmental competence | | | |
| | | 5. Visioning skill | | | | |
| | 3. Concepts, theories, or models of development and change | 6. Negotiation skill | | 3. Continuous development by: -gaining a progressive grasp on problem solving; -courage to experiment and transform; -critical self-evaluation | 3. Transferring to HRD work in the same organisation | |
| | | 7. Understanding organisation behaviour | | | | 4. Transferring to HRD work after several organisations |

and III, pp. 541-544. When the HR developers in this study were asked to name from the list of eleven roles five roles which would best describe their job, the most prevalent roles in this listing were the roles of organisational change agent, program designer, HRD manager, marketer, needs analyst and instructor/facilitator. Secondly, the HRD practitioners were asked to choose the role which best describes the part of their job on which they spend most of their working hours. In general, about one fourth of the respondents reported that they spent half or more of their working time in the role chosen. For more than 40 per cent of the respondents the working hours in this role were evaluated to be between 25 and 49 per cent of their working time. Thirdly, they were asked to name one role which they experience in other ways as the important part of the job. In describing the focus of their behaviour and activities in the job by the single most time-consuming role, the HRD practitioners most often chose the role of organisational change agent, which was defined in the evaluation as the role of influencing and supporting development and change in the organisation. This role was perceived as most important in terms of the working time spent on it, but also in other ways.

Another role which was perceived as descriptive in terms of time spent on it was the role of program designer. This role was explained as planning and deciding on aims, contents and methods in specific developmental interventions. However, this role was not evaluated as so important in other ways. The role of HRD manager, which refers to managing and supporting the work of the HRD unit and integrating it into the organisation's activity, was the third role which stood out in the evaluation of roles in terms of the time it takes up. The role of HRD manager was almost equally evaluated as important in other ways as well. Roles in which little time was consumed but which were evaluated as important were those of needs analyst and marketer. It seemed that there were fewer opportunities to spend time on these roles than the respondents would have liked. In addition, the participants were given a chance to name new roles, if those listed in the questionnaire did not satisfactorily describe their activities. This resulted in three new, but infrequent roles. These were termed reflective practitioner, consultative communicator and coach.

For the further analyses the survey participants (n=164) were grouped into four role groups according to the prevalence of the roles evaluated as important in terms of time spent (see articles I, pp. 24-26 and III, pp. 537-539). The role groups were formed so as to take into account the three most prevalent roles in the study, i.e. organisation change agent, programme designer and HRD manager. Another aspect considered in forming the role groups was the HRD Model and recent discussion related to it. The grouping was also affected by Nadler's categorization of HRD roles into learning specialists, HRD managers and HRD consultants (McLagan 1989b; 1996; Nadler & Nadler 1989). Thus, the group of change agents (n=51) combined organisational change agents and reflective practitioners which was one new role described as being related to work with change. Change agents were practitioners who saw themselves performing most often as supporters of organisational changes and development. The designers (n=37) were all practitioners who had chosen programme designer as their most important role. Thus, they were practitioners who saw their work as most often

characterised by organising specific HRD interventions. The group of managers (n=50) was a combination of HRD managers, marketers, administrators and consultative communicators. Managers were practitioners who spent most of their working time as providers of HRD function in an organisation by managing, marketing, administering the HRD function and doing internally consultation work in developmental situations. The trainers (n=26) consisted of needs analysts, researchers, HRD materials developers, instructors/facilitators, career development advisers, evaluators and coaches. These roles were combined into one group because they all are roles which are connected with the various phases of learning and training processes. In the beginning of the research process this group was named learning specialists (see article I) but in the further analysis the name was changed to trainers (see article III). This new term was thought to illustrate the nature of this role in HRD work better than the old one. Figure 5 shows, firstly, the prevalence of all the roles in the self-evaluation and, secondly, the grouping of the roles into the four role groups which were used in the further analyses.

The relative prevalence of the perceived roles shows on the one hand the absence of a single shared perception among the HRD practitioners studied of the HRD practitioner's role in an organisation. Rather it suggests that roles are parallel and coexist side by side, also in an individual HRD practitioner's work. The results show that working with organisational change, organizing specific interventions, managing the HRD function, and training were clearly the central dimensions of the job. These may receive different emphasise according to individual, organisational or contextual attributes. This suggests that the practice of HRD requires a flexible engagement and understanding of situations from the HR developers. Furthermore, evaluation of roles such as needs analyst shows that the actual practice of the job and the perception of what is be important in it does not always go hand in hand. This increases even further the need to pay attention to flexibility and diversity in HRD work. The same kind of diversity was found in the roles described by the developers working in specific developmental processes in the public sector (Seppänen-Järvelä 2000). On the other hand, the results show that the centrality of being an agent of change reflects the general and contemporary perspective on HRD practice as an organisational activity which is concerned with change processes at all levels both organisationally and individually (Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle 1999). Consequently, if we take change as the mainstream discourse in current working life, the centrality of the role of agent of change also suggests how the conception of this role can be tied to a current strand of thinking in the management of organisations. The role groups of change agents, managers, designers and trainers can also be seen in the light of the discourses of HRD presented by Sambrook (2000) as learning-oriented "gel", as business-oriented "sell" and as traditional training-oriented "tell" in an organisation, respectively. The fact that different role groups and different discourses of HRD exist in parallel supports the conception of HRD as flexible and inclusive field of professional expertise.

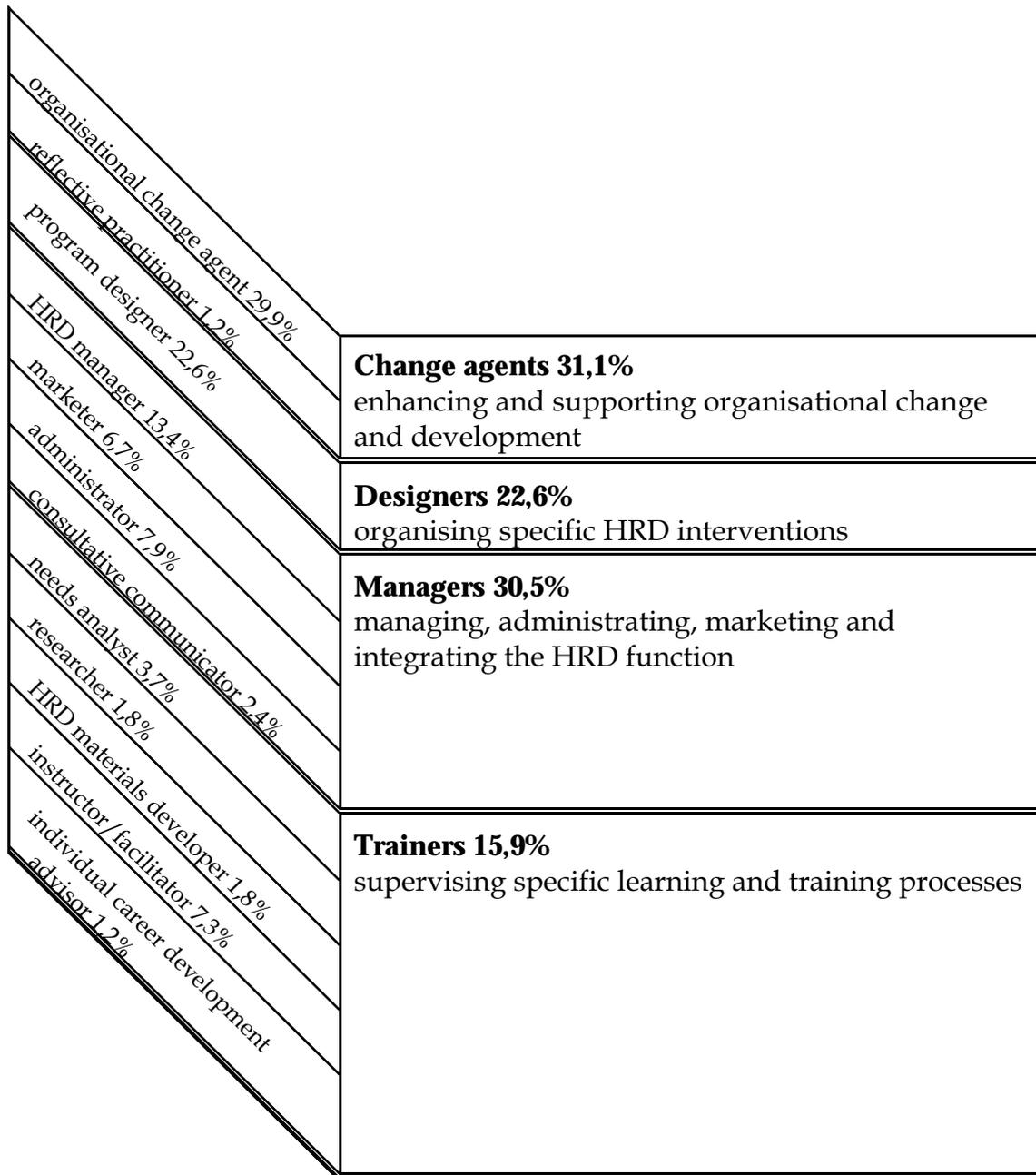


FIGURE 5 Evaluation of the practice of HRD in terms of roles which take up most of the developers' working time and the make-up of the four role groups (n=164)

Given the diversity of role choices among the HRD practitioners in the present study, an analysis was carried out to detect possible relationships between those role choices and the issues related to individual attributes and organisational context (see articles I, pp. 21-28 and III, pp. 538-539). The statistical analysis of relationships between these variables gave evidence on the individual and contextual boundaries which characterize the many-sided nature of HRD practice. One relationship of interest was that those perceiving themselves as agents of

change worked from an educational background in business and economics, law and administration, whereas trainers had their disciplinary background in education, psychology and the social sciences. However, professional further education, amount of work experience and permanent career orientation in HRD were not related to the ways in which role as a HRD practitioner was perceived. The relationship between educational background and role choice suggests that agent of change is a more familiar term in the business-related disciplines; organisational change may thus also be perceived by this group from the managerial point of view. Trainers' educational backgrounds seem to be in the disciplines centred on training, education and learning. Hence their understanding of HRD comes from another, more learning-oriented point of view. The relationship also suggests that those perceiving themselves as agents of change may have professional knowledge and experience also in the organisation's line of activity, whereas trainers are experts concerned with training and learning processes. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the ways in which organisational change is actually understood among HRD practitioners have an effect on the overall actualization of the change processes.

As far as the role choices and organisational attributes were concerned, the findings suggest that the perceived role may be determined by the organisational context to some extent. In this study those working in the public-sector organisations saw themselves as designers more often than the others did. This may reflect the more regulated organisational culture of the public sector compared to that of the private companies. The rather reactive and traditional picture of the practice of HRD as it is seen by those opting for the role of a designer may still be experienced as the most appropriate way to act in the public sector. However, the organisation's line of business and size were not connected with choice of role. Furthermore, it was full-time in-house HRD practitioners who tended to presume their role as designers or managers, whereas among the change agents there appeared to be more temporary developers, that is, those who were working in HRD tasks part-time more often than the others. This implies that various change processes have a temporal character as the focus of HRD in an organisation - design and management of HRD have to be dealt with on a permanent basis regardless of the focus.

The evaluations of the actual outputs of the HRD practitioner's job in relations to choice of role provided an enriched understanding of the practice of HRD. The HRD practitioners in the study were asked to evaluate the actual outputs of their work from the point of view of the role in which they spend most of the working time. Overall, recommendations to management regarding HRD systems, designs for change, teams, concepts, theories or models of development or change, and awareness of relationships within and around the organisation were among those products and services which were evaluated most frequently as the outputs of HRD work among the respondents. All except one of these most frequent outputs were connected with the role of organisational agent of change in the original model for HRD adopted in the evaluation (cf. McLagan 1989b), even though only one third of the respondents chose this role as the starting point of their evaluation. This indicates that the evaluation does not necessarily follow the structure designed for roles and outputs in the HRD model as also assumed

by McLagan (1989b). The evaluation demonstrates that HRD work is connected in general to change processes, various developmental projects, negotiations, and seeking support for the HRD function. These, as well as many of the other most frequent outputs, suggest that the nature and contents of HRD work can be characterized as relatively implicit. HRD practitioners produce plans, recommendations, relationships and ideas. They use language and literal symbols as their working tools. This supports the view of HRD practitioners as belonging to an occupational group which produces symbol-analytic services in working life (Reich 1992) or as agents of change who typically bargain, influence and negotiate in cultural systems between individuals and the organisation (Buchanan & Boddy 1992). This result also corresponds to Sambrook's (2000) conception of HRD practice as a process of persuasion and advice that is in a danger of being perceived as "all talk" rather than as productive action.

Table 8 shows the overall picture of the nature and contents of the practice of HRD in terms of relationships between role groups and the most frequently mentioned outputs found in the statistical analysis. More detailed description of this analysis and commentary on it is presented in article III, pp. 541-542.

TABLE 8 Relationships between role groups and most prevalent outputs

| Role groups | change agents | designers | managers | trainers |
|--|---|-----------|---|--|
| Shared outputs across role groups | 1. Client awareness of relationships within and around the organisation 2. Recommendations to management regarding HRD systems 3. Concepts, theories, or models of development and change | | | |
| Role specific outputs | 1. Sales and business leads 2. Resolved conflicts for an organisation or groups 3. Changes in group norms, values, culture 4. Plans to implement organisational change 5. Implementation of change strategies | | 1. HRD budgets and financial management | 1. Feedback to learners 2. Facilitation of group discussions 3. Facilitation of structured learning events |

What can clearly be seen from Table 8 is that working with social relations, interacting with the management and providing knowledge about development and change as the outputs of one's job seem to constitute an aspect of HRD work which was widely shared among the HRD practitioners. Of these shared outputs, outputs 1 and 2 were connected with the role of organisational change agent and output 3 with the role of researcher in the HRD model, but in this study these were included in the most prevalent outputs of the job regardless of role choice. As far as the role and output combinations are concerned, they are statistically

strongest among the change agents and trainers. Hence it appears that despite the recent debate which has emphasised transformation of HRD practitioners from trainers to change agents or consultants, the role of trainer is still perceived among HRD practitioners. These results further suggest that the main currents and orientations in the nature and contents of professional practice in HRD can be understood not only through organisational change but also through training.

5.3 Evaluating competencies: HRD as centred on people and the processing of knowledge

This chapter presents the main findings that emerged from the analysis of the competencies needed in order to perform in the perceived roles. The results are found in more detail in articles I, pp. 24-34; II, pp. 177-183 and III, pp. 541-544. When asked to evaluate the importance of different competencies in the practice of HRD, the top competencies according to the HRD practitioners in the study were 1) understanding organisations, 2) feedback skill, 3) visioning skill, 4) data reduction skill, 5) understanding adult learning, 6) negotiation skill and 7) understanding organisation behaviour. As in the evaluation of outputs, the respondents were asked to evaluate the competency list from the point of view of their choice of role according to the time spent in it. Again, the majority of the most important competencies were related to the role of organisational agent of change according to the HRD Model. The importance of these competencies suggests that the general job contents which characterize professional expertise in HRD are related to communication in terms of using knowledge and being in relations with people. This in turn means that HRD can be characterized as both centred on people and the processing of knowledge which was also emphasised in the study of organisational stories by HRD practitioners in large companies (Hansen & Kahnweiler 1993). Understanding organisations as the highest ranked competency implies the importance of knowing and understanding the organisational context the practitioner is working in. In addition, out of the many possible disciplines included in the list of competencies, understanding adult learning occurred in the top five. Table 9 summarises the evaluation of all the competencies. In sum, the self-evaluation of competencies needed in the practice of HRD also provides an inclusive and flexible picture of HRD as a field of professional expertise. Nevertheless, there are some areas which seem to be more visible than others, namely competencies related to the handling of change processes, people and knowledge.

TABLE 9 Evaluation of importance of competencies (0 = not important at all, 1 = little important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important) (n=159-154)

| Competency in: | \bar{x} | Competency in: | \bar{x} |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| understanding organisation | 2,7 | project management | 2,3 |
| feedback | 2,7 | understanding organisation develop- ment theories and techniques | 2,3 |
| visioning | 2,6 | writing | 2,3 |
| data reduction | 2,6 | facilities | 2,3 |
| understanding adult learning | 2,6 | coaching | 2,3 |
| negotiation | 2,6 | subject matter understanding | 2,3 |
| understanding organisation behaviour | 2,6 | cost-benefit analysis | 2,2 |
| business understanding | 2,5 | competency identification | 2,2 |
| group process | 2,5 | understanding training and develop- ment theories and techniques | 2,1 |
| presentation | 2,5 | questioning | 2,1 |
| observing | 2,5 | model building | 2,0 |
| relationship building | 2,5 | performance observation | 2,0 |
| intellectual versatility | 2,5 | delegation | 1,9 |
| self-knowledge | 2,4 | computer | 1,7 |
| information search | 2,4 | research | 1,5 |
| objectives preparation | 2,4 | understanding career development theories and techniques | 1,5 |
| industry understanding | 2,4 | records management | 1,4 |
| | | electronic systems | 1,3 |

A further analysis of competency evaluations (an explorative factor analysis) was conducted in order to explore the underlying dimensions or structures of knowledge and skills evaluated according to their importance in the practice of HRD. In addition, the aim of the further analysis was to explore the possibility of characterizing the underlying dimensions through different kinds of expert knowledge. The outcome of the analysis was four competence dimensions termed analytical, managerial, coaching and developmental competence (see also article III, pp. 539-540). The names for the dimensions were given on the basis of the marking competencies in the analysis and in order to illustrate the core idea of the dimension. Table 10 shows the competence dimensions and the marking competencies in each dimension. Accordingly, the marking competencies for analytical competence were skill at data reduction, intellectual versatility, observing skill, understanding of industry, and negotiation skill. For coaching competence they were the skills of questioning, coaching, performance observation and feedback. Managerial competence included skills in such areas as electronic systems, facilities, records management and cost-benefit analysis. For developmental competence the marking competencies were understanding organisation development theories and techniques, understanding organisation

behaviour and, understanding of training and development theories and techniques.

TABLE 10 Competence dimensions as seen through the different types of expert knowledge

| Competence dimensions | Types of expert knowledge | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| | formal | practical | self-regulative |
| analytical | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observation - negotiations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intellectual versatility - data reduction - industry understanding |
| coaching | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - questioning - coaching - performance observation - feedback | |
| developmental | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding OD theories and techniques - understanding organisational behaviour - understanding T&D theories and techniques | | |
| managerial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cost-benefit analysis - records management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - electronic systems - facilities | |

In addition, Table 10 presents a hypothesis of how the competencies embedded in different dimensions might be characterized in terms of different types of expert knowledge. The suggestion for these characterizations are based on the definitions provided for each competency in the HRD Model (see appendix 1, pp. 128-130) and on the characterization of different types of expert knowledge (e.g. Tynjälä 1999). The analysis of the competence dimensions demonstrated that out of the four dimensions analytical and coaching competences were experienced as playing a particularly central role in the practice of HRD. On average, these two competence dimensions received the highest ratings among the respondents. It is suggested in Table 10 that analytical and coaching competence refer to less formal types of knowledge, namely to practical and self-regulative knowledge. The competencies included in these dimensions cannot necessarily be explicated in formal terms and they are related to interaction with people, the different ways of using knowledge and knowing the organisational context of one's job. Nevertheless, as the four dimensions found in the analysis show, professional expertise in HRD cannot be understood only as analytical and coaching

competence. Managerial and developmental competence, which appear to be emphasised by their connection with knowledge on various theories, techniques and models in the fields of training, development and business, i.e formal knowledge of these topics, also have to be taken into account in order to obtain a holistic picture of professional expertise in HRD. A similar tendency in terms of different types of expert knowledge can also be seen in the evaluation of single competencies (see Table 9). Out of the top competencies, understanding organisations, data reduction, feedback, negotiation and visioning appear to fall into the practical and self-regulative types of knowledge, while understanding adult learning and understanding organisational behaviour can be characterized as ones which require formal knowledge of the subject.

Even though there seemed to be diversity among the HRD practitioners in this study in terms of their evaluations of the roles and outputs in the practice of HRD, there were only slight or no differences between the role groups in terms of the evaluation of the competence dimensions. This was the outcome of the analysis even though the respondents were asked to concentrate on their chosen role when evaluating the competencies. Thus, even though there does not seem to be a single understanding of the practice of HRD in terms of concrete roles and outputs in the jobs which the HRD practitioners are doing a relatively shared vision of the nature and contents of professional expertise in terms of various knowledge and skills which are needed in that varying practice seems to prevail. Hence it can be suggested that the competence dimensions may be one important factor in forming a common occupational culture in HRD in terms of understanding of scope of HRD and the personal resources which the job requires (see also Hansen, Kahnweiler & Wilensky 1994).

5.4 Constructing professional expertise on the job: analysis of problematic situations

The results which were drawn from the survey data highlighted the role of less formal forms of knowledge, especially practical knowledge in HRD. This confirmed the decision to concentrate on the relationship between the practitioners and the job through the processes of acquiring that knowledge in their everyday work. This section summarises the findings of the analysis of the problematic situations encountered in the developers' everyday work and particularly the lessons learnt through those situations (for a more detailed presentation of the results see article IV, pp. 185-190). The analytical process focussed on three points of interest. The HR developers were asked to speak about problematic situations in their work, about the processes of resolving those situations and about the learning which they had experienced in those situations. The outcome of the analysis was a collection of different themes describing the problem stories, the resolution stories and the lessons learnt (for illustration of the themes see article IV, p. 185 or article VI, p. 12). The themes emerged from the analytical process and describe the whole data. Accordingly, the themes can be characterized describing relatively shared experiences among the HR developers.

The problem stories

When the HR developers described the different problematic or challenging situations encountered in their everyday work the following themes emerged. The problem stories included, firstly, *conflicts and contradictions concerning the values, aims and targets of HRD activities with the (line and middle) management* of the organisation. These conflicts included situations where managerial opinions and intentions had to be interpreted to other interest groups in the organisation, situations where the need and means for developmental interventions expressed by the management had to be challenged by the HR developer, and situations which required efforts to integrate organisational and individual needs. Secondly, the HR developers told how they had experienced *resistance to change* expressed on the individual, group and organisational levels towards HRD activities. These experiences had also aroused very personal *feelings of rejection of one's professional practice and status*. However, on the other hand, such situations were also seen as learning challenges, sites for extending one's expertise. Thirdly, the problematic situations were located in *interaction and communication* between HRD practitioner and different members of the staff or within the staff. For the HRD practitioner these situations were sites for interpreting, mediating, acting and communicating between the different groups in the organisation. Fourthly, the HRD practitioners described experiencing a *lack of skills and knowledge*. These needs for more or further knowledge and skills included knowledge and skills in foreign languages, communication, presentation and knowing one's own organisation. Issues related to one's own organisation were insufficient access to information and developmental processes as well as limited time frames and other resources for learning processes embedded in HRD activities. Lastly, the HR developers described *practical problems* which can occur during training sessions. These included problematic situations related to the actual arrangements, but also to the making of decisions to buy-in external training and consulting services. To sum up, paradoxically the sources for the problem stories seem to coincide with the topics which are suggested by the recent studies as either current justifications for or challenges to HRD in organisations, that is, promoting organisational change, integrating HRD closely with the management, clarifying HRD's role in the organisation or supporting communication in the workplace (Garavan et al. 1999; Tjekpema et al. 2000).

The resolution stories

In the stories about the resolutions to the problematic situations four different themes describing the ways of approaching and resolving the situations emerged. All these ways implied a certain level of critical thinking towards one's practice and either using language and talking or taking a very practical approach to the problem. Accordingly, the resolution stories were named as influencing by talking, finding and experimenting with alternative practices, evaluating and developing own knowledge and skills, and solving by doing. When *influencing by talking* the HR developers emphasised active listening and talking and had also found it to be crucial in their practice to encourage others involved in a problem

situation to listen and talk. In addition, they made efforts to assist the different people and groups to understand and take into account each other's views. Accordingly, what can be read into this theme is that the HR developers described themselves as promoters of dialogue in the organisation. *Finding and experimenting with alternative practices* included the processes of trial, withdrawal and re-trial in specific interventions. This kind of processing especially involved rethinking how to conduct a project without being forced to change the original aims. Thus, these resolution stories not only reflect an element of critical thinking about one's performance, but also durability and belief in the developer's conception of his or her expertise in the practice of HRD. Furthermore, *evaluating and developing one's own knowledge and skills* was presented simply as critical self-evaluation of one's professional expertise, implying that the search for solutions can also originate from the practitioner herself or himself. Finally, *solving by doing* presented the HR developers as applying very practical approaches to problematic situations. For example, involving the staff in the various phases of HRD interventions, in planning, implementing and evaluating the developmental processes themselves, was a solution which clearly recurred within this theme. This approach sees the developer's role as a practitioner or as an expert in the organisation which, according to Whyte's (1991, 272) characterization, is not to provide answers, but to look for opportunities to participate and involve people in doing and in getting things to work out. This role implies a relatively democratic and learning-oriented view of one's practice.

The lessons learnt

Three different themes in the HR developers' stories emerged which describe the lessons learnt in solving problematic situations. The first theme describes learning *how to solve problems progressively*. To give an example, this theme included experiences of learning to find and experiment with new and different alternatives in problematic situations, to acquire feedback, and to exercise critical self-evaluation of routine solutions. All these experiences had also required the courage and will to transform one's own way of thinking about the practice of HRD. The second theme describes learning *how to involve others in developmental processes*. Thus, this lesson seems to be directly connected with the resolution termed solving by doing. It both relies on one's increased understanding of people and of the ways of involving them in developmental processes. Furthermore, the involvement of other people also seems to include an understanding of people as learning subjects in relation to HRD activities. The third theme deals with an increased *personal sense of the process of change*. This theme seems to interact with experiences of resistance to change seen as learning challenges and as sites for trying out new and alternative solutions. The outcome of this interaction seemed to be described as an extended understanding of the complexity of change as both an individual and organisational process.

Finally, the whole analytical process produced an understanding of the processes by which one's professional expertise is embedded in the handling of problematic situations in the everyday practice of HRD. To sum up, it is suggested here that promoting participatory practices and understanding the

process of change and continuous development are processes which characterize the construction of professional expertise in HRD through learning challenges in the everyday job. These all are processes which can be understood both as outcomes of this construction and the sites of it; see Table 11 for a summary of these processes. Accordingly, it appeared in the analysis that social interaction, especially enhancing participation and dialogue in the organisational setting, seems to be an important site for the construction of professional expertise since it requires finding explanations and argumentation for the suggestions and activities which are presented and undertaken. In addition, the analysis provided more evidence for thinking critically about the nature and role of the processes of change as central aspects of HR developers' work. Both these processes also brought up understanding learning as an important aspect of the job. Furthermore, flexibility and inclusiveness in problem solving as well as confidence in one's practical knowledge as features of the professional expertise in HRD on the one hand supported the findings from the self-evaluation of roles, outputs and competencies. On the other hand these features extend the previous findings from the survey phase and present the HRD developers as critical practitioners who are motivated towards the continuous development of their practice and expertise. Interestingly, it can be noticed that in the analysis of how professionals from various fields, including the field of training, learn in practice (Cheetham & Chivers 2001, 281-285), the same kind of descriptions of co-operation, participation, learning challenges, problematic situations and continuous development related to the learning processes were found.

TABLE 11 Processes of constructing professional expertise in HRD

| | |
|---|--|
| Participatory practices by | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social interaction - involving the staff in all levels in development work - supporting new feelings of togetherness and collaboration - creating dialogue and acting in dialogue |
| Understanding the process of change by | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reaching an understanding of the complexity and slowness of change processes both as individual and organisational process - acquiring means both to promote and contest the change processes - securing time for change processes |
| Continuous development by | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gaining a progressive grasp on problem solving - finding the courage to experiment and get feedback - critical self-evaluation - transformation of one's own practices |

5.5 Constructing professional expertise through one's career: analysis of career stories

While the analysis of problematic situations increased understanding of the processes of constructing professional expertise in HRD embedded in the everyday practice of HRD, the study of the careers of the HR developers saw the processes of developing as a HRD practitioner from a long term perspective. The analysis of careers centred on two points of interest. The first of these concerned the developers' work histories, i.e. documenting the different educational and occupational phases and moves of the developers, which were extracted from the interviews. The second concerned the HR developers' explanations and interpretations of their careers, i.e. career stories. This section summarises the types of work histories reported in the interviews and the main findings from the analysis of careers stories. The career stories obtained from the analysis of the interview data are presented in more detail including quotations from the data in article V, pp. 8-17 (see also Valkeavaara 2002).

Different types of work histories

The documentation of the different educational and occupational moves reported in the interviews revealed four different types of work histories among the HR developers in the study. The main dimensions distinguishing the different types of work histories appeared to be the permanence of HRD as an occupational choice from the outset and the number of organisations the practitioner had been employed in. The types of work histories found among the HR developers are displayed in Figure 6.

| HRD from the outset | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| One organisation | HRD as an original occupation and employed by the same organisation (n=3) |
| | HRD as an original occupation and employed by several organisations (n=3) |
| | Several organisations |
| | Employed by the same organisation and later transferring to HRD work (n=7) |
| | Employed by several organisations and later transferring to HRD work (n=7) |
| Later transferring to HRD | |

FIGURE 6 Different types of work histories among the interviewed HR developers in the second phase of the research (N=20)

Accordingly, for three HR developers HRD was their choice of employment already in the early stages of their occupational careers and they had done this work for the same organisation throughout. They all worked in the public sector. For another three HR developers HRD was also an original choice of employment, but they had done this type of work in several organisations. Currently, two worked for a private company, while one was employed in the public sector. Seven practitioners had been employed by the same organisation for the whole of their careers transferring gradually to HRD work within the organisation. Four out of these seven practitioners worked in a private company and three in the public sector. Another seven practitioners had also transferred gradually to HRD work during their careers and they had been employed by several organisations. The clear majority of these practitioners currently worked in the public sector. Thus, out of twenty participants six were practitioners for whom HRD had been their permanent job focus. On the one hand, fourteen practitioners had work histories which can be characterised as typical within the field of HRD, that is, they had initially worked in jobs related to their original educational background and only gradually transferred to HRD work. On the other hand, it can be seen that out of twenty participants ten had traditional work histories in a sense that they had been employed their whole working life by the same organisation. Presumably, the close link between the developer's personal work history and the historical development of the organisation is less likely among those with work experience from several organisations than those with a history confined to a single organisation.

The career stories

The focus of the process of documenting the career stories was the explanations and interpretations which the participants gave about their involvement in HRD work, interest in HRD and remaining in the field of HRD. The outcome of the analysis was the identification of four groups of thematic lines. The four groups are introduced in Table 12 below and explained in more detail. The four groups can be seen as a lens or a framework through which the construction of professional expertise in HRD can be understood. Thus on the basis of the analysis, understanding and naming a special work content, involvement in the organisation, personal career aspirations or a combination of all these can mould the career-building process in HRD. This resembles the building processes found among training designers working in external training services (Poikela 1999, 195-203). The different groups in the present study are not meant to indicate right or wrong ways of constructing a career and professional expertise in HRD, but to provide a complementary framework for understanding the different processes through which individuals can become HR developers.

TABLE 12 Four groups of career stories among the interviewed HR developers in the second phase of the research (N=20)

| CAREER STORY | DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS |
|---|--|
| Working for and with people: <i>humanists</i> (n=5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a desire to enter into relationships with others - the importance of the community - interest and belief in people, in human learning and in development - optimistic approach to learning |
| Working for the organisation: <i>company guys</i> (n=7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the importance of understanding and working towards the needs of the organisation - interest in the organisation and its function |
| Searching for professional challenges: <i>careerists</i> (n=4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - optimizing personal opportunities for developing one's knowledge and skills - looking for professional challenges in the job - active involvement in continuous training |
| Versatile career building: <i>holistic</i> (n=4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrating people, the organisation and personal professional challenges - active construction of HRD as an activity in the organisation and as a personal career - understanding and highlighting the importance of learning |

The thematic line in the career stories among the *humanists* centres on explaining and interpreting entry into and remaining in HRD by an interest in people, in human learning, in the possibilities of working with human factors and contributing to human development in the organisation. Social contacts with various interest groups within and around the employing organisation had played an important part during these practitioners' careers and contributed to their personal development in the field. The *humanists* seemed to have an optimistic approach to learning and a belief in the possibilities of educative endeavours in the workplace. This approach can be explained by their personal attitude and interest in learning and/or by their previous studies in the field of training and education. Overall, these HR developers appeared to have strong confidence in their knowledge and experience of learning. Accordingly, these practitioners were at pains to stress that they are primarily HRD personnel and that their responsibility is to take care of the promotion of people's learning in the workplace. The fact that they do not represent the organisation's specific field of activities, but bring in a different approach and are oriented to understanding learning they saw as a benefit in their work. Nevertheless, their optimistic and learning-orientated view was not uncritical. Change and learning were also seen

as demanding and difficult tasks, involving many challenges in their everyday work.

Another group, whose career stories had a distinctive thematic line, was termed *company guys*. For them the primary starting point for their career in HRD had been working and acquiring knowledge about the substance of the organisation, and only later transferring to HRD work. The majority of these seven practitioners had worked in the same organisation throughout their career, and thus they had built their professional expertise both as a practitioner in the organisation's field of activity and as a practitioner of HRD. Interest in supporting and improving the organisation's activity, according to the organisation's needs, would seem to lie in the centre of their involvement in HRD work among these practitioners. Consequently, for instance, the overall development of HRD in the organisation is closely related to their entry into HRD work. Furthermore, both incidental occurrences related to organisational developments and personal interests were mentioned in the explanations. Despite the fact that the organisation, especially its management, seems to be the main determinant in the career story, the *company guys* also had the experience of working in between the different interest groups, for instance between the management and staff, in the organisation. One illustration of this is the metaphor of acting as a "mouthpiece" between management and staff. Furthermore, even though organisationally determined, they also brought up the importance of understanding adult learning in HRD tasks.

The *careerists* appeared to describe their interest, involvement and commitment to the field of HRD as a search for new professional challenges. The distinctive feature among them was the emphasis on optimizing personal opportunities for developing one's knowledge and skills as well as the nature and contents of the job. For these HR developers continuous professional challenges and continuous training seemed to fuel their personal career building. For instance, participation in studies alongside their jobs had developed their understanding of human development and developmental work in general. It appeared that as a result of active training especially in the field of adult education, the *careerists* had acquired the theoretical tools necessary for understanding HRD work. Nevertheless, it was also reported that professional challenges and understanding of learning and development also emerge in the course of one's everyday work.

A fourth group consisted of career stories in which both interest in working with people, the centrality of the organisation and the importance of career achievement emerged as the sources and elements explaining careers. All these aspects seemed to interact as the sources of the career choices made, while these aspects were separately singled out in the other groups. Thus, this group was termed *holistic* because of the holistic approach which emerged in their career stories. The approach of the *holistic* developers implies an emphasis on the active construction of a HRD career, even though HRD had been the occupational choice from the outset only for one of them. However, for the other three their long history in the same organisation had made it possible for them to realize their vision about working with people and promoting development in the organisational context. Beside the holistic impression which combines people,

organisation and personal career, the centrality of understanding learning and training recurred clearly in these stories. Interestingly, in no case was the original educational background of these HR developers in the field of education, but further studies and experience of HRD work had highlighted the importance of understanding learning from a very practical perspective. Another feature which can be seen clearly in the *holistic* group is the courage and willingness to make a difference as a HR developer. While admitting the risks contained in HRD work, these practitioners brought out, more than the other groups, the importance, for instance of breaking up routines and challenging existing ways of thinking.

Despite the aim of the analytical process, which was to find distinctions and differences among the career stories in order to show the richness of experience, certain common features also recurred clearly across the stories. These appeared regardless of the identified thematic line. One of these features was the rather unanimous view held among the HR developers of *HRD as learning-based activity*. The career stories indicated that the understanding of learning and paying attention to it had been important, both as a resource and as an outcome during the HR developers' careers. The analysis revealed that several conceptions of learning, varying from behaviourism to experiential learning, existed implicitly in the career stories. However, neither were these conceptions necessarily referred to explicitly nor was the adoption of a particular theory of learning a conscious choice. Instead, the centrality of learning came up in the highlighting of for instance, the importance of learning in the job, learning by doing, making arrangements to secure and promote learning, and the time resources needed for learning. Interestingly, when compared to the analysis of training designers' experiences of their learning at work in a training centre providing training services (Poikela 1999, 104-127), the same kind of unawareness of the underlying conceptions of learning and confidence in learning by doing can be found.

Another common feature recurring in the career stories was that they showed these *HR developers as active builders of their careers* despite the incidental nature of many of them. The career stories showed that the HR developers had been involved in promoting the establishment of HRD activities or in building a wholly new HRD practice for the company or public-sector organisation. Simultaneously they had built a role for themselves as experts in HRD. The career-building processes can be characterized both as proactive in seeking out challenges and future visions and as reactive in being able to utilize one's knowledge and experience according to the situational demands. Thus, the relationship between the practitioner and the job as well as the organisational context is actualized in the career-building process.

The four groups of thematic lines found in the analysis of the twenty career stories suggest that developing as a HRD practitioner does not proceed along a single continuum but that the process can take several paths. Thus the construction of professional expertise in HRD through one's career may be moulded, but is not determined by, experience, which includes the relationship between personal motivation and the context. Figure 7 shows the work histories and the four groups of thematic lines among the career stories (see also article V, p. 9).

| HRD from the outset | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| One organisation | humanist (1) company guys (2) | humanist (1) careerist (1) holistic (1) | Several organisations |
| | company guys (3) holistic (3) humanist (1) | humanist (2) company guys (2) careerist (3) | |
| Later transferring to HRD | | | |

FIGURE 7 The groups of thematic lines among the career stories and work histories among the interviewed HR developers in the second phase of the research (N=20)

As can be seen from Figure 7, when the thematic line in the career story is connected with the features of the work histories, there is no fixed pattern for the connections between the career story and the type of work history. Behind the *humanists* all types of work histories can be found. However, it can be seen that many of the *company guys* seem to share a long history in one organisation and the *careerists* share the experience of working in several organisations. Among the *holistic* developers all except one seem to possess the traditional career path of a HRD practitioner, that is, having worked in the same organisation throughout the careers and later transferring to HRD work within that organisation. Presumably, on the one hand the number of different organisations worked in may have had more impact than the selection of HRD as an occupational field on the ways a career had been moulded. On the other hand, the early choice of HRD also seemed to strongly direct career-building. Nevertheless, the career processes appeared to be so varied and included such a diversity of individual experiences that one has to be cautious in drawing conclusions about possible relations between career stories and work histories. It can be suggested however, that the varied histories appeared to lead to at least a relatively shared understanding of the core aspects of HRD expertise.

6 DISCUSSION – WHAT WAS LEARNT ALONG THE WAY?

6.1 What can be learnt from the experiences of HRD practitioners?

What the researchers and practitioners in the field of HRD in the European context seem to have agreed upon during the last couple of years is the need to clarify HRD as an emerging and independent field of professional practice and expertise. Related to this there have been several efforts to study the practice of HRD, to define the changing role of HRD and the challenges facing HRD as an organisational activity, and to build a shared theoretical understanding for the field (see e.g. McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson 2001; Tjekpema et al. 2000). Furthermore, conferences and networks for the linking of HRD researchers and practitioners as well as training schemes for HRD have been launched. These have served as places where the suggestions for a shared understanding of the field can be promoted and tested.⁴ The present research process has been one attempt to participate in these efforts by exploring the practice of HRD as a field of professional expertise in Finland. The research aimed at describing and understanding what the practice of HRD and professional expertise in this particular, but non-specific field may entail and how it may be developed.

This research proceeded from the adoption of a descriptive model for the self-evaluation of the practice of HRD in a survey study to a qualitative research interview in order to capture the personal interpretations of HRD practitioners. Accordingly, this exploration provided results which are brought together in this report and can be characterized as an interpretative window (see Table 7) on the

⁴ To give examples, recent conferences and networks include e.g. Conference on HRD Research and Practice Across Europe in 2000, 2001 and 2002, see e.g. Streumer 2001; EHRD Base, see <http://www.b.shuttle.de/wifo/ehrd/about.htm> and University Forum for Human Resource Development, see <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/ufhrd>.

experiences of HRD practitioners. The findings of each phase of the research are discussed in articles I-VI (see I, pp. 34-36; II, pp. 183-187; III, 544-546; IV, pp. 190-194; V, pp. 17-21 and VI, 13-14). This chapter discusses the picture or the landscape that can be seen through the window of HRD as a field of professional expertise. It brings together the central findings from the different phases of the study and draws conclusions about what can be learnt from the experiences of HRD practitioners across and beyond those findings.

The discussion in this report is also concerned with the recent studies on the status of HRD and the challenges facing it in the workplace. Accordingly, the current and future challenges for HRD practitioners include such questions as how to integrate HRD more closely with management, how to clarify the role of HRD in an organisation, how to recognize and promote informal learning through HRD activities, how to find time resources for learning, and how to shift the emphasis in HRD activities from training towards other forms of learning (Marsick 2001; Tjepkema et al. 2000). For instance, on the basis of this research it seems that HRD practitioners' evaluation of their professional practice and expertise corresponds with the current challenges facing HRD. Furthermore the question can be asked, what are the aspects that on the basis of this study need to be taken into account in order to develop and strengthen HRD as a field of professional expertise in the workplace and as field of professional education? (see e.g. Johnston 2001).

The conclusions presented here are to be read as suggestions and working hypotheses generated from the analyses of the study. The aim is not to add to the many definitions of HRD, but merely to point out features which are thought to be of importance in constructing descriptions and understanding of the practice of HRD as a field of professional expertise. Thus the suggestions characterize both the nature and content of the practice of HRD, the nature and content of professional expertise deployed in the practice of HRD and the processes related to the development and construction of professional expertise in HRD. In the following I shall argue that the debate on as well as the practical implications concerning the nature, content and development of HRD as field of professional expertise should include the following themes:

- 1) open and flexible nature of HRD;
- 2) inclusiveness, practicality and common sense in HRD;
- 3) understanding the processes of change and learning at the heart of HRD; and
- 4) the centrality of social interaction.

The list may not be exhaustive, but themes offer an interpretative framework of HRD based on the experiences of HRD practitioners acting in Finnish working life encountered for the purposes of this research process. Flexibility, practical knowledge and common sense including knowing the organisational context, knowledge on change and learning, and social interaction can all be seen as specific elements of knowledge and as well as processes dealing with it. They can also be seen as constituting the distinctive nature and content of professional expertise deployed and developed in HRD work. For all that, these suggestions

can be well compared to an experienced development practitioner's contention that "the discipline of the development practitioner is an art, one which demands imagination, flexibility and the ability to work with ambiguity and contradiction; one which works with living people and life-processes; one which can use guidelines but not rules; one which is inherently creative rather than technical, while at the same time being grounded within an accessible and rigorous framework" (Kaplan 1996, xii).

6.1.1 Open and flexible nature of HRD

The first suggestion deals with the indefinability and flexibility of HRD as a field of professional expertise. The point of departure in this study was the ongoing debate on the lack of clarity and the complexity of HRD both as a field of professional expertise and as an organisational activity. Hence a systematic study using the HRD model was expected to provide the basis for a definition in the Finnish context. However, as the study proceeded it became increasingly clear that the answer to the original aim of defining the field of HRD lies in the open and flexible nature of HRD and thus the view of HRD as a complex field of professional expertise was confirmed by the present study. This conclusion is not necessarily in contradiction to the HRD model. Even though the HRD model gives a clear and technical picture of training and development, organisational development and career development and the related roles, outputs and competencies as the main components labelled as HRD, it uses the term "HRD function" in order to indicate that HRD is not a job title but a flexible and varying function integrated into the overall activity of the organisation (McLagan 1989a).

Consequently, the research process on the whole showed that there is no single story or single truth about professional expertise in HRD. Rather HRD came to be seen as a flexible field of professional expertise which embraces many possibilities and parallel stories. Flexibility relates to the dynamic context in which HRD takes place. It also demonstrates the theoretical diversity behind HRD. This diversity is brought into the practice of HRD through the many disciplinary backgrounds found among the HRD practitioners. The many HRD stories become understandable also in the light of the framework offered by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 6) that the majority of the learning embedded in human resource activities in the organisational context takes place in informal and incidental ways, and is not formally and institutionally structured. Accordingly, as the experiences of the HR developers in this study showed, the professional practice of HRD is clearly characterized by its implicitness at the various levels of organisational activity. Furthermore, practice of HRD is characterized by contributing to or taking advantage of informal and incidental events in organisational life. Thus, these informal and incidental situations can also be seen as the potential sources for constructing HR developers' professional expertise. Following that, it may be asked whether one problem in defining and clarifying as well as developing HRD lies in the issue of incidentality or if to become a HR developer is more a matter of coincidence than an intentional and motivated career-building choice. On the basis of the career stories of HR

developers in this study it can be concluded, however, that deliberate efforts and active approach to career-building within HRD practice can also be found.

The openness and flexibility of the definition of HRD, which is suggested by this research process, may have negative connotations if a field of practice is aiming to become a well-defined profession. However, in terms of the terrain covered by HR developers flexibility may contain more opportunities than threats in the varying organisational contexts that exist within the market economies (see article VI, pp. 4-8, 13-14). Multidisciplinarity and differences in the practice of HRD which are embedded in flexibility may in fact enable the holistic perspective and may make the role of HRD practitioner more independent of the organisationally determined context. The holistic perspective implies the understanding of many possible approaches and thus also better appreciation of the contextual demands (Kuchinke 1999). Following Garrick (1998, 154-155), who interviewed HRD practitioners about their jobs it can be concluded that flexibility may contribute to the survival of the HRD practitioner by enabling her or him to negotiate for instance, the managerial, organisational and individual restrictions inscribed in HRD practice. Furthermore, flexibility itself can be understood as a negotiable feature within the professional expertise in HRD.

The many ways of defining HRD as a field of professional expertise which cropped up during the research process are certainly in line with the academic debate on the field which has also arisen elsewhere recently. Lee (2001) argues that finding definitions for HRD also implies a notion of good practice, which may do a particular disservice to HRD practitioners working in such a dynamic and ambiguous field. Laying down the criteria for good or the best practice indicates a view of professional expertise as excellent performance and may also neglect the contextual boundaries. Refusal to provide a single definition implies that perhaps the lack of a unified definition is not a disadvantage for the field but a benefit which also contains a challenge with respect to the continuous further study and development of professional expertise in HRD. Furthermore, it challenges scholars and practitioners to be more aware of the view that complex and flexible fields of professional practice like HRD should not be closed off by fixed definitions of expertise, but should be seen as an evolving process (Willis 1996).

However, to suggest that HRD expertise should be seen only as an evolving field of professional expertise also entails certain risks which need to be taken into account. Flexibility can be a pitfall for HR developers since it may corroborate the view of HRD as an implicit and unspoken field of practice and expertise, and thus make it difficult to discuss and legitimize it. As far as the view of the importance of a certain knowledge base in professional expertise is concerned, explicated, formal knowledge has an important role, especially from the point of view of professional ethics. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) formal knowledge is needed in order to communicate and negotiate as well as to argue and make decisions about in a professional field. Thus, if formal knowledge is lacking from among the constituents of professional expertise in HRD, should then be asked where, for instance, the assumptions and decisions concerning human development by HRD practitioners are anchored and how they are accounted for in each case. In this study it appeared that this kind of formal

knowledge base can be seen at least in the theories of adult learning as well as those of organisational development and management.

From an ethical view point the construction of a knowledge base can be seen as a critical issue in relation to the construction of HRD expertise as experience-based and as deriving from contextually successful practices in the organisation. Accordingly, expertise is always also an outcome of its context and this process promotes the localness and organisation-specificity of HRD expertise as well as its dependence on the discourse of market economics (Garrick 1998, 155). An extreme example of this would be that the rationale behind HRD practice is most likely to be altered when some contextual factor external to the HRD practitioner's professional expertise changes. This can be the case when, for instance, a manager in the company or a situation in the market shifts and not when the HRD practitioner argues for a new mode of thinking about strategy planning or suggests the implementation of new interventions in the organisation.

Leaving the definition of professional expertise in HRD as open and flexible can also be seen to be in contrast to a study of professional expertise which aims to regulate the knowledge base of expertise and transfer it to the curricular objectives within professional education. However, it can be suggested that definition of professional expertise in fields like HRD should not be perceived merely from the perspective of formal theories and concepts but rather that such definitions should start from the direction of less explicit and experiential knowledge, and from the processes which contribute to the practice of professional work (Eraut 1994, 102-116). The suggestion that the analysis of what constitutes professional expertise in HRD should start with the question of how practitioners already in the field conceive of their situation and not with the questions of the most suitable background disciplines has also been brought up in the recent discussion (Perspectives on people 2001). As the present research showed processes of acquiring as well as giving information and knowing one's organisational context came high up in the evaluation. Furthermore, everyday learning challenges seem to result in the understanding of processes and perhaps the adoption of new theoretical understandings in those processes. This supports the view of experience as an essential constituent of professional expertise (Eteläpelto 1998, 74).

Finally, arguing in favour of the indefinable and flexible nature of HRD as a field of professional expertise implies that the traditional conception of professional expertise as strictly defined and attainable excellent performance should be challenged in the contemporary world of work. To understand HRD practitioners' professional expertise requires that it is related to flexibility, contextuality, continuous learning and less explicit fields of professional knowledge instead of the delineation of certain superior and explicitly measurable task-specific skills and criteria for outstanding performance.

6.1.2 Inclusiveness, practicality and common sense in HRD

The suggestion to leave the definition of HRD open can also be summarised with an expression used by two HR developers in the interview phase. They described HRD as a job where "the sky is the limit". On the whole, the repeated emphasis

on continuous development and acquiring a progressive grasp on problem solving, seemed to refer to the same thing. Such inclusiveness leaves room for the idea of HRD as a continuously evolving field, but it also raises the question of how far there is a practical understanding of the boundaries of the field and realistic awareness of the practice and its opportunities. If the sky is the limit, the question arises: are one's feet still on the ground?

One possible answer to the question raised above can be found in the findings of the study. The self-evaluation of the competencies needed to perform in the job suggested that expert knowledge in HRD can to a large extent be characterized as practical. The competencies evaluated as the most important clearly referred to working and communicating with people, and knowledge of one's organisational work context, meaning having a profound knowledge of both the explicit and implicit structures prevailing in the organisation. Furthermore, in addition to an optimistic believe in HRD activities, everyday experiences at work had produced also a critical understanding of the many possibilities that exist to solve developmental challenges and conduct interventions in the workplace. The HR developers' views laid stress on learning by doing, both as a road to self-development and as a tool for organisational development. The stories of challenging everyday situations faced in the job and the accounts of their careers illustrated the fact that the lessons learned from experience by the HRD practitioners derived from the running of developmental projects, meetings, negotiations, training sessions and other practical tasks which have to be taken on.

The HRD practitioners' stories resemble the stories of practising military leaders whose professional knowledge was studied by Horvath et al. (1999): much of the knowledge embedded in the practice of HRD is practical and not explicated. It also remains hidden and unspoken if it is not revealed in the stories which the practitioners tell about their experiences. Accordingly, practicality implies the same kind of pitfalls as exist in the case of flexibility. Thus the deliberate personal interpretation and construing of experiences in order to recognize and build one's professional expertise could play an important role in professional development in HRD and in the training schemes designed to assist in accomplishing it.

Knowing the organisation, confidence in one's practical knowledge and inclusiveness in problem solving are also interestingly in accordance with the idea of using common sense as an important element of learning in the workplace. In his study of manual workers' conceptions of common sense knowledge Gerber (2000) concludes that having confidence in one's own abilities, being practical, knowing the work context, procedures, management style and organisational culture, and having a broad vision are personal attributes which can be connected to the use of common sense in work practice. There is thus a resemblance between Gerber's manual workers' conceptions of common sense and evaluations of their expertise by the HR developers in this study. This resemblance also demonstrates that one important part of HRD expertise centres on personal attributes. The implications for learning in the workplace put forward by Gerber suggest that the key educative roles in organisation's training programs and other learning efforts should be handed over to the kind of people who exhibit work-based common

sense. In the light of this suggestion and the findings in the present study it can be concluded that HRD practitioners are ideally placed to carry out these functions.

6.1.3 Understanding the processes of change and learning at the heart of HRD

The research on the whole supported earlier analyses which have found HR developers in a changing role from being trainers to agents of change. Furthermore, the findings provided the possibility to reflect on the role of agent of change from a broader perspective than of merely the perceived role. Thus, the third suggestion for the HRD as a field of professional expertise is that HRD be seen as a field dedicated to knowing and understanding the processes of change (Varila & Kallio 1992, 96-100). The self-evaluations of roles in the job showed the strong prevalence of the role of agent of change, while the outputs connected to that role gave an even clearer picture of the developers as agents of change. Furthermore, the evaluations of the outputs showed that working with change was central to all the participants. According to these outputs the practice of HRD is about working with recommendations and plans for management to consider, dealing with relationships among the personnel in the organisation, and also about producing and adopting models and theories of change for the use of the organisation.

These findings in the survey resemble what was told in the stories about problematic everyday work situations where relationships and interaction among people and dealing with resistance to change processes recurred as particularly problematic. The resolutions to those situations included influencing by talking and solving by doing, which in practice meant the promotion of interaction and co-operation between different interest groups in the organisation. Accordingly, working with change processes was conceived as working with people and with the relationships between people, not with organisational structures or machines. This kind of concern for people over other factors resembles the stories of HRD managers in large companies in the study by Hansen, Kahnweiler and Wilensky (1993; 1994). Change processes were understood as human processes and the lessons learnt in handling change highlighted the greater and more profound understanding of the complexities of change. In sum, it can be suggested that being an agent of change and constructing one's expertise in order to develop as one can be characterized as finding the balance between the different interest groups and different ways of promoting and contesting the processes of change among the people in the organisation.

Interestingly, the role of the agent of change perceived among the HRD practitioners seems to be analogous to that connected with teachers by Fullan (1993, 12), who says that change agency is being self-conscious about the nature of change and the change process. This is in line with the lessons learnt in the course of reaching an understanding of the complexity and slowness of change both on the individual and organisational levels which occurred in the stories of the HRD practitioners in this study. Fullan (1993, 12) continues by listing the core capacities needed for personal and institutional change agency: vision-building, practices of continuous and critical inquiry, mastery which involves having and adopting

professional and organisational knowledge, and collaboration. Similarly, these capacities are included in the HRD practitioners' listing of the most important competencies: understanding organisations, skill at giving feedback and skill at visioning. One way to understand this analogy between, for instance, vocational teachers and HRD practitioners is to see that both groups of practitioners are dealing with learning-based practices and educational change in their organisations. For teachers the primary working context is still the classroom in a school, whereas for HRD practitioners it is a variable working space in a company or some other kind of organisation. In practice, however, the different interpretations given to the learning processes that take place in the worlds of education and work (Tynjälä & Collin 2000) have built boundaries between the two groups of practitioners, even though they might have a lot to learn from each other. However, the similarities in experiencing the role of the agent of change in these two worlds presents new challenges in finding areas of shared experience and understanding, and also new ways of developing collaboration between these practitioners to the benefit of both.

Understanding the processes of change as a central aspect of professional expertise in HRD can also be examined in the light of the study by Buchanan and Boddy (1992) who analysed the expertise of the agent of change in the managerial setting. There are many connections which can be drawn between their study and the present research. The experiences reported of being an agent of change among the HRD practitioners in this study are in line with Buchanan and Boddy (1992, 115), who paid attention to the agent of change's involvement in the construction of the process of change in judgments about timing, about the presentation of plans and ideas and about the views and arguments of different interest groups in the organisation. Furthermore, Buchanan and Boddy (1992, 114) also bring up the contextuality of acting as an agent of change. They argue, that the agent of change must act within the norms and culture of an organisation in activating and balancing public and backstage activities in order to legitimate change, maintain personal credibility and sustain support for proposals.

Nevertheless, wearing the garb of the agent of change in the workplace is a far from self-evident process for HRD practitioners. Filander (2000, 88) in her study of developers in the Finnish public sector suggests that the heroic and pioneering role which is given to change agency and management of change in the management and organisation literature is more of an ideal description than a viable portrayal of the HRD practitioners' daily work. However, such uncertainty and the sense of being an outsider which were expressed among the developers working in public-sector organisations in the time of the recession and drastic changes in public administration (Filander 2000, 88) were not found among the HRD practitioners of the present study. Rather, another direction can be suggested. The long and self-constructed careers of the HR developers studied here implied contentment with their chosen field of professional practice, even though organisational constraints and feelings of rejection of one's expertise in relation to change agency were also noticed. However, the heroic pioneering role related to managerial settings did not occur either among these HRD practitioners. Rather their change agency appeared merely as backstage activity (Buchanan and Boddy 1992). The difference between uncertainty and contentment

may be due to fact that the present study was conducted after the recovery from the recession. The HRD practitioners from both the public-sector and private organisations were also asked to reflect on their whole career, which was long, including both ups and downs both in the economic and organisational sense. Consequently, the difference in the findings between these studies across one decade suggests how strongly the practice of HRD and the interpretations of HRD practitioners can be bound to time and place. This kind of contextuality highlights the challenge of seeing HRD as an evolving enterprise and avoids fixing the attention either on desperate or contented stories of change agency among HRD practitioners. Being tied to either of these stories may hinder an innovative and transformative approach to the development of the field.

Understanding HRD as learning-based activity

The ways in which the HR developer seemed to be involved in the construction of change and was able to challenge managerial initiatives and rhetoric on change appeared as acts of bringing up the notion of learning. Accordingly, the interviews revealed that one distinctive way of challenging management initiatives or other expert cultures was by defending the importance of understanding learning. In practice this meant arguing for time resources to be reserved for learning and for the ways of organising training and development activities. What came up in the career stories was that understanding learning, whether acquired either through formal training or a practical understanding of it, strengthened the identity of the HR developer as a practitioner. Even though knowing the organisation and its business were also seen as important, understanding of learning in this way was a component of expertise which gave personal support to one's actions and served as a basis for argumentation also for the larger constituency. This kind of concentration on learning can, however, constitute a pitfall for a HR developer in terms of achieving higher organisational status, at least in traditional and less learning-oriented organisations (cf. Hansen & Kahnweiler 1993). In sum, assuming that change can be defined as a learning process, a characterization of HRD practitioners which would emphasize their point of view in the developmental processes, would be agent of learning. This, however, also requires awareness of the many possible interpretations of learning.

Hence, in addition to the perspectives of understanding HRD as various forms of development (Lee 2001), as a discourse constructed in relation to managerial activity (Sambrook 2000) or as activity understood through views of adult development and learning (Kuchinke 1999), it is suggested here that understanding learning should be seen as the core of the practice and professional expertise of HRD. This means that understanding learning should go beyond the traditional, e.g. behaviouristic, cognitive and constructivistic theories of learning. Given that the workplace as a learning environment is neither universal nor independent of the context, it is suggested that understanding learning processes should be seen through contextual resources such as time, crowdedness of the situation and organisational as well as individual intentions (Eraut 2000). According to Eraut's (2000) study on learning in professional work these can be

seen as factors competing for each interest groups' attention in the organisational setting. They form an interactive relationship, which will have impact on the nature of the cognitive and practical activities and the pursuit of the outcomes of learning processes. For instance, if the organisational intention is to develop new procedures, but without allocating enough time for this, people will adopt an intuitive approach, make rapid interpretations and probably carry on with their routinised actions. Furthermore, if there is more time available, deliberative planning, monitoring, evaluation and experimenting become possible, and these processes may result in the qualitative development of the procedures. Consequently, in terms of understanding HRD as a learning-based activity from this perspective, the HRD practitioner's expertise does not lie only in the readiness to organize training but also in the readiness to bring forward questions such as: Is the purpose of learning adaptive or developmental? Is the target of the activity reactive or deliberate in nature? Is the intention to strengthen routines or change them? And, what are the available time resources? There are, of course, numerous possibilities in between these continua, but the important task as well as ethical responsibility of the HR developer could be in mediating and explaining the developmental potential embedded in learning processes.

The importance of understanding learning, which recurred among the HRD practitioners in the present study, also brings up interesting notions regarding the relationship between adult education and adult learning theories and HRD. In fact, it gives strong support to this kind of relationship. It can be assumed that on the managerial levels of organisations the connections between HRD and adult education are relatively unknown, whereas in the academic field of adult education HRD as a form of practice in adult education has been criticised because it violates the values of democracy and critical thinking and has its justification within the market economy model. This seems to be the line of thinking even though in the field of critical adult education where the context of HRD, that is, the workplace, has also been brought into the discussion as an important resource for well-being, learning and development in adults' lives. Interestingly, it appears on the basis of this study that HRD practitioners seem to comprise an interest group who do in fact give closer scrutiny than the other interest groups to the workplace as a learning site, and more often from the point of view of people and individual learning than of business needs. A holistic understanding of the realities of the workplace and the possibilities of learning seemed to be characteristic of the HRD practitioners. This could be explained as a typical feature of the historical development of the Finnish practice of HRD, which is supported by the strong relationships that subsist between employer-sponsored training and adult education practice. Accordingly, given the recent discussion on the importance of continuous learning in the workplace this developmental strand appears to be of great advantage.

Nevertheless, in his study of the organising of work-related learning projects Poell (1998) stresses that HRD personnel are not the only ones who promote learning or are learning in the developmental projects in work organisations (if they have ever even been granted that privilege). Actually, a lot of adult learning takes place in the workplace regardless of the strategies or activities of management and HRD staff. Even if HRD activities are planned and

conducted in order to improve the performance of the organisation, the majority of learning in the workplace is informal, and formal training is only one possible, though popular, intervention among the many. A further question which arises from that is: what, then, are the ways in which the HRD practitioners can make a difference in the workplace? What specifically can be said about the HRD practitioner's role in the learning processes taking place at work? On the basis of the present research it is suggested that HRD practitioners' expertise can be located in and could be built further on an understanding of both theories of learning and the contextual resources available for it. This understanding would include the ability to see the many options there are to promote learning that exist and the many ways to support a culture where various learning projects are in general possible.

6.1.4 Centrality of social interaction – making the difference through dialogue and brokering

As already shown in discussing the centrality of understanding the processes of change, social interaction in its many forms appeared to play a central role in the practice and construction of professional expertise in HRD. A considerable proportion of the job performance, competencies and lessons learned through experience emerged from being in contact with people. Thus the centrality of social interaction resembles, for instance various forms of team working and networking and switching perspectives with fellow practitioners and other professionals. These all were found to be important sources of learning in the practice of various professionals in the study by Cheetham and Chivers (2001, 275-276). On the one hand social interaction is a working tool for HR developers and on the other hand it is a site for the personal construing of professional expertise. The importance of social interaction among the HRD practitioners becomes interesting when it is related to the studies of learning in the workplace which have stressed the social nature of learning (Tynjälä & Collin 2000) and to the emerging understanding of the workplace as an organisational activity system or as a collection of communities of practice (Engeström 1992; Wenger 1998). There also is, however, empirical evidence to show that lack of trust in the workplace (Kevätsalo 1999) hinders interaction and thus, the potential for learning through it. The question which then arises touches on the HR developer's role and possibilities as a participant in and promoter of social interaction and trust in the organisation.

On the basis of the present research it seems that one perspective which can be taken on social interaction as an important constituent of the professional expertise in HRD is that of dialogue. HRD practitioners work between people more than between other forms of resources in the organisation. According to their own descriptions they listen and ask, mediate and interpret, and bring different perspectives together. If looked from the point of view of organisational dynamics and development this activity as described in the stories can be explicated as promoting dialogue, which seeks to have people learn how to think together and to produce an environment conducive to the creation of shared meaning (Isaacs 1993). Dialogue has entered the recent management and

leadership rhetoric and it has been also an important constituent in the discussion on the learning organisation (e.g. Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2001; Isaacs 1993; Marsick & Watkins 1993, 73-95; Schein 1993; Senge 1990, 233-269). For HRD practitioners building dialogue and acting in dialogue seems to have long been an implicit and a more or less conscious part of their everyday work. One role of dialogue is to assist in getting the many voices in the organisation heard. However, working among the many voices in the organisation means that one's own voice also has to be loud and clear. Dialogue is paradoxical in the sense that it seeks to allow greater coherence through the acknowledgement of similarities and differences, but at the same time it does not impose anything (Isaacs 1993). Accordingly, the developer needs courage to use her or his own expertise and personality as an important working tool in promoting interaction as a process of dialogue. It seems that among the HRD practitioners such courage is acquired through the successful resolving of the challenges faced during their everyday work and through taking an active part in their own career-building.

The present study suggests that another interesting perspective on the centrality of social interaction would be to see HRD practitioners as located in the framework of learning in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). The career stories revealed that for the HRD practitioners a greater number of years of experience in the same organisation was one important way of building their membership of the organisation and their role as an expert practitioner in HRD. Thus, long experience in the same organisation, as described in the career stories, can be seen as a process of moving from participation on the periphery to the participation in the social practice of the organisation (Lave & Wenger 1991). What is interesting in the case of HRD practitioners is that due to their specific jobs and expertise they do not usually have a shared specific community of practice, or if they do, then it is very small; they have no forum within the organisation. Instead they socialise themselves through their actions in the various communities that exist in the organisation, but may nonetheless remain on the periphery of these communities. The participatory actions which they take in order to be able to participate may include taking responsibility for various training programs or developmental projects, for instance management training.

Compared to other groups of developmental practitioners in organisations, e.g. external practitioners with an action research orientation (Kuula 1999, 116-142), the HRD practitioners in this study seem to share with action researchers the experience of casting off the role of a technical-rational expert or consultant providing answers and solutions from the outside. Instead, the aim seems to be to activate and involve the staff in its own developmental processes. However, where developmental practitioners with an action research orientation aim at attaining a position external to the organisation's social structure, HRD practitioners prefer to involve themselves more in the social networks of the organisation, and thus knowing the staff is an important resource for their work. The better the HRD practitioner's knowledge of the communities at all the levels of the organisation, the more opportunities there will be for involvement in developmental projects.

The centrality of social interaction as an aspect of HRD practitioners' professional expertise can be further discussed in relation to the components of the social theory of learning presented by Wenger (1998). Wenger (1998, 104-110) proposes two kinds of connections, boundary objects and brokering, through which communities of practice in an organisation can organize their mutual participation and cross the boundaries between practices. Boundary objects are countable products and artifacts or forms of communication, while brokering is a human activity centred on participation and thus performed by those who are able to introduce the various practices to each other. What can be read into the stories of the HR developers in this study is that they act as brokers in their places of work. Brokering involves acting between different perspectives and getting them to work together through the processes of translation, coordination and alignment. The job of brokering involves certain complexities and a degree of ambivalence. In the light of this definition, HRD practitioners solving problems between, for instance, managers and staff as well as between different groups within the staff, and also between the business and other people or between adaption and development are brokers who usually remain on the boundaries themselves (Valkeavaara 1999). The HRD practitioner's job is not to choose between being in or out but rather to focus on crossing boundaries, as one of the HR developers in the interview expressed it when describing herself as a "mouthpiece" between management and staff. The professional expertise needed in HRD can be seen from a horizontal viewpoint and thus it can also be characterized as boundary crossing, which means a readiness to operate flexibly between multiple and parallel contexts in an organisation (Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen 1995). The individual inadequacy, experiences of rejection and uprootedness expressed by the HR developers in this study could be explained by the nature of brokering, which may leave the core of the practice and competence it requires vague and unexplained. Consequently, explaining and interpreting their experience in the job renders the practice and expertise of HR developers more visible and builds up their understanding of what may constitute the core of such expertise.

6.2 Methodological discussion

The methodological choices in both phases of study have been reflected on and discussed separately in each article produced during the research. The usability of the North American model for the description of the practice of HRD is discussed in articles I, p. 36; II, pp. 184-186 and III, pp. 545-546 in particular and the applicability of the narrative approach to the analysis of the construction of professional expertise from interview data is reflected on in articles IV, pp. 193-194 and V, pp. 19-20. Given the constructivist framework emphasised here, the methodological choices and the results obtained require to be discussed more in terms of their viability and trustworthiness than in conventional validity terms (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Kvale (1996, 240-244) suggests that the validity of the research process should be evaluated in terms of quality of craftsmanship. This

becomes essential in research focussing on interpretative approaches, but also applies to critical reflection on a research process regardless of the approach adopted. Quality of craftsmanship is dependent on the continuous checking of analyses, selection of participants, questioning of the content and purpose of the study and theoretically interpreting the methods and findings during the research process. Below a few broader themes concerning challenges and critical points encountered during the process are further discussed. These themes include the theoretical contribution of this research process to the maturing of HRD as a field of professional expertise, evaluation of the research strategy and study design adopted, and the transferability of the findings.

To begin with, the question can be asked: where is the present research process located in the body of research which has the aim of contributing to the maturing of HRD as a field of professional expertise. Lynham (2000) has suggested four key research paradigms affecting theory building in HRD as body of knowledge. The main dimensions in theory-building research vary from regulating to aiming at the radical change in the field, and from adopting an objective approach to the use of a subjective approach. Accordingly, these paradigms include functionalist (regulatory and objective), interpretivist (regulatory and subjective), radical structuralist (radical change and objective) and radical humanist (radical change and subjective). All the paradigms are interwoven in such a way that they simultaneously influence the development of HRD knowledge. If the time dimension is added into the maturation of a certain field of professional expertise, it can be seen that before suggestions for radical change can be made knowledge and understanding of the current state of regularities and processes is needed. Following Lynham's suggestion, the purpose of the present research process can be located in both the regulatory objective and regulatory subjective paradigms. On the one hand, the purpose of the research was functional, i.e. to test the HRD model in Finnish context and search for possible regularities in the description of HRD as field of professional expertise. On the other hand, the research process was interpretivist in that it set out to describe and explain the current state of affairs and developmental processes. Nevertheless, in the long term the research process also aimed at inducing a potential change in the field by producing suggestions for further development of the field of HRD from both the objective (developing professional education for HRD expertise) and subjective (encouraging the practitioners to engage in critical self-evaluation) approaches.

In fact, the theoretical paucity of HRD as a field organisational activity as well as a field of professional expertise was a challenge in deciding on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. To conduct an academic study of a phenomenon which is primarily constructed through practice, is determined within the market economy but deals with human learning, and has no distinct theoretical identity but is based on several disciplines (McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson 2001) was like walking on slippery, thin ice. Thus, the theoretical conception of what was to be studied could not be based on a theory of HRD. Given the purpose of the research to explore what HRD entails as a daily job and what it requires from the practitioner, approaching HRD as field of professional expertise offered a perspective which was

sufficiently broad for the study. Furthermore, the view of professional expertise as experienced performance included the constructivist idea that professional expertise cannot be described or understood in isolation from professional practice and that its practitioners themselves are thus the best experts in their job and also furnish the most suitable informants for the research effort.

The adoption of the view of professional expertise, however, meant that some critical issues had to be addressed. Traditional research on professional expertise is usually based on the definition of expertise as excellent and outstanding performance. Hence research has aimed at distinguishing what an excellent level of performance is and the different ways of attaining it. Traditional expert-novice comparisons and laboratory analyses of expert performance in relation to specific tasks are typical examples of this strand of research on expertise. Behind studies of this type lie clearly defined criteria for what constitutes top performance, or, if not, those criteria are sought through specific tasks. (Ericsson & Smith 1991.) Similarly, studies of competencies in professional work imply the dimension of quality which concerns the level of the practitioner's performance (Eraut 1994, 164-167). The present research process, however, took another starting point altogether by desisting from the idea of building on a foundation of setting criteria for top performance or being able to distinguish excellent practitioners in HRD. This was due to lack of any such criteria and the ill-defined nature of the tasks to be performed by those in the field. Instead, the concept of professional expertise was seen as a descriptive tool, through which the research process aimed to describe and understand experienced performance through the analysis of roles, outputs, competencies, everyday challenges and career processes. Nevertheless, this kind of descriptive effort can always also be seen from normative and policy-making points of view. It participates, more or less, in producing particular views as well as expectations of what the practice of HRD is like and how can one develop as a HRD practitioner (Eraut 1994, 166-169; Stevenson 1996).

Accordingly, in terms of the general run of research on professional expertise the research process embarked on here can be seen as a first step in investigating the nature and contents of professional expertise in a certain, ill-defined field, HRD. It consisted of a structured analysis of performance and knowledge actualised in the practice of HRD and in-depth analysis of a relatively small number of practitioners in order to acquire an understanding of the developmental processes embedded in HRD practice. At this stage of the research an expert practitioner was defined broadly as a person specialising in HRD tasks. Nevertheless, in the second phase of the present research this definition was restricted to HRD specialists who also had wide experience in the field and thus only experienced practitioners were selected as participants. Expert practitioners in the field were thus given the opportunity to contribute to the lines along which an understanding of their practice as a field of professional expertise would be constructed. Future steps in the investigation may include testing the viability of the suggestions made on the basis of this research and also re-construction of the understanding achieved. This can be done for instance by evaluating the practice of HRD or by planning and implementing professional training schemes or

comparing the performances and interpretations of novices and experts (Salthouse 1991).

Another important issue which needs to be reflected on is the adoption of two different methods in order to elicit the data for the study of professional expertise. The structured postal questionnaire, which adopted the HRD model, and the semi-structured interview and their respective statistical and narrative analyses presented two different modes of thought and ways of ordering experience which, for instance, Bruner (1986, 11-14) terms as paradigmatic and narrative. The paradigmatic mode employs, for instance, categorizations in order to describe or to find universal categories which correspond with a phenomenon. The narrative mode deals with human intentions and is interested in stories which can bestow verisimilitude on a phenomenon. Thus, these modes vary in their epistemological and ontological underpinnings, and it is more common to focus on one mode of thought than to utilize both in a single research process. They should be seen, however, as complementary. They can also be found mutually convincing, as was the case in this study. Consequently, in this research a decision was made in favour of mixing these methods (Brannen 1992; Bryman 1992).

To choose a research strategy which utilised two different methods and was located between the paradigmatic and narrative mode meant also that professional expertise in HRD was seen both as composed of factors related to HRD activity (such as behaviour, outputs, different types of knowledge) and as constructed through thoughts and emotions actualized in that activity (such as the interpretation of experience). In order to obtain a holistic understanding of professional expertise both ways of ordering experience were to be taken into account (Bruner 1986, 11-14). For instance, earlier studies adopting the HRD model for the description of the practice of HRD in various countries have focussed on testing the model and describing the country-specific situation according to the categories provided in the model. In its quest to test the validity of the model this approach has neglected the possibility of going beyond the model and acquiring an understanding of the processes embedded in building HRD practice. This research process represents just such a more holistic approach. The practice of HRD as a field of professional expertise was studied both through the HRD model and in terms of personal interpretations of their experience provided by HRD practitioners.

However, there are certain problems which have to be addressed in the adoption of the HRD model as a way of ordering experience. According to Hager and Gonczi (1991) checklists for roles, outputs and competencies can be seen to limit the interpretation of personal experience and to give too atomistic and superficial picture of the HRD practice and expertise. Self-evaluation of one's practice through lengthy checklists on a given response scale may also cause the practitioners problems in such a many-faceted field as HRD and thus limit the usability of the model. For example, it can be questioned whether the instruction to evaluate outputs and competencies from the point of view of the most time-consuming role chosen was too restrictive for the respondents. On the other hand, the respondents did not know what kinds of combinations of roles and outputs and roles and competencies were present in the HRD model.

Accordingly, the findings demonstrated that respondents' evaluations followed those combinations only partly. Furthermore, there is also supportive evidence on the usability and accuracy of self-judgement of competencies needed in work (Hansson 2001).

Questions can also be posed regarding the focus on asking the interviewees to talk about challenging and problematic situations encountered in their daily work and about their occupational careers, and on the adoption of a narrative approach from which to study them. These thematic areas in the interview were aimed at eliciting the HRD practitioners' interpretations of their developmental processes in the job. Thus, as a source of data the stories represented practitioners' interpretations of what were assumed to be salient points and developmental processes in the ordering of their experience, and not descriptions corresponding to what had actually happened (e.g. Pentland 1999; Rossiter 1999; see also articles IV, pp. 194-194 and V, pp. 19-20). The choice of themes was based on the debate surrounding the development of professional expertise as a continuous learning process throughout one's career, where challenges and problematic situations are seen as more illuminating in terms of expertise than one's daily routines and successes (e.g. Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993; Engeström 1992; Marsick & Watkins 1990). Furthermore, the starting point of seeing HRD practitioners themselves as the best informants of their practice and the use of narrative approach to find the practitioners' stories of the events in their work were in line with each other (Doyle 1997). Despite this theoretical starting point in deciding the points of interest in an interview (Kvale 1996), one can, however, always ask what kind of stories remained untold or were left out of the analysis. Given the latest debate on the development of professional expertise the focus on looking for stories could be turned more strongly towards the role of the social context (e.g. Wenger 1998). Accordingly, it can also be asked whether there is enough general understanding of the context where the stories in the present study came from. In the analysis of these stories it was not possible to touch upon the role of the specific organisational context as much as had been envisaged. This was due to the frequent requests in the interviews that anonymity be preserved. Consequently, the presumably small number of experienced, full-time and in-house HRD practitioners in Finland, and their relatively sensitive roles and positions in their places of work restricted the detailed description of the organisational context.

In all, however, the feedback from the respondents of the survey stressed the positive and ordering impact which the questionnaire had on the self-evaluation of one's job. The interview yielded similar feedback, which suggests that collection of data on the whole in this research process served as a foundation for the important challenge of understanding one's expertise in HRD practice in contemporary working life (Kasvio et al. 1999, 294-295). Thus, neither the questionnaire nor the thematic map for the interview should be neglected in the future but rather both should be developed as tools for further development of the field, for instance in documenting and interpreting experiences, explicating the aims and values behind practice, making portfolios, pointing out critical incidents or evaluating the outcomes of practice.

Many of the methodological choices made in research may also be based on very pragmatic factors (Brannen 1992). Often, it is practical events and incidents

which mould the research process. This was also the case in deciding on the research strategy and design of the present study. The offer to participate in the European comparative research project could be criticised as too methodologically binding on the researcher since the design of the survey study was already decided. In the beginning of the research, despite the agreement about collecting comparable data from Finland, I as a researcher had many reservations about the evaluation of roles, outputs and competencies through the questionnaire. Hence the research process on the whole was planned in two phases. However, had I not been offered the chance to participate in the European comparison, I might have neglected the interesting possibility of acquiring knowledge of the practice of HRD through the HRD model. Consequently, the research would not perhaps have adopted the holistic approach it did. Even though participation in the research project was somewhat restrictive it nevertheless provided an important opportunity for peer evaluation and international cooperation. In all, participation in international comparison and cooperation as such has been a valuable learning challenge and an important point in my journey as a researcher.

To utilize an established model, developed in the cultural and historical context of another country, means however that there are also crucial cultural questions which have to be considered. These questions are discussed in detail in articles I - III, but some are also brought into the discussion here. When employing the HRD model it was important to be aware of the fact that occupational, organisational and cultural factors affect the ways in which HRD is viewed in each country (Hansen & Brooks 1994; Peterson 1997). On the other hand, however, given the fact that much of the HRD literature and discussion in Finland has been adopted from the USA, the use of the model did not appear to raise any major problems among the respondents. Furthermore, the translation of the questionnaire was done in co-operation in the comparative research project and with the help provided by Finnish HRD practitioners. While the role studies among HRD practitioners has a long history in the USA, it has also been criticised from various perspectives. For instance, Watkins (1991) has queried the relevance of the continuous defining of roles, outputs and competencies in the USA and suggested shifting towards more process-oriented approach in the study of HRD practice. However, the testing of the HRD model in Finland in the little studied field of HRD practice was thought to be a justified starting point for a systematic study.

Given the lack of clarity and the complexity of HRD as a field of professional practice the selection of the participants was also a challenge in the research. This challenge was first met in deciding on how to find and get into contact with individuals corresponding to the content and purpose of the study. Following the model of the selection procedures conducted in the European comparative study the Finnish participants for the postal survey were invited from two professional associations known to operate in the field of HRD. The choice of using two associations can be criticised as rather exclusive, but had the benefit of being practical and less time-consuming while at the same time offering contact with practitioners organized in their field. The interviewees were selected from the respondents to the postal survey on the basis of criteria tied to definitions of both HRD and professional expertise. In all, 164 individuals, twenty of them twice,

served as informants in this research. Overall, the strategy used to find appropriate participants can be considered successful.

The question remains as what extent and on which grounds the results of this research are generalizable. Given the purpose of the study and that the selection of the participants in both phases of the study was based on specific criteria and not on random sampling it is clear that the results cannot be subjected to statistical generalization or generalization to the population at large. Instead, the transferability of the findings should be discussed, meaning that it can be asked how far the findings can be used as a guide to understanding the typical or common situation in the field and to predict future trends or developmental directions (Kvale 1996, 231-235). For instance, the present findings corresponded with the descriptions of the common features of the field produced in international studies (see article VI). However, one reservation regarding the transferability lies in the fact that the participants in the second phase of the study in particular were full-time HRD personnel in their respective organisations. This leaves out trainers and consultants working externally in training and development services. Nevertheless, the similarities between the present findings and those of the study by Poikela (1999) of training designers' learning at work lend support to the belief that the results have some degree of transferability in the field of HRD as a whole. Another reservation regarding transferability is the decision to concentrate on full-time and internal HRD practitioners who are found in large private and public sector organisations. This decision left small and medium enterprises out of the scope of this study. However, given that the focus of HRD is on people, it can be suggested that the conclusions drawn in this study will be applicable to the development work of people in smaller companies as well.

In addition, the conclusions can be tested in future practice and research. Thus, transferability is intertwined with the evaluation of validity. In this research much of the transferability and the evaluation of the viability of the results can also be left as a task for the primary target audience, that is the various types HRD practitioners and researchers. During the research process itself articles were disseminated to the participants of the interview phase as they were published. In addition, the results have been presented to various groups of experienced HRD practitioners and the feedback from them has been positive. To give an example, one experienced HRD practitioner from a public-sector organisation reported that the analysis of problematic situations was an illuminating and comforting reading experience in terms of gaining an understanding of the difficulties inherent in the job and that copies of the article on this subject have also been distributed to colleagues to promote discussion on the subject.

6.3 Further research and practical challenges

Suggestions for further research and practical challenges are seen here as intertwined in the existing research on HRD since the emerging field requires

continuous systematic efforts both in theory-building and in finding and experimenting new forms for use in practice. Thus, these should go hand in hand. If further research based on the present study is seen as the next step in understanding HRD as field of professional expertise or as a phase in initiating radical change and development in the field, it should focus on adopting and evaluating the usability of the current findings in practical efforts followed by a systematic study. This would also mean a choice of the research strategies which emphasise a critical approach, and a participatory and action orientation (Kirjonen et al. 1996). Given the criticism levelled at direct verbalization as a methodological approach in research on development of expertise (see e.g. Reitman-Olson & Biolsi 1991), practical and action-oriented approaches would complement the picture which can be drawn of professional expertise in HRD.

In general, the practical challenge suggested by this research process is in fact twofold. On the one hand the results challenge the management of organisations to pay attention to their HRD activities and to the often overlooked potential for learning and development that are embedded in the ways in which HRD activities are conducted (or given the chance to be conducted). Given that HRD is a part of an organisation's (human resource) management activities, the missed opportunities to realise are dependent on managerial awareness of HRD. On the other hand the results challenge HRD practitioners themselves to a critical evaluation of their practice and professional expertise both in relation to their employing organisation and to the field of HRD in general. Looking critically at one's practice and expertise would certainly be retrospective at first, but energy should also be directed at continuity. If an evaluation was conducted both individually and collectively it could also promote the construction of communities of practice in HRD. The hoped-for consequence of this twofold challenge is that forums and tools for the exchange of experiences and critical evaluation among HRD practitioners are supported and further developed, and that the interests of the both groups, i.e. managers and HRD personnel are heard and given space in the debate. This would also contribute to the challenge of discussing what is expected of managers and HRD practitioners with regard to HRD (Buyens, Wouters & Dewettinck 2001). In this enterprise the questions of roles, outputs and competencies as well as the map of the interview themes could be developed together into a "mapping tool" for the individual's experiences. In addition, further research on a multidisciplinary basis should be directed at the understanding of the HRD by both management, staff and HRD personnel in order to build a shared vision of the practice and of language of HRD (Tjekpema et al. 2000). Further research as well as practical efforts could also involve both internal HRD personnel and external trainers and consultants in a comparison of their practice and professional expertise.

A conclusion which can be drawn from the experiences of HRD practitioners is that the practice of HRD and the professional expertise in HRD is in constant danger of remaining an unused resource in organisations. The experiences of the HR developers in this study showed that a lot of potential expertise existed among them which could be "given away" at the managerial level or to employees as far as promoting the workplace as a learning environment is concerned. This presupposes, however, genuinely taking people and their

development, i.e. adults and their learning, into account as a resource in the organisation. Thus, development and radical change in HRD is always dependent on the changes that take place in organisations and management cultures as well as in working life and society at large. A cynic might ask why the managers should bother to do more than simply mention HRD in their managerial rhetoric (Legge 1995, 205-207). On the cynical view HRD is a cost and a rhetoric which is manifested and experienced as manipulation. However, if one adopts an optimistic view, as many of the interviewees had done for years, the developmental view may be recognized and utilised. But it also requires an understanding of the complexity and slowness of the processes of change, an understanding that had been constructed as one constituent of HRD expertise according to the experiences of the HR developers in this study. Consequently, further research, again on a multidisciplinary basis, should be directed to an understanding of change processes in the business organisational context from the point of view of HRD. In particular understanding the many meanings of learning embedded in those processes and in HRD practice deserve closer scrutiny (e.g. Slotte, Tynjälä & Hytönen 2002). This kind of research interest would make the understanding of learning more explicit both as a conceptual and practical tool in efforts at developing the workplace as a learning environment. In addition, a multidisciplinary approach would strengthen interaction and mutual understanding between the various disciplines which so far have operated independently in the efforts to develop the practice and professional expertise of HRD.

The many complexities and lack of clarity may have had a role in preserving the nebulous nature of HRD practice as field of professional expertise even though it has appeared in managerial visions and strategies in the workplace. In relation to this, the inclusive and practical nature of HRD can be seen as a pitfall for HR developers. Inclusiveness and confidence about practical knowledge enable flexibility in practice, but they also have a role in preserving the practice and professional expertise of HRD as implicit and "hidden" as well as keeping its legitimacy weak. It has been said that HRD can be talked into practice by HR developers themselves (Lee 2000), and in this way an understanding of HRD can be socially constructed. There is, however, a larger need to find more formal language in which to discuss HRD. The practical contribution provided by this study is the suggestions it makes for describing and understanding the practice of HRD as a field of professional expertise. These suggestions also aimed at explicating what the practice of HRD and professional expertise in it may entail, and thus they can be seen as a proposal for a language that HR developers as well as other interest groups can use to achieve a shared understanding and constructive discussion of the practice of HRD and its outcomes. The challenge of further research is to examine the usability of this language in constructing an understanding of HRD and to making suggestions for its re-construction.

As far as the traditional characterizations of professional expertise are concerned, this research did not draw a picture of HRD practitioners as experts with great power (see also Hansen, Kahnweiler & Wilensky 1994). The criticism against the legitimation of expert systems and the power which is given to experts over the individuals is somewhat irrelevant in the case of HRD practitioners. The

paradox of the position of HRD practitioners as experts in developmental work and questions of power in organisations was well illustrated in this study. On the one hand HR developers hold their positions and have constructed their careers and places as professional experts in developmental work, but nevertheless, they lack the final say in the decisions which are made about the implementation of HRD. Their power and responsibility is always primarily and organisationally dependent on management.

On the other hand, however, the lack of power can be given an affirmative interpretation. Given that HR developers work between the different interest groups and perform a brokering function between different communities they are uncommitted and free to make forays into conventional thinking, to raise issues or use approaches which would not be seen as appropriate if done by some other groups in the organisation. Both the organisation and the practitioner him/herself are thus challenged to a critical evaluation of their practice and opportunities for development can raise. This kind of processing seems to presuppose, however, a relatively long history in an organisation, knowing the organisation from the shop floor to the top, knowing the history of the organisation and taking a long-term perspective on the practice of HRD. This long term perspective presents a practical challenge to be considered in deciding between short-term consultancies and long-term developmental projects in the workplace. It also raises questions about how the experiences of experienced HR developers can be shared with novices in the field. Furthermore, it stresses the need for further comparative research on beginners and experienced practitioners in the field.

On the basis of this research it also appears to be difficult to label these HRD practitioners as traditional technical-rational expert practitioners acting as a "besser-wisser" in developmental work. Accordingly, for instance flexibility, brokering and taking a dialogical approach which seem to characterize the HR developers in this study, supports this notion. In fact, it can be suggested that professional expertise in HRD, as in any field, will find itself in crisis if the practitioner adopts the role of a besser-wisser in working. Rather professional expertise in the field covered by HRD practitioners in particular should be developed as a collection of ways in which to make sense as well as to make use of one's experiences and those of the target population, and as an approach which adopts different specific and general bodies of knowledge in a contextual but flexible and evolving way.

YHTEENVETO

Henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden rakentuminen

Johdanto ja tutkimuksen tarkoitus

Tämän tutkimuksen kohteena ovat henkilöstön kehittäjien arviot ja kokemukset kehittämistyön asiantuntijuudesta ja sen rakentumisesta. Väitöskirjatyö koostuu yhteenveto-osasta ja kuudesta englanninkielisestä artikkelista, jotka on julkaistu vuosina 1997-2002.

Tutkimuksen lähtökohtana voidaan pitää kysymyksiä: millaiseen asiantuntijuuteen suomalaisilla työpaikoilla toteutettava henkilöstön kehittämis- ja koulutustoiminta perustuu, millä tavoin tällainen asiantuntijuus kehittyy, ja miten tietoa henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuudesta voi soveltaa organisaatioiden johtamisessa ja kehittämisessä? Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on ymmärtää, miten oppimista työpaikoilla tuetaan, ja mitä tietoja ja taitoja henkilöstön kehittämisessä toimivat käyttävät ja tarvitsevat oppimisen tukemisessa. Vaikka työnantajien järjestämä henkilöstön kehittäminen eri muodoissaan on voimakkaasti lisääntynyt viime vuosina, henkilöstön kehittäminen yksilön asiantuntijatyönä, organisaation toiminta-alueena tai erityisenä koulutusalueena on edelleen jäänyt moniselitteiseksi ja saanut monia tulkintoja. Syitä moniselitteisyydelle voi hakea henkilöstön kehittämisen lyhyestä historiasta organisaatioiden johtamisessa, yhtenäisen professionaalisen koulutuksen puuttumisesta tai vähäisestä alan tutkimuksesta. Moniselitteisyyttä ylläpitää myös se, että henkilöstön kehittämisessä sisältää useita ennakoimattomia ja ennen kaikkea inhimilliseen toimintaan kytkeytyviä haasteita. Lisäksi sekä organisaation että yksilön oppimistarpeiden huomiointi saa aikaan väistämättömiä ristiriitoja kehittämistyöhön. Toisaalta on jo peräänkuulutettu henkilöstön kehittäjien asiantuntijuuden kriittistä tarkastelua ja kehittämistä yhteiskunnan ja työelämän ajankohtaisia vaatimuksia vastaavaksi. Tämän tutkimuksen menetelmällisenä lähtökohtana oli antaa tilaa kokeneiden kehittäjien ja kouluttajien äänelle, joka aikaisemmista henkilöstökoulutusta ja henkilöstön kehittämistä koskevista tutkimuksista on puuttunut työnantajien, työntekijöiden ja työntekijäjärjestöjen rinnalta.

Tutkimuksen taustalla vaikuttavat yhteiskunnallinen murros ja työelämän muutos, muutokseen kytkeytyvät työelämän ja organisaatioiden kehittämishankkeet ja oppimiseen investointi. Työpaikkoja onkin alettu tarkastella oppimisympäristöinä ja ihmisten osaamisen sekä jatkuvan oppimisen tukemista erilaisin koulutus- ja kehittämishankkein on vähitellen alettu pitää kestäväksi investointina. Yhteiskuntapoliittisella tasolla investointi näkyy sekä EU:n tukemina hankkeina että kansallisina työvoima- ja opetushallinnon resurssoina työelämän kehittämisohjelmina. Aikuiskoulutustilastoissa investointi näkyy siinä, että yli puolet työllisestä työväestöstä osallistuu vuosittain työnantajan kustantamaan henkilöstökoulutukseen. Viime vuosikymmenen kehityksen perusteella näyttää siis siltä, henkilöstön kehittämisestä on tullut entistä merkittävämpi osa organisaatioiden toimintaa.

Henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuus on tutkimuskohteena on hyvin laaja-alainen ja moniselitteinen. Organisaatioissa toimivat henkilöstön kehittämisspäälliköt, koulutusspäälliköt, henkilöstöpäälliköt, suunnittelijat ja kouluttajat on Suomessa mielletty yhdeksi aikuiskouluttajien erityisryhmäksi. Henkilöstön kehittämistyö ja siinä tarvittava asiantuntijuus eivät kuitenkaan rakennu yhtenäisen peruskoulutuksen, eikä yhteisen tieteellisen teoriaperustan pohjalle. Työtehtävät ja tehtävänimikkeetkään eivät ole yhtenäisiä. Vaikka tämän tutkimuksen lähtökohtana on henkilöstön kehittäjien tarkastelu yhtenä aikuiskouluttajien erityisryhmänä, yhtä lailla heitä voisi tarkastella ammattikasvatuksen, työ- ja organisaatiopsykologian tai taloustieteen ammattilaisina tai työelämän tutkijoina. Kehittämistyön laaja-alaisuuden ja moniselitteisyyden takia henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden rakentumisen tarkastelussa onkin syytä lähteä siitä oletuksesta, että henkilöstön kehittäjän asiantuntijuus rakentuu kehittäjän toimiessa erilaisissa organisaationaalisista ja yksilöllisistä tarpeista lähteivissä kehittämishankkeissa. Tällainen toiminta on vaativaa ja haasteellista ja siitä saa kokemuksia henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden rakentamiseen.

Tässä tutkimuksessa kysyttiin, millaiseen toimintaan, kokemukseen ja asiantuntijatietoon henkilöstön kehittämistyö ankkuroituu ja miten alan asiantuntijaksi kehitytään. Henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden kuvaamisen lähtökohtana ei ollut asiantuntijuuden määrittely lineaarisen kehitysprosessin ylimpänä tasona ja erinomaisena suorituksena, joka ilmaistaan tiettyinä eksaktisti mitattavina tietoina ja taitoina. Tässä tutkimuksessa asiantuntijuus määriteltiin kokeneeksi toiminnaksi jollakin tietyllä alalla. Kokenut toiminta sisältää tietyt koulutuksen ja kokemuksen avulla hankitut alakohtaiset tiedot ja taidot sekä kyvyn niiden soveltamiseen, arviointiin ja kehittämiseen käytännön ongelmien ymmärtämisessä ja ratkaisemisessa. Asiantuntijuutta voidaan tarkastella myös toimijan ja tehtävän välisen suhteen toteutumisenä tietyssä kontekstissa. Täten asiantuntijuutta jollain alalla voidaan pitää jatkuvasti alan ongelmien ratkaisemisessa muokkautuvana, sekä yksilöllisenä että sosiaalisena prosessina. Tässä tutkimuksessa henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuutta lähestyttiin tutkimalla kehittäjien arvioita ja kokemuksia omasta toiminnastaan vaativissa ihmisten ja organisaatioiden kehittämiseen liittyvissä tehtävissä.

Tutkimuksen tehtävänä on kuvata ja ymmärtää 1) erilaisissa työorganisaatioissa toimivien henkilöstön kehittäjien työn luonnetta ja sisältöä 2) henkilöstön kehittämistyössä tarvittavan asiantuntijuuden sisältöä ja laatua sekä 3) henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijana kehittymisen prosessia.

Metodit

Henkilöstön kehittämisen moniselitteisyys ja laaja-alaisuus sekä tutkimustehtävien luonne edellyttivät eri menetelmien yhdistämistä. Yhtäältä tutkimus kohdistui henkilöstön kehittäjien arvioihin omasta työstään ja siinä tarvittavista tiedoista ja taidoista tietyn, henkilöstön kehittämistyötä kuvaavan mallin avulla. Toisaalta tutkimuksen kohteena olivat kehittäjien omat kuvaukset niistä kokemuksista, joista kehittämistyön asiantuntijuus oletettavasti rakentuu. Tällä perusteella tutkimuksen suorittaminen jakaantui kahteen, teorialähtöiseen ja aineistolähtöiseen vaiheeseen, joissa sovellettiin erilaisia tiedonhankintatapoja ja aineiston

analyysimenetelmiä. Tutkimusvaiheet olivat strukturoitu kyselylomaketutkimus ja tilastollinen analyysi sekä puolistrukturoitu haastattelu, jonka aineistoa analysoitiin narratiivisessa viitekehyksessä. Kvalitatiivista ja kvantitatiivista kuvausta käytettiin toisiaan täydentävästi.

Tutkimuksen kohdejoukon muodostivat henkilöstön kehittäjät eli henkilöt, jotka toimivat erilaisissa organisaatioissa ja jotka ovat vastuussa organisaation henkilöstön kehittämistoiminnan suunnittelusta, toteuttamisesta ja arvioinnista. Henkilöstön kehittämistyön moniselitteisyys ja yhtenäisten koulutus-, työ- ja virkanimikkeiden puuttuminen vaikeutti tutkimusjoukon valintaa. Tutkittavat valittiin kahdesta henkilöstön kehittämisen ja henkilöstöjohtamisen alan ammatillisesta järjestöstä, joita olivat Henry ry. ja Julkishallinnon kouluttajat ry.

Ensimmäisessä vaiheessaan tutkimus toteutettiin postikyselynä. Kyselyyn vastasi 164 henkilöä. Strukturoitu kyselylomake noudattelee USA:ssa 1980-luvulla henkilöstön kehittäjien työtä kuvaamaan kehitettyä mallia, joka perustuu 1) työrooleja, 2) työn tuotoksia ja 3) työssä tarvittavia pätevyysalueita koskevien käsityksien analysointiin. Kyselyssä henkilöstön kehittäjiä pyydettiin itse arvioimaan työtään tämän mallin avulla. Roolilla tarkoitetaan yksilön toimintaa ja käyttäytymistä tietyssä työssä ja henkilökohtaista suhtautumista työhön. Roolivaihtoehtoja oli yksitoista: markkinoija, tarpeiden tunnistaja ja analysoija, tutkija, HRD-materiaalien kehittäjä, organisaation muutosagentti, opettaja/kouluttaja, suunnittelija, henkilöstön kehittämispäällikkö/-johtaja, hallinnoija, urasuunnittelun ohjaaja/neuvoja ja arvioija. Nämä roolit kuvaavat niitä toimintoja, joista henkilöstön kehittämistyö kokonaisuutena muodostuu. Vastaajia pyydettiin nimeämään viisi roolia, jotka parhaiten kuvaavat heidän työtään sekä valitsemaan annetuista vaihtoehtoista yksi rooli, jossa he käyttävät eniten työaikaansa. Lisäksi heitä pyydettiin valitsemaan yksi rooli, joka on muutenkin kuin käytetyllä työajalla arvioiden heille tärkeä. Lisäksi kyselylomakkeessa esitettiin 75 tuotosta, jotka voivat olla konkreettisia palveluksia tai tuotteita, joita henkilöstön kehittämistyön tuloksena syntyy. Vastaajia pyydettiin nimeämään työnsä tuotoksia sen roolin näkökulmasta, jossa he viettävät eniten työaikaansa. Vastaajat arvioivat myös 35 pätevyysalueen tärkeyttä, osaamistasoa ja kiinnostustaan kehittää itseään näillä alueilla. Pätevyysalueet ovat tietoja ja taitoja, jotka liittyvät kehittämiseen ja koulutukseen, liiketoimintaan, yksilöiden välisiin suhteisiin sekä tiedonkäsittelyyn. Tämä tutkimuksen ensimmäinen, vuosien 1995 ja 1996 vaihteessa toteutettu, vaihe on osa eurooppalaista vertailututkimusta, HRD Profession for the 90's, jota koordinoi Twenten yliopisto Hollannissa.

Tutkimuksen toisessa vaiheessa haastatteluun kutsuttiin kyselytutkimukseen vastanneiden joukosta harkinnanvaraisesti 20 kokenutta, erilaisen peruskoulutuksen saanutta, päätoimista ja organisaation sisäistä henkilöstön kehittäjää. Kaikki haastateltavat työskentelivät suurissa julkisen tai yksityisen sektorin organisaatioissa ja yrityksissä. Toinen tutkimusvaihe perustui sille oletukselle, että henkilöstön kehittäjän asiantuntijuus rakentuu toiminnassa erilaisten organisatonaalisten ja yksilöllisten tarpeiden ja tilanteiden mukaan sekä prosesseissa, joissa kokemuksia eri tilanteissa tulkitaan ja arvioidaan. Tutkimushaastattelut suoritettiin keväällä 1997. Tutkimushaastattelun teemat käsittelivät henkilöstön kehittäjien työtä, työorganisaatiota ja asiantuntijuutta, heidän kertomuksiaan

työstään, työ- ja koulutusurastaan sekä heidän kokemuksistaan työnsä haasteista ja ongelmista.

Artikkelien yhteenveto

Ensimmäisessä artikkelissa, *HRD practitioners analysing their work: what does it tell about their present role in working life?*, kuvaan kyselylomaketutkimukseen vastanneiden henkilöstön kehittäjien arviointia työnsä rooleista, tuotoksista ja pätevyysalueista. Artikkelissa esitellään myös kyselylomaketutkimuksen perustana toiminut malli henkilöstön kehittämistyön ja siinä tarvittavan asiantuntijuuden kuvaamiseksi. Mallin keskeisen sisällön muodostavat työroolien, työtuotosten ja työssä tarvittavien pätevyysarvioinnit. Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan myös henkilökohtaisten ja organisaationaalisten tekijöiden sekä työn itsearvioinnin välisiä yhteyksiä ja pohditaan sitä, kuinka henkilöstön kehittäjien itsearvioinnit heijastelevat työelämän muutostrendejä ja ajankohtaista tilannetta. Tutkimus osoitti, että henkilöstön kehittäjät ovat korkeasti koulutettuja ja kokeneita työelämän toimijoita, joiden työhön sisältyy myös henkilöstön kehittämistoiminnan johtamistehtäviä. Useimmiten kyselyyn vastanneet kehittäjät arvioivat työssään painottuvan organisaation muutosagentin roolin. Muita vastaajien valitsemia rooleja olivat suunnittelija, henkilöstön kehittämistoiminnan johtaja ja kouluttaja. Henkilöstön kehittämistyön painopiste näytti perinteisen koulutuksen organisoinnisen asemesta olevan organisaatioiden muutoshankkeiden kehittämisessä, mikä heijasteli työelämän ajankohtaista tilannetta. Peruskoulutusala, työn sisältö ja organisaation toimintaympäristö suuntasivat työtä kuvaavan roolin valintaa. Tarvittavien pätevyysarvioinnissa samanlaista suuntautumista ei voitu havaita. Organisaation ja organisaationaalisten prosessien tunteminen sekä vuorovaikutus- ja tiedonkäsittelytaidot olivat keskeinen osa henkilöstön kehittämistyössä tarvittavaa asiantuntijuutta.

Toisessa artikkelissa, *Human resource development roles and competencies in five European countries*, vertasin kyselylomaketutkimukseen osallistuneiden henkilöstön kehittäjien itsearviointeja työnsä rooleista, tuotoksista ja pätevyysalueista viidessä Euroopan maassa: Englannissa, Hollannissa, Italiassa, Saksassa ja Suomessa. Vertailu perustuu raportteihin, joita vuosina 1992-1996 toteutetuista maakohtaisista tutkimuksista oli julkaistu. Artikkelin tavoitteena oli osallistua eurooppalaiseen keskusteluun mahdollisuuksista luoda yhteistä käsitystä henkilöstön kehittämistyöstä ja siihen tarvittavasta koulutuksesta. Vertailu osoitti, että henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ei voida kuvata yhdellä roolilla, vaan että se rakentuu vaihtelevasti useasta roolista sekä kunkin maan sisällä että maiden välisessä tarkastelussa. Roolien näkökulmasta henkilöstön kehittämistyö on maakohtaisesti ja kulttuurisesti rakentuvaa ja näin ollen myös maittain työelämään ja sen muutoksiin kiinnittynyttä. Erityisesti englantilaiset ja suomalaiset vastaajat näkivät itsensä organisaation muutosagentteina, kun taas saksalaiset valitsivat kouluttajan roolin kuvaamaan työnsä painoaluetta. Vertailussa tuli esille, että henkilöstön kehittämistyössä tarvittavat pätevyysalueet korostavat asiantuntijuuden laaja-alaisuutta ja kehityksellisyyttä. Eriävistä rooliarvioinneista huolimatta henkilöstön kehittäjillä näytti olevan jokseenkin yhdenmukaiset käsitykset työnsä keskeisistä pätevyysalueista. Nämä liittyivät yksilöiden ja organisaation kehitystarpei-

den ja ongelmien tunnistamiseen, kehitysprosessien tukemiseen ja analysointiin ja vuorovaikutussuhteiden ohjaamiseen.

Kolmannessa artikkelissa, *Exploring the nature of human resource developers' expertise*, tarkastelin henkilöstön kehittäjien asiantuntijuuden sisältöä ja luonnetta kyselylomakeaineiston avulla. Analysoin kyselyyn vastanneiden henkilöstön kehittäjien arviointeja omista työrooleistaan ja työnsä tuotoksista sekä työssä tarvittavien pätevyysalueiden tärkeydestä ja henkilökohtaisesta pätevyyksien kehittämisennostuksesta. Tilastollisen analyysin lähtökohtana oli etsiä sekä erityisiä ulottuvuuksia että yhteisiä piirteitä, joiden avulla henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuutta voidaan kuvata. Tulokset osoittivat, että muutosagenttius, kouluttajuus ja henkilöstön kehittämistyön johtaminen sekä suunnittelu ovat erityisiä kehittämistyön ulottuvuuksia, joita määrittävät myös kontekstuaaliset tekijät. Pätevyysalueiden arvioinnissa erottui neljä asiantuntijatiedon ulottuvuutta, joita olivat analyttinen pätevyys, kehityksellinen pätevyys, valmennuspätevyys ja johtamispätevyys. Pätevyyden tärkeyden ja kehittämiskiinnostuksen näkökulmasta analyttinen pätevyys ja valmennuspätevyys näyttivät henkilöstön kehittäjien arvioinneissa keskeisiltä. Näiden tärkeys vaihteli myös valitun työroolin mukaan. Näitä molempia asiantuntijatiedon ulottuvuuksia voidaan luonnehtia asiantuntijuuden vähemmän eksplisiittisiksi ja informaaleiksi tiedonalueiksi. Kyseiset tiedonalueet rakentuvat ensisijaisesti kokemuksellisesti ja välittyvät kommunikaatiossa ja vuorovaikutuksessa koko organisaation käyttöön. Yleispäätelmänä todettiin, että käytännöllisyys, kokemuksellisuus ja vuorovaikutuksellisuus tulisi huomioida kehitettäessä henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuutta.

Neljännessä artikkelissa, *“Sailing in calm waters doesn't teach”: constructing expertise through problems in work - the case of Finnish human resource developers*, tarkastelin henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden rakentumista analysoimalla henkilöstön kehittäjien jokapäiväisessä työssään kokemia ongelmatilanteita. Tutkimuksen painopiste siirtyi asiantuntijuuden luonteen ja sisällön kuvaamisesta ja ymmärtämisestä asiantuntijuuden kehittymisen tarkasteluun. Tutkimuksen lähtökohtana oli, että sellaisilla ihmiskeskeisillä ja tietointensiivisillä työelämän asiantuntijuusalueilla, kuten henkilöstön kehittäminen, joudutaan jatkuvasti ratkaisemaan avoimia ja vaikeasti määriteltävissä olevia ongelmia, joihin harvoin löytyy yksi ratkaisu. Tämän kaltaiset ongelmanratkaisutilanteet ovat tyypillisiä myös henkilöstön kehittämistyössä, jossa ongelmanratkaisutilanteet toimivat myös resurssina asiantuntijuuden rakentumiselle. Asiantuntijaksi kehittymistä pidetään konstruktivisena ja kokemuksellisena oppimisprosessina, jossa alan formaalia ja kokemuksellista tietoa sovelletaan, haastetaan ja muokataan uudeksi praktiseksi osaamiseksi. Huomattavan osan henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuudesta nähtiin rakentuvan juuri kokemuksellisesti, jokapäiväisissä työn ongelmatilanteissa toimimalla.

Tässä tutkimuksen vaiheessa henkilöstön kehittäjien jokapäiväisiä ongelmanratkaisutilanteita asiantuntijuuden kehittymisen rakennusaineena tarkasteltiin narratiivisessa viitekehyksessä. Analyysi perustuu kahdenkymmenen kokeneen ja koulutetun, päätoimisen henkilöstön kehittäjän haastatteluun. Haastatteluissa kehittäjiä pyydettiin kertomaan työnsä ongelmallisista tilanteista, niiden ratkaisusta sekä asioista, joita kehittäjät olivat mielestään kyseisissä tilanteissa oppineet. Analysoin aineistoa ongelmakertomuksina, ratkaisukerto-

muksina ja oppimiskertomuksina, joissa kehittäjät rakentavat kuvaa henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuudesta ja itsestään oman alansa asiantuntijoina. Kolmesta kertomusryhmästä nousivat esiin tietyt, kutakin kolmea aineistokokonaisuutta kuvaavat teemat. Kehittäjien kertomusten analyysi osoitti henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuuden moninaisuuden. Huomattavaa oli myös se, että kommunikaatio, vuorovaikutus, yhteistoiminta ja johdon sitoutuminen, jotka usein mainitaan henkilöstön kehittämisen ideaaleina lähtökohtina ja tavoitteina, ovatkin ensisijaisesti ongelmalähteitä kehittäjän työssä ja täten myös uuden oppimisen lähteitä. Kehittäjien kertomusten perusteella näyttää siltä, että henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuudelle ja sen rakentumiselle on tunnusomaista ensinnäkin vuorovaikutuksessa toimiminen ja ihmisten osallistaminen, erityisesti luomalla organisaatioon dialogia ja toimimalla itse dialogissa. Toiseksi henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuus on joustavaa, jatkuvasti kehittyvää ja laaja-alaista enemmän kuin turvautumista rutiiniratkaisuihin. Kehittäjien kertomuksissa korostui muutoksen ja oppimisen ymmärtämisen tärkeys. Kertomukset myös avasivat ja problematisoivat kyselytutkimuksen antamaa kuvaa henkilöstön kehittäjästä organisaation muutosagenttina. Kolmanneksi ongelmallisissa tilanteissa toimiminen rakentaa luottamusta käytännölliseen tietoon ja sen soveltamiseen uusissa tilanteissa.

Viidennessä artikkelissa, *The career stories of human resource developers*, henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden tarkastelun painopiste siirtyi kehittäjien uratarinoiden analysointiin. Tutkimuksen aikaisemmat vaiheet olivat kuvanneet henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden luonnetta ja sisältöä asiantuntijatiedon näkökulmasta ja asiantuntijuuden rakentumista jokapäiväisessä työssä oppimisen näkökulmasta. Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan tutkimuksen tavoitetta ymmärtää henkilöstön kehittämistyön asiantuntijuuden rakentumista pitkän ajan kuluessa. Tarkoitus oli etsiä asiantuntijuuden rakennusaineita uratarinoista, joita tutkimuksessa haastatellut, kokeneet kehittäjät kertoivat omasta koulutuksestaan, työhistoriastaan ja päätymisestään henkilöstön kehittämistyöhön. Joillakin perinteisillä professionaalisen asiantuntijuuden aloilla, kuten lääketieteessä, sairaanhoidossa tai opettajan työssä asiantuntijaksi kehittymistä on kuvattu varsin lineaarisena ja tarkkaan määriteltynä kehitysjakumona. Henkilöstön kehittämistyön moninaisuuden vuoksi tällainen näkökulma ei välttämättä toimisi. Henkilöstön kehittäjien professionaalisen kehitysprosessin voidaan yleisesti katsoa olevan vielä siinä vaiheessa, että siitä puuttuvat yhtenäinen muodollinen koulutus, yhtenäinen toiminnan taustalla vaikuttava teoria, käsitteet ja mallit sekä muut professionaaliset tunnusmerkit kuten muodolliset koulutus- ja tehtävänimikkeet. Tällöin henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuuden rakentamisen lähtökohtana voidaan pitää kokeneiden, erilaisissa konteksteissa toimivien kehittäjien tulkintoja omasta työstään ja omasta urastaan.

Tutkimuksessa analysointiin kahdenkymmenen haastatellun kertomuksia omasta urastaan. Kertomuksista etsittiin ensiksi työhistorioita eli dokumentaarisia kuvauksia yksilön koulutuksesta sekä työtehtävistä ja -paikoista. Toiseksi etsittiin uratarinoita eli tulkintoja siitä, miten ja miksi yksilöt olivat mielestään päätyneet henkilöstön kehittämistyöhön ja pysyneet alalla. Uratarinoille etsittiin tiettyä temaattista juonta, joka kuvaa tarinan valintojen perusteita ja tarinan organisoitumista. Tulokset osoittivat, että haastateltavien joukosta löytyi neljän-

laisia työhistorioita. Kolmelle kehittäjälle henkilöstön kehittäminen oli alkuperäinen uravalinta ja he olivat työskennelleet koko uransa samassa organisaatiossa. Toiset kolme kehittäjää olivat myös lähtökohtaisesti valinneet henkilöstön kehittämistyön urakseen, mutta he olivat työskennelleet useissa organisaatioissa. Kahdestakymmenestä kehittäjästä seitsemän oli työskennellyt koko uransa samassa organisaatiossa ja siirtynyt siellä vähitellen päätoimisesti henkilöstön kehittämistyöhön. Toiset seitsemän kehittäjää oli työskennellyt useassa organisaatiossa urallaan, jona aikana he olivat vähitellen siirtyneet henkilöstön kehittämis-tehtäviin. Työhistorioiden vertailu osoitti, että yksiselitteisiä johtopäätöksiä ei voi tehdä neljän ryhmän eroista siinä, millainen koulutustausta kehittäjällä oli tai työskenteliko hän yksityisessä yrityksessä tai julkisen sektorin organisaatiossa.

Uratarinoiden rakennetta ja sisältöä kuvasi neljä teemaa, joiden mukaan uratarinat jaettiin neljään ryhmään. Toisaalta uratarinoissa tuli esiin myös kehittäjien kokemusten ja niiden tulkintojen samankaltaisuus. Uratarinat painottuivat ihmiskeskeisesti, organisaatiokeskeisesti, oman ammatillisen uran kehittämiseen tai kokonaisvaltaisesti kaikkiin kolmeen. Nämä ulottuvuudet kuvaavat myös niitä painoalueita, joihin henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuuden rakentuminen ankkuroituu yksilön kokemuksissa. Kehittäjien uratarinoiden analyysi osoitti, että henkilöstön kehittäjäksi ei ole olemassa yhtä määrättyä kehitysjatkuu-vaan useita mahdollisia prosesseja tulkintoineen. Yksityiskohtaisempi tarkastelu osoitti, että yksiselitteisiä yhteyksiä uratarinoiden ja työhistorioiden, koulutustaustan tai toimintasektorin välille ei voida vetää. Vaikka henkilöstön kehittäjäksi tullaan eri tavoin painottuvissa kokemuksellisissa prosesseissa, tutkittavien kertomuksia myös yhdistävät tietyt samankaltaisuudet. Henkilöstön kehittäjät kertoivat työstään varsin yksimielisesti oppimislähtöisenä toimintana ja kuvasivat henkilöstön kehittämistyötä uraksi, jota täytyy aktiivisesti rakentaa asiantuntijauraksi. Yleispäätelmänä todettiin, että uratarinoissa esiin nousseiden erilaisten ulottuvuuksien ja samankaltaisuuksien perusteella ei voida esittää oikeita ja väärä tapoja rakentaa henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuutta. Uratarinoita voidaan käyttää viitekehystenä, jossa henkilöstön kehittäjien asiantuntijuuden kehitysprosesseja voidaan ymmärtää ja arvioida. Käytännön johtopäätöksenä esitettiin, että tätä viitekehystä kuten myös narratiivista lähestymistapaa voisi hyödyntää henkilöstön kehittäjien koulutuksessa. Lisäksi tutkimuksen perusteella esitettiin, että kokeneiden kehittäjien uratarinat kuten myös heidän kokemuksellinen tietonsa yleensäkin tulisi voida kanavoida aloittelevien henkilöstön kehittäjien ohjaukseen.

Kuudes artikkeli, *HRD as a professional career? Perspectives from Finland, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom*, on kansainvälinen yhteisartikkeli, joka kirjoitettiin EU:n COST A11 projektissa "Flexibility, mobility and transferability as targets of vocational education and training" julkaistavaan kirjaan. Toimin artikkelissa ensisijaisena kirjoittajana. Artikkelissa kuvataan henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ammattikasvatuksen ammatillisuuden näkökulmasta. Tarkoituksena oli kriittisesti arvioida, voidaanko henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ja sen asiantuntijuutta tarkastella asemansa vakiinnuttaneena professiona. Artikkelin pääkysymykset kohdistuvat henkilöstön kehittäjänä olemisen ja kehittymisen prosesseihin. Arvioiva tarkastelu perustuu Suomessa, Hollannissa ja Iso-Britanniassa toteutettuihin, henkilöstön kehittäjiin kohdistuneisiin tutkimuksiin. Artikkelin

johtopäätöksissä esitetään, että vertailussa mukana olleiden tutkimusten perusteella henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ei voida luonnehtia vahvaksi, työelämässä asemansa vakiinnuttaneeksi professioksi. Eri maissa toteutettujen tutkimusten vertailu osoitti henkilöstön kehittämistyön laaja-alaisuuden, vahvan painotuksen praktiseen tietoon ja osaamiseen sekä tarpeen alan kehittämiseksi. Muodollisen professioaseman vahvistaminen esimerkiksi koulutuksen avulla ei kuitenkaan välttämättä ole suositeltavin vaihtoehto, vaan henkilöstön kehittäjät ammatillisena yhteisönä voisivat hyötyä oman työnsä ja asiantuntijuutensa taustaoletuksien ja tuotoksien kriittisestä itsearvioinnista. Työelämän asiantuntijuusalueena henkilöstön kehittäminen näyttäytyy tarkasteltujen tutkimuksien valossa organisationaalisten muutosprosessien ja oppimisen ymmärtämisenä. Tällainen asiantuntijuus näyttäytyy yhtäältä joustavana ja toisaalta organisaatiokohtaisesti rakentuvana. Joustavuus voi mahdollistaa holistisen näkökulman henkilöstön ja organisaation kehittämiseen, ja samalla vahvistaa henkilöstön kehittämistyön ja asiantuntijuuden itsenäistä asemaa vähentämällä asiantuntijuuden kiinnittymistä organisaatio-spesifisiin tavoitteisiin.

Yleiset johtopäätökset ja pohdinta

Tutkimuksen tavoitteeksi asetettiin henkilöstön kehittämistyön kuvaaminen ja ymmärtäminen henkilöstön kehittäjien arvioimana ja kokemana. Tarkoitus oli osallistua keskusteluun, joka hakee henkilöstön kehittämisen moniselitteisyyteen selkeyttä. Tutkimus osoitti edetessään kuitenkin sen, että henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuudelle ei ainakaan tässä tutkimuksessa käytetyillä menetelmillä ole löydettävissä yhtä oikeaa määritelmää, vaan henkilöstön kehittämistä ilmiönä ja työelämän asiantuntijuusalueena luonnehtii avoimuus ja jatkuva kehittyminen tarkastelunäkökulman, kontekstin ja käytännön haasteiden mukaan.

Henkilöstön kehittämisen nykyisiä ja tulevaisuuden kehittymishaasteita tarkastelevassa keskustelussa on painotettu henkilöstön kehittämisen integrointia organisaatioiden johtamiseen, henkilöstön kehittämisen roolin selkeyttämistä organisaatioissa sekä henkilöstön kehittämismuotojen painoalueen siirtämistä koulutuksesta laaja-alaisempiin, oppimista tukeviin ratkaisuihin. Tällaiset ratkaisut korostavat esimerkiksi informaalin oppimisen tunnistamista ja tukemista sekä sitä, että oppimiselle varataan aikaa työpaikoilla. Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että henkilöstön kehittäjien arvio omasta työstään ja asioista, joihin kehittämistyön asiantuntijuus näyttää ankkuroituvan, vastaavat alaan kohdistuvia haasteita.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että työroolien ja työn tuotoksien arvioinnissa löytyi sekä samankaltaisuutta että eroja, jotka antavat monialaisen kuvan henkilöstön kehittämistyöstä. Tästä huolimatta organisaation muutosagentin rooli ja muutoshankkeisiin liittyvät työn tuotokset luonnehtivat selkeimmin henkilöstön kehittäjän työtä. Haastatteluaineisto paljasti kuitenkin muutosagentin roolin problemaattisuuden. Muutosagentti on haastavaa ja tilannekohtaisesti vaihtelevaa ja rakentuvaa toimintaa, jossa oleellisinta näytti olevan muutosprosessien vaatavuuden ymmärtäminen. Muutosagenttiuteen ei liittynyt erityistä sankaruutta vaan lähinnä kulisissa puurtamista sekä muutosprosessien aiheuttaman ammatillisen ahdistuksen sietämistä ja muuntamista oppimiseksi. Työssä

tarvittavan asiantuntijatiedon näkökulmasta ihmisiin ja tiedon prosessointiin liittyvät tieto- ja taitoalueet korostuivat. Kaiken kaikkiaan käytännöllisesti painotunut ja kokemuksellisesti rakentunut asiantuntijatieto eri muodoissaan näytti olevan keskeistä henkilöstön kehittämistyössä. Kun tarkasteltiin asiantuntijuuden rakentumista päivittäisen työn ongelmatilanteissa, voidaan tiivistää, että henkilöstön kehittäjiä kokemuksissa korostuivat osallistavat käytännöt, muutosprosessien luonteen ymmärtämisen kehittyminen sekä aktiivinen ote jatkuvaan kehittymiseen. Kehittäjiä uratarinoiden analyysi osoitti, että henkilöstön kehittäjäksi ei ole olemassa yhtä määrättyä kehitysjatkuu- vaan useita mahdollisia kehitysprosseja. Prosessit voivat painottua joko ihmiskeskeisesti, organisaatiokeskeisesti tai oman ammatillisen uran kehittämiseen tai sitten nämä kaikki kolme voivat olla yhtä voimakkaita. Tutkittavia yhdistivät myös tietyt samankaltaisuudet. Henkilöstön kehittäjät arvioivat kehittämistyötä varsin yksimielisesti oppimislähtöiseksi toiminnaksi ja henkilöstön kehittämistyötä uraksi, jota täytyy aktiivisesti rakentaa asiantuntijauraksi.

Tutkimuksen yleiset johtopäätökset voidaan esittää ehdotuksina, joita voi soveltaa alan jatkotutkimuksessa ja mahdollisessa koulutuksen suunnittelussa. Nämä ehdotukset, jotka kuvaavat ja pyrkivät ymmärtämään henkilöstön kehittämistyön sisältöä, luonnetta ja kehittymistä asiantuntijuusalueena ovat: 1) henkilöstön kehittämistyö on avointa ja joustavaa ja se myös edellyttää kehittäjältä avoimuutta ja joustavuutta tavoitteenasettelussa ja toiminnassa, 2) henkilöstön kehittämistyö on laaja-alaista, mutta se ankkuroituu myös kokemuksellisuuteen ja käytännöllisyyteen ja painottaa arkijärjen ja -kokemuksen hyödyntämistä, 3) muutos- ja oppimisprosessien ymmärtäminen on henkilöstön kehittämisen ytimessä ja 4) sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus on keskeinen osa henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ja kehittämisen asiantuntijuutta. Näiden ehdotusten avulla voi pyrkiä rakentamaan myös yhteistä ymmärrystä ja kieltä, joilla henkilöstön kehittämisestä voidaan keskustella ja tehdä siitä näkyvä ja arvioitavissa oleva ilmiö.

Henkilöstön kehittämisen luonnehdinta avoimena ja joustavana voidaan nähdä kielteisesti, jos alasta halutaan kehittää vahva ja perinteiset tunnusmerkit täyttävä professio. Toisaalta avoimuus ja joustavuus voivat olla enemmän mahdollisuuksia kuin uhkia henkilöstön kehittämistyössä. Ne mahdollistavat henkilöstön kokonaisvaltaisen kehittämisen ja irrottautumisen ainoastaan organisaation tavoitteista määrättyvästä kehittämistyöstä. Laaja-alaisuus, kokemuksellisuus ja käytännöllisyys korostavat henkilöstön kehittämisen ihmis- ja organisaatiokeskeisyyttä. Yhtäältä on oleellista ymmärtää, että kyseessä on ihmisten kanssa työskentely. Toisaalta kohdeorganisaation tunteminen on keskeistä. Molemmat asettavat henkilöstön kehittäjän työlle reunaehdot, joiden tunnistaminen ja hyväksyminen ovat henkilöstön kehittämisen lähtökohtia. Henkilöstön kehittämistyössä korostuu muutoksen ja oppimisen kanssa työskentely, mikä myös painottaa kehittämistyön ihmiskeskeisyyttä. Sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus on henkilöstön kehittämistyössä sekä väline, osaamisalue että tila rakentaa omaa asiantuntijuuttaan. Kehittäjät toimivat vuorovaikutuksessa sekä vuorovaikutuksen synnyttäjinä ja välittäjinä, mikä myös tukee heidän oman asiantuntijuutensa rakentumista.

Käytännön johtopäätökset ja jatkotutkimustarpeet kietoutuvat henkilöstön kehittämistyön tarkastelussa yhteen. Alan vähäisen tutkimuksen vuoksi sekä

systemaattinen teoriaa rakentava tutkimus että uusia toimintamuotoja testaava tutkimus ovat oleellisia jatkuvan kehittymisen välineitä. Käytännön haasteena esitetään, että yhtäältä tutkimuksessa esitetyt johtopäätökset ja ehdotukset herättävät organisaatioiden johdon kiinnittämään huomiota henkilöstön kehittämistoiminnan resursseihin ja johtamisesta lähteviin reunaehtoihin. Toisaalta tutkimus haastaa henkilöstön kehittäjät arvioimaan omaa työskentelyään ja asiantuntijuuttaan suhteessa työskentelyorganisaatioonsa ja henkilöstön kehittämisalaa yleensä. Organisaatioiden johdon ja henkilöstön kehittäjien saattaminen yhteiseen keskusteluun ja yhteisten keskustelufoorumien synnyttäminen eri organisaatioissa toimiville kehittäjille voi lisätä kokemusten jakamista ja yhteisen ymmärryksen rakentamista oppimisen tukemisesta työpaikoilla. Ennen kaikkea yhteinen keskustelu edistäisi henkilöstön kehittämistyön ja siinä tarvittavan asiantuntijuuden tekemistä näkyväksi ja sisällöllisesti perustelluksi työelämän osaamisalueeksi ja osaksi organisaatioiden toimintaa. Tässä pyrkimyksessä työn, työroolien ja työssä tarvittavien pätevyysalueiden arviointi ja niistä keskustelu tai päivittäisten työkokemusten tai urakokemuksien jakaminen voivat palvella välineinä ja ohjausmenetelminä.

Yhtenä tutkimuksellisenä ja käytännöllisenä haasteena voidaan pitää käytettyjen tutkimusmenetelmien kehittämistä myös kehittäjien koulutuksen ja verkostoitumisen välineiksi. Toisaalta asiantuntijuuden sanallistamista edellyttäviä kyselylomake- ja haastattelumenetelmiä voidaan kritisoida siitä, että ne eivät pysty täysin tavoittamaan kehittymisen prosessiluonnetta. Tällöin tutkimusmenetelmien kehittäminen osallistavaan ja toimintatutkimukselliseen suuntaan olisi perusteltu suunta jatkotutkimukselle.

Henkilöstön kehittämisen asiantuntijuuden monialaisuuden haaste vahvistui tämänkin tutkimuksen perusteella. Jatkotutkimuksessa kuten myös käytännön kehittämishankkeissa tuleekin entistä painokkaammin huomioida monitieteisyys eli henkilöstön kehittämistä koskettavien useiden tieteenalojen välinen yhteistyö. Henkilöstön kehittäminen näyttäytyi myös vahvasti muutoksen ja oppimisen ymmärtämiseen kiinnittyvänä työnä ja asiantuntijuutena. Tästä näkökulmasta henkilöstön kehittämistyön selkeä historiallinen ja nykyinen kytkentä aikuiskasvatukseen vaikuttaa alan kannalta myönteiseltä ja edelleen kehitettävältä yhteydeltä. Jatkotutkimusta ja -kehittelyä tarvitaan myös siinä, miten henkilöstön kehittämistyötä ja sen asiantuntijuutta voidaan ymmärtää ja kehittää oppimisteoreettisista lähtökohdista.

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Information on the University Forum for Human Resource Development available on <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/ufhrd/> (referred 7.3.2002)

Appendix 1: Questionnaire (translated)

Research

The role and professional expertise of HRD practitioner in the work organisation

Questionnaire

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Education
P.O. Box 35
40351 Jyväskylä

Dear Sir/Madam,

Human resource development is seen to have an important role in the changing work life today. I am doing research on persons working in the field of human resource development in various work organisations, and their roles and professional expertise in the development work. The research is connected to a research project "HRD profession for the 90's", which is conducted in the University of Twente, in the Netherlands. At the moment, in addition to Finland also Norway, Sweden, Germany and Denmark are participating in the research. In Finland the participants for or the study are chosen from the Association of Trainers in Public Administration (Julkishallinnon kouluttajat ry) and the Association for Human Resources Management (Henry ry.) Internationality enables the comparison of the work of European HRD practitioners.

Even if you did not work as a full time HRD practitioner at the moment, your participation in this research is very important, if your present job includes even some HRD tasks. In this research the work of HRD practitioner is described through different roles and the contents of work through outputs (products and services) and competencies needed in work. The questionnaire comprises the following sections:

Section 1: Questions concerning your work

Section 2: Your roles in your work

Section 3: Outputs in the role, which takes up most of your working time

Section 4: Competencies in the role, which takes up most of your working time.

Section 5: Questions concerning your education and work history

Questionnaire comprises mainly multiple choice questions. Please answer by marking the alternative which is the best description of you/your situation and/or write your answer in the lines provided after the question.

My research is a study project for my doctoral studies in education in the University of Jyväskylä and it is funded by the University of Jyväskylä and since 1996 by the Academy of Finland. All the information is treated confidentially and will be used only for this research. Results of the study are disseminated through the Association of Trainers in Public Administration (Julkishallinnon kouluttajat ry) and the Association for Human Resources Management (Henry ry.).

You can return the questionnaire by using the attached envelope by 16.2.1996.

I will be happy to answer any questions you might have concerning the research.

Thank you for your co-operation and help.

MEd Tuija Valkeavaara
University of Jyväskylä
Department of Education

tel: 941-60 1672
e-mail:tvalkeav@dodo.jyu.fi

1.5. Are you employed at the moment,

- 1 employed by an organisation, in which you are responsible for the HRD function
- 2 employed by an organisation, in which you are responsible for other than HRD tasks, but HRD function belongs also to your job.
- 3 employed by an organisation, which produces and offers training and developemnt products an services to other organisations, individual clients etc.
- 4 as an independent consultant/trainer in different target organisations
- 5 other,
please specify

1.6. What are your main tasks?

1.7. Please indicate the average percentage of your working hours you spend on HRD tasks?

- 1 < 10%
- 2 10-24%
- 3 25-49%
- 4 50-74%
- 5 75-100%

If you chose in question 1.5. alternative 3 or 4, please move on to question 1.12.

1.8. Approximately how many employees does your organisation have?

- 1 1-19
- 2 20-99
- 3 100-199
- 4 200-499
- 5 500-999
- 6 ≥ 1000

1.9. In which part of your organisation you are organisationally primarily located to?

- 1 personnel management
- 2 separate training and/or development department
- 3 in some line management or service department
- 4 project department
- 5 other, please specify _____

1.10. How many full time positions are there in HRD in your organisation?

- 1 ≤ 1
- 2 2-4
- 3 5-9
- 4 10-14
- 5 15-19
- 6 ≥ 20

1.11. What is the proportion of the following HRD activities in the HRD function of your organisation?
(1=not at all, 2=somewhat small, 3= neither small nor large 4=somewhat large, 5=very large)

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Training which is aimed at developing competence of the staff (e.g. training needs analysis, planning and implementation of in-house training programs, external training services, induction) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Management development (e.g. management training, management development projects) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Organisation development and activities aimed at functional changes (e.g. development of co-operation between individuals and groups, developing skills and readiness for change, various specified projects) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Support of individual career development Yksillöllistä (e.g. individual career planning, support of self-initiated studies, integration of individual and organisational needs) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Activities related to staffing (e.g. human resource planning, selection) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Development of contents and methods of work (e.g. job rotation, enrichment, redesigning of task descriptions) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1.12. In the following you will find statements which describe the different aims and purposes of human resource development. In which ways do these statements correspond to your own personal views of staff training? (1=totally disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither disagree nor agree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=totally agree)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The primary aim in HRD is to develop individuals' knowledge and skills at present work tasks. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. HRD should focus on integrating individual and organizational aims. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. HRD should be based mainly on informal learning at work and in different developmental projects. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The main purpose of HRD is to increase organizational effectiveness and productivity. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. The primary aim in HRD is to facilitate individual learning capacity and to support individuals to evaluate their own work and developmental needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. HRD should be based on planned training programs designed by human resource development practitioners. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. HRD should focus on individual performance improvement in work tasks. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. HRD should be closely integrated into management and business planning of an organization. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. The most important in HRD is to aim at supporting the achievement of organization's functional aims. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. HRD should be based mainly on planned and formal learning and training. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. The primary aim in HRD is to facilitate individual learning capacity and to support individuals to evaluate their own work and developmental needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. HRD should be supportive function outside the actual business activity. | 12345 |
| 13. HRD should concentrate on promoting individual growth and development. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. HRD should be based on on-line needs assessment meaning those developmental needs which can be recognized in each particular situation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

SECTION 2: Your most important role

The work of a HRD practitioner can be seen to consist of a combination of two or more roles. By role is meant here doing, activities and tasks, which are included in work, not a work or job title. (From now on human resource development is referred to by acronym HRD). The following eleven roles have been distinguished in the work of HRD practitioners:

| Role | Role Description |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Marketer | The role of marketing and contracting for HRD viewpoints, programmes and services. |
| Needs Analyst | The role of identifying ideal and actual performance and performance conditions and determining causes of discrepancies. |
| Researcher | The role of identifying, developing, or testing new information (theory, research, concepts, technology, models, hardware and so on) and translating the information into its implications for improved individual or organizational performance. |
| HRD Materials Developer | The role of producing written or electronically mediated instructional materials. |
| Organization Change Agent | The role of influencing and supporting changes in organizational behavior. |
| Instructor/Facilitator | The role of presenting information, directing structured learning experiences, and managing group discussions and group processes. |
| Programme Designer | The role of preparing objectives, defining content, and selecting and sequencing activities for a specific intervention. |
| HRD Manager | The role of supporting and leading a group's work, and linking that work with the total organization. |
| Administrator | The role of providing co-ordination and support services for the delivery of HRD programmes and services. |
| Individual Career Development Advisor | The role of helping individuals to assess personal competencies, values and goals and to identify, plan and implement development and career actions. |
| Evaluator | The role of identifying the impact of an intervention on individual or organizational effectiveness. |

2.1 Does your job contain one or more HRD roles, not already mentioned and described on the previous page?

1 yes

2 no

2.2 If you answered, "yes" in question 2.3, could you please describe those additional role(s)?

Name of role 12 _____

Description of role 12

Name of role 13 _____

Description of role 13

2.3 Mark maximally 5 roles, which according to your experience best describe your work as a HRD practitioner.

1 marketer

2 needs analyst

3 reseracher

4 HRD material developer

5 organisation change agent

6 instructor/facilitator

7 programme designer

8 HRD manager

9 administrator

10 individual career development advisor

11 evaluator

12

13

2.4 Which of the roles, just marked, takes up most of your working time? Please, write down only one role.

The role of

2.5 Please indicate the average percentage of your working hours, you spent on the role you have just chosen in question 2.4.

1 < 10 %

2 10-24%

3 25-49%

4 50-74%

5 75-100%

2.6 The role that takes up most of your time is not necessarily the most important role in your job. Which of the roles do you find most important and remarkable in your job? Please explain why.

The role of _____
because _____

2.7 Do you think that some of the roles will gain more importance to your job in the near future than at the moment (in the next three years)?

1 yes, the role of: _____
because _____

2 no

SECTION 3: Outputs in the role that takes up most of your working time

The aim of this section is to describe in more detail the role which you chose in question 2.4. by concentrating on outputs, that is, products and services, which can be outputs in the work of a HRD practitioner. **Please mark for each of the outputs whether or not this product or service is output in the role which takes up most of your working time.** Mark only those outputs which actually are produced, do not mark those which should be the outputs. in yo produce this output. You can add outputs, if they are not named in the list. If you are not certain about the meaning of an output, please leave it unanswered and write down why did you chose to leave it open.

You can write here the name of the role, which takes most of your working time: _____

| Outputs | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.1 Presentation of material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.2 Resource acquisition and allocation for HRD | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.3 Contracts or agreements to provide service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.4 Strategies for analyzing individual or organizational behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.5 Functioning equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.6 Concepts, theories, or models of development or change | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.7 Graphics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.8 Facilitations of structured learning events (such as case studies, role plays, games, simulations and tests) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.9 Individual career assessments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.10 Performance management for HRD staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.11 Evaluation feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.12 Feedback to learners | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.13 Advice on media use | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.14 Positive image for HRD products, services and programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Outputs | | YES | No |
|---------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.15 | Facility and equipment schedules | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.16 | Research designs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.17 | Work direction and plans for HRD staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.18 | Transfer of development or career planning skills to the learner | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.19 | Research findings, conclusions, and recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.20 | Computer-based material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.21 | Sales/business leads | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.22 | Records of programs and clients | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.23 | Test delivery and feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.24 | HRD department strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.25 | Evaluation processes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.26 | Job aids | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.27 | Client awareness of relationships within and around the organization | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.28 | HRD policy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.29 | Hardware/software purchasing specifications | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.30 | Facilitation of group discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.31 | HRD research articles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.32 | Behavior change from a counselling/advising relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.33 | Audio-based material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.34 | HRD department structure | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.35 | Data analysis and interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Outputs | | YES | No |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.36 | Resolved conflicts for an organization or groups | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.37 | HRD budgets and financial management | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.38 | Information on future forces and trends | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.39 | Tools to measure individual, work group or organizational performance discrepancies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.40 | Changes in group norms, values, culture | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.41 | Provision of career development resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.42 | Definitions and descriptions of desired individual or group performance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.43 | Program/intervention objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.44 | Video-based material/live broadcasts | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.45 | On-site program support and staff management | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.46 | Facilitation of media-based learning events (such as video/audio, teleconferences, computer-assisted instruction) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.47 | Teams | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.48 | Career guidance and advice | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.49 | Designs for change | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.50 | Instructor/facilitator guides | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.51 | Logistical support and service to program participants | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.52 | Plans to market HRD products, services and programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.53 | Evaluation instruments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.54 | Feedback on development or career plans | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.55 | Plans to implement organizational change | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Outputs | | YES | No |
|---------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.56 | HRD long-range plans | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.57 | Program/intervention designs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.58 | Group members' awareness of their own group process | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.59 | Recommendations to management regarding HRD systems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.60 | Evaluation designs and plans | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.61 | Marketing and sales presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.62 | Print-based learner material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.63 | Professional counselling or referrals to third parties | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.64 | Individuals with new knowledge, skills, attitudes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.65 | Recommendations for needed change in individual, work group, or organizational performance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.66 | Linkage of HRD to other groups/organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.67 | Learning environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.68 | Facility and equipment selections | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.69 | HRD promotional and informational material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.70 | HRD department work environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.71 | Support for career transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.72 | Implementation of change strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.73 | Individual action plans for learning transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.74 | Evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Outputs | | YES | NO |
|---------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.75 | Other:..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.76 | Other:..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION 4: Competencies required for the role that takes up most of your working time

In the previous sections you described your work through roles and outputs. HRD tasks require also certain knowledge, skills and attitudes, i.e., competencies. Section 4 concentrates on the following competencies in HRD.

You can write down here the role in your work which takes up the most of your working time: _____

1. IMPORTANCE: Read carefully through the list of competencies. Indicate in the first column **how important each competency is for the role that takes most of your time?**

Alternatives are as follows:

- 0 not important at all
- 1 little important
- 2 somewhat important
- 3 very important

2. LEVEL: Indicate in the second column the level of expertise required in each competency for successful performance in the role which takes up most of your working time?

Alternatives are as follows:

- 1. Basic level: general understanding of key principles; can function in simple, repetitive situations;
- 2. Intermediate level: in-depth understanding and skills; can function in broader range of moderately difficult situations;
- 3. Advanced level: broad and deep understanding and skills; can function in complex, varied situations; is a model of subject matter mastery and skills.

Leave the column 2 blank for the competencies that are not important to your role (those you rated with '0' on the importance scale).

3. INTEREST: Indicate in the third column how interested in you would be to increase and develop your knowledge and skill in each competency? Evaluate your interest in each competency.

Alternatives are as follows:

- 0 not interested at all
- 1 a bit interested
- 2 quite interested
- 3 very interested

| Competencies | Importance | | | | Level | | | Interest | | | |
|--|------------|---|---|---|-------|-----|---|----------|---|---|---|
| | no | 1 | 2 | 3 | basic | ad. | | no | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.1. Adult Learning Understanding: Knowing how adults acquire and use knowledge, skills, and attitudes; understanding individual differences in learning. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.2. Business Understanding: Knowing how the functions of a business work and relate to each other; knowing the economic impact of business decisions. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.3. Career Development Theories and Techniques Understanding: Knowing the techniques and methods used in career development; understanding their appropriate uses. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.4. Coaching Skill: Helping individuals to recognize and understand personal needs, values, problems, and goals. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.5. Competency Identification Skill: Identifying the knowledge and skill requirements of jobs, tasks, and roles. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.6. Computer Competence: Understanding and/or using computer applications. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.7. Cost-Benefit Analysis Skill: Assessing alternatives in terms of their financial, psychological, and strategic advantages and disadvantages. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.8. Data Reduction Skill: Scanning, synthesizing, and drawing conclusions from data. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.9. Delegation Skill: Assigning task responsibility and authority to others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Competencies | Importance | | | | Level | | | Interest | | | |
|--|------------|------|---|---|-------|-----|---|----------|------|---|---|
| | no | very | | | basic | ad. | | no | very | | |
| 4.10. Electronic Systems Skill: Having knowledge of functions, features and potential applications of electronic systems for the delivery of and management of HRD (such as expert systems, interactive video, teleconferences). | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.11. Facilities Skill: Planning and coordinating logistics in an efficient and cost-effective manner. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.12. Feedback Skill: Communicating information, opinions, observations, and conclusions such that they are understood and can be acted upon. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.13. Group Process Skill: Influencing groups so that tasks, relations, and individual needs are addressed. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.14. Industry Understanding: Knowing the key concepts and variables such as critical issues, economic vulnerabilities, measurements, distribution channels, inputs, outputs, and information sources that define an industry or sector. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.15. Intellectual Versatility: Recognizing, exploring, and using a broad range of ideas and practices; thinking logically and creatively without undue influence from personal biases. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.16. Information Search Skill: Gathering information from printed and other recorded sources; identifying and using information specialists and reference services/aids. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Competencies | Importance | | | | Level | | | Interest | | | |
|---|------------|------|---|---|-------|-----|---|----------|------|---|---|
| | no | very | | | basic | ad. | | no | very | | |
| 4.17. Model Building Skill: Conceptualization and development of theoretical and practical frameworks that describe complex ideas in understandable, usable ways. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.18. Negotiation Skill | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.19. Objectives Preparation Skill: Preparing clear statements which describe desired outputs. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.20. Observing Skill: Recognizing objectively what is happening in or across situations. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.21. Organization Behavior Understanding: Seeing organizations as dynamic, political, economic, and social systems which have multiple goals; using this larger perspective as a framework for understanding and influencing events and change. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.22. Organization Development Theories and Techniques Understanding: Knowing the techniques and methods used in organization development; understanding their appropriate use. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.23. Organization Understanding: Knowing the strategy, structure, power networks, financial position, and systems of a specific organization. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.24. Performance Observation Skill: Tracking and describing behaviours and their effects. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.25. Presentation Skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Competencies | Importance | | | | Level | | | Interest | | | |
|---|------------|------|---|---|-------|-----|---|----------|------|---|---|
| | no | very | | | basic | ad. | | no | very | | |
| 4.26. Project management skills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.27. Questioning Skill: Gathering information from stimulating insight in individuals and groups through the use of interviews, questionnaires, and other methods. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.28. Records Management Skill: Storing the data in an easily retrievable form. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.29. Relationship Building Skill: Establishing relations and networks across a broad range of people and groups. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.30. Research Skill: Selecting, developing, and using methodologies such as statistical and data collection techniques for a formal inquiry. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.31. Self-Knowledge: Knowing one's personal values, needs, interests, style, and competencies and their effects on others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.32. Subject Matter Understanding: Knowing the content of a given function or discipline being addressed. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.33. Training and Development Theories and Techniques Understanding: Knowing the theories and methods used in training; understanding their appropriate use. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.34. Visioning Skill: Projecting trends and visualizing possible and probable futures and their implications. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Competencies | Importance | | | | Level | | | Interest | | | |
|---|------------|------|---|---|-------|-----|---|----------|------|---|---|
| | no | very | | | basic | ad. | | no | very | | |
| 4.35. Writing Skill: Preparing written material that follows generally accepted rules of style and form, is appropriate for the audience, is creative, and accomplishes its intended purposes. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.36. Other, specify? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

SECTION 5: Questions concerning your education and work history

Thank you for your concentration on the questions. The aim of this last section is to describe your training and work history, such as your basic and further education and work experience.

5.1. Your age

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---------|
| 1 | ≤ 24 v | 4 | 45-54 v |
| 2 | 25-34 v | 5 | ≥ 55 v |
| 3 | 35-44 v | | |

5.2. Your sex

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|--------|
| 1 | male | 2 | female |
|---|------|---|--------|

5.3. What type of basic education did you complete? Mark the highest level.

- 1 elementary education/comprehensive school
- 2 matriculation examination
- 3 vocational education,
which? _____
- 4 university, Bachelor's degree,
which? _____
- 5 university, Master's degree
which? _____
- 6 university, Licenciante's degree
which? _____
- 7 university, Doctor's degree
which? _____

5.4. Do you have professional further education specified in the field of HRD? (e.g. trainer training, professional development programs etc.)

- 1 yes,
which? _____

- 2 no

5.5. How many days do you invest on the average per year in your personal further training in the field of HRD? (e.g. training, seminars, congresses etc.)

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 0 days | 5 20-29 days |
| 2 ≤ 4 days | 6 30-50 days |
| 3 5-9 days | 7 60-89 days |
| 4 10-19 days | 8 ≥ 90 days |

5.6. Please indicate the number of years you have been working after your basic education?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 < 1 years | 3 5-9 years |
| 2 1-4 years | 4 ≥ 10 years |

5.7. Please indicate how many years you have worked in your present job?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 < 1 years | 3 5-9 years |
| 2 1-4 years | 4 ≥ 10 years |

5.8. Please indicate the number of years which you have worked in the field of HRD?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 < 1 years | 3 5-9 years |
| 2 1-4 years | 4 ≥ 10 years |

5.9. In which other jobs than as a HRD practitioner have you worked?

5.10. Do you believe that you will work in the field of HRD after five years?

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1 yes | 2 no |
|-------|------|

Your name _____

Contact information _____

This information is needed for the interview in the second phase of this study project. Questionnaires are treated and analysed confidentially and the identification of the respondents is impossible in the every phase of the study.

Thank you for your co-operation and help!

Please return the questionnaire in the attached envelope (postal paid) by /16.2.1996.

Appendix 2: Interview themes

Interview themes:

I General information

e.g. age, job title, main tasks in the organisation, daily tasks

II Education

e.g. basic education, field of study, professional further education, learning needs

III Work career

e.g. work experience after basic education, in HRD, in the present job, what kind of jobs, reasons for changes of job, current thoughts and plans, reasons for choosing HRD, myself as a HRD practitioner, ideal HRD practitioner, learning to be a HRD practitioner

IV The organisation

e.g. characterization of line of (business) activity, functions, staff, management

V HRD in the organisation

e.g. responsibility for HRD, location of HRD, HRD staff, own position, relationship to management and staff, expectations towards HRD practitioner/HRD, view of HRD, aims of HRD, HRD activities, personal view of HRD, integration of organisational and personal view of HRD

VI Professional expertise

e.g. approach to work, personal strengths, conceptual and theoretical framework, methods, important and essential knowledge and skills

VII Thinking aloud tasks

1. Your organisation has published certain organisational values for its actions. One of those values is the integration of work and learning. As a HRD practitioner you should plan activities in order to promote the actualisation of this value. Tell how would you start? What kind of things you would take in accordance? What kind of aims would you have? How would you act? Explain and justify your actions.

2. One central factor from the point of view of organisational aims is internal communication and information service. The management of the organisation has set the aim of improving and developing internal communication and information service. This is assignment is given to HRD practitioner. Tell how would you start? What kind of things you would take in accordance? What kind of aims would you have? How would you act? Explain and justify your actions.

VIII Challenging situations

e.g. best experiences at work, supportive things at work, most challenging and most difficult and problematic things in work, contradictory situations, future challenges

IX Solutions to challenging situations

e.g. how and with whom solutions for challenging and contradictory situations have been sought for, what kind solutions, feelings toward solutions, situations for personal development, changes in personal views

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