CHAPTER - III

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INTRODUCTION

Every researcher owes a debt of gratitude to the previous researchers and their research findings in any domain of knowledge. As it is said, ‘before sit down, understand where you are standing’, a critical review of earlier studies will establish meaningful connectivity for the purpose of understanding the ‘past’, analysing the ‘present’ and projecting the ‘future’ trends and progress in a given field of investigation. Review of literature is very vital to examine ‘whether a field of study is unresearched or under-researched or even over-researched’ in addition to the process of identifying and defining the research gap.

Previous research studies in the field of ‘learning’ could be classified into two broad segments – Foreign and Indian. Again, the existing foreign studies have been discussed in this chapter under three dominant themes: individual, team and organisation learning; learning organisation; and learning culture, learning environment and learning outcomes.

FOREIGN STUDIES

(a) Individual Learning, Team Learning, and Organisational learning

Rogers (1996) conducted a case study in Intermedics orthopedics, Inc. (IOI), an Austin based orthopedic device manufacturing company, in Texas U.S.A. The organisation had 600 employees and all the employees were included in the case study. This case study explored learning challenges, as managers took next steps towards culture change-collective planning, defining core competencies, and a return to Vision Quest sessions aimed at team learning. During the course of her study, Rogers found out that the journey to build a learning organisation was not an
easy one, and awareness of shortcomings, rather than success was often common among employees. At times, it appeared that the greatest challenge for leadership was the ‘ambiguity of the process of working through a seemingly, endless series of paradoxes and dilemmas’. At IOI, learning dilemmas had played out in three specific arenas: empowerment, accountability, and teamwork.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Core competencies were identified that formed the basis for training. Employees continuously asked, “If not, why not?” Vision Quest sessions helped new employees to reflect and question.

**TL:** Groupware, dialogue, and participation were used to engage everyone in creating a common vision. Compensation and rewards were focused on team performance.

**OL:** The CEO of the company led the visioning process that emphasised learning. Linkages were created to support planning, sharing, and learning across groups or levels.

In her findings, Rogers stated that organisational learning was an ongoing, never-ending process of moving through questions and confusion to moments of clarity and shared understanding that opened the door to new questions. The evolving needs of the organisation required solutions that, once implemented, posed a new set up problems. Once the cross-functional processes were designed, the company had to wrestle with issues of culture and attitude that sometimes prevented individuals and groups from embracing the concept of teamwork that was so critical for success in today’s changing market conditions.
Honold (1996) conducted a case study in Johnsonvelle Foods, a national producer and distributor of sausage and other food products in Johnsonville Wisconsin. The Company employed 600 employees and Honold took all the employees for her case study. Ralph Stayer, The CEO of this company restructured the company in 1982 to put responsibility for decision making in the hands of employees. He left in 1989, and empowerment waned. The CEO returned in 1991 and invited employees to reshape the company. This case study described their solution—performance contracting between teams and customers that rewarded extraordinary learning.

The key elements of Johnsonvelle Foods’ change initiative were—performance responsibility, summit conference, the great performance share and targeted learning level.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** The change initiative contracted stretch people to learn that which was above and beyond day-to-day job requirements.

**TL:** The CEO created self-managed, empowered work teams. The team leaders set vision and served as coaches.

**OL:** The ‘great performance share’ was created to compensate teams every month based on their contract with customers.

Honold proved that Johnsonvelle Foods was a learning organisation by listing the key success factors. Here leadership from the top was critical. The owner wanted to change the organisation, and he was committed to doing so. Another critical factor was Ralph Stayer’s dedication to practising
what he preached. The fact that Johnsonville had already experienced a great deal of change from 1982 to 1989 was a key success factor. Another was that the managers and supervisors had already begun the transition towards coaching. Their jobs changed from that of directors—telling people what to do—to that of facilitators. Their responsibility was to provide general direction and support so people could do their own jobs.

**Boydell (1996)** conducted a case study in British Insulated Callender Cables (BICC), a large U.K. based engineering company in Manchester during the period of 1992-1995. It employed 300 workers and all of them were included in the case study. Boydell described the steps he took in helping BICC to restructure as a decentralised, team-centered company in order to survive and increase market share while simultaneously building the capacity of employees. Measurement against a “Learning Company” framework (Pedler *et al.*, 1991) showed the systemic nature of actions taken to build a learning culture and environment.

BICC’s journey towards becoming a learning organisation was divided into four main phases:

1. Setting the scene.
2. Removing the barriers and creating the right environment.
3. Introducing teamworking in manufacturing.
4. Creating a learning environment.

In 1991, Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell published *The Learning Company*, in which they proposed a systemic framework for characterising the learning organisation. These characteristics were used to guide progress throughout the BICC transformation. During the case study, Boydell
observed that each of the 11 characteristics was addressed, although not necessarily in sequence. Rather, certain decisions about strategy were made, and other areas were dealt with as the need arose.

According to Boydell (1996) the outcomes were excellent, and included the following:

- Employee productivity increased by 113 per cent.
- Scrap was reduced by 50 per cent.
- On-time deliveries were the highest ever.
- Loss of more than $1 million was reversed to a profit of more than $1 million.
- More than 30 jobs were saved.

No one intervention, change, or characteristic led to these outcomes. They were the result of the ‘whole system of changes’ summarised by the 11 characteristics. By working on these changes simultaneously, members of the company could apply their existing knowledge and learn not only about how to make copper cable, but also about ‘how to work together’.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Learning was based on real concerns and issues. Personal development planning and training was set in place.

**TL:** New teams were created. Teams were trained as intact work units.

**OL:** Learning was central to new business strategy and to reorganisation in teams. Unions agreed to new pay scales and contract that included learning.
Ziegler (1996) took up a case study of Morrison Communications, a publishing company at Tennessee. Total employee size was 165 and all the employees were considered for case study. This case showed that learning was not linear and predictable, but rather a generative process characterised at times by uncertainty and a willingness to explore. Before embarking on their plan to become a learning organisation, Morrison Enterprises, as it was formerly called, was a holding company consisting of two operating companies: Morrison Printing and School Calendar. Although the two companies operated separately, their futures became more intertwined as the company began its intensive self-examination process. According to Ziegler (1996), although the owners reported many reasons for wanting to change their company, several factors were prominent: (1) lagging profits, (2) loss of family feeling and increasing distance from their employees, (3) lack of workforce involvement, and (4) realisation that everyone—not just the owners—was responsible for the future of the company. During her case study period Ziegler (1996) found out that, in the first year, only those at the managerial/supervisory level were involved in the change initiative. The owners’ goals were for both operating companies in Morrison Enterprises to have a shared vision, an empowered and involved workforce, systems thinking or a “big picture” perspective, and continuous learning. The following factors indicated that the two companies were beginning to achieve their goals: owners’ commitment to learning, openness about lack of knowledge, widespread understanding of why change was necessary, identification of current assumptions, willingness to establish new relationships, ‘everybody wins’, awareness of connectedness, and ‘big picture’ perspective. Two years after the change initiative began, Ziegler found that, Morrison Enterprises was still learning and changing. The two
companies, Morrison Printing and School Calendar, had merged to become Morrison Communications. Many managers had changed jobs completely. The physical premises already looked like a single company. Richard Morrison commented that the teams came and went so fast that it was hard to keep up with how many were operating at any one time. He also said they were continuing to change, but now it was a norm rather than a rare occurrence.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Learning was integrated with work.

**TL:** People became aware of connections through work on cross-functional and cross-company teams.

**OL:** Leader’s ‘model learning’ was encouraged. Practices were named so that they could be changed.

**Driscoll & Preskill (1996)** conducted a case study in Land O’Lakes, a farm supply and dairy processing company in Midwest. The company employed 6000 workers. It was founded almost 75 years ago. The executive management group of the company commissioned a cross-functional task force to reevaluate the company’s approach to training in the wake of Total Quality Management (TQM) initiatives. Both groups discovered learning as a strategy for quality transformation. This case described initiatives taken to implement a learning system model that targeted individuals, teams, leaders, and the organisation.
Driscoll & Preskill (1996) found out that over the last 5 years, the company had become decentralised. With decentralisation had come the tendency for each unit to customise most of its work. Consequently, there was very little uniformity in any of the systems or programmes, and very little collaboration in the exchange of information. Growth during the past several years had been achieved largely through acquisitions, joint ventures and line extensions. Workforce reductions, one in 1987 and one in 1992, were very painful experiences that adversely affected employee morale. To measure morale, the company conducted an employee survey in 1989. The results indicated that supervisors were not doing many of the things that employees thought they should do. After several months of study by a cross-functional committee, a mandatory core curriculum was instituted for all employees. There was a great deal of negative reaction to this programme. At the same time that the core curriculum was being instituted, Land O'Lakes' most financially successful divisions (animal feed) embarked on an effort to introduce total quality concepts into their operations. The division hired an outside consultant to train employees in the fundamentals of TQM. The executive management group recognised the need to reevaluate the company's approach to training. They commissioned an eight-person, cross-functional task force to evaluate the current system and to make recommendations as to how to proceed. The task force began by describing what its members believed to be the most important attributes of a learning organisation:

- Learning was considered a lifelong, continuous process.
- There was an environment in which people wanted to, knew how to, and were encouraged to learn; and corresponding systems were in place.
Operating assumptions, theories, and facts on which decisions were made were critically examined.

Learning was looked for in every situation.

Appropriate talent was matched with appropriate tasks so that the organisation and the individual collectively achieved their objectives.

Learning was shared and applied for the improvement and success of the overall system.

The improvement effort was continually evaluated to ensure that the acquisition and application of learning were progressing.

The task force also created a model that targeted learning at four levels: individuals, team, leader, and organisational.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Learning strategy evolved in response to organisational change initiatives and emphasised informal learning.

**TL:** Training was provided to intact work teams. Cross-functional team was empowered to develop learning systems model and practices.

**OL:** CEO identified and extended new practices to entire company.

During 1994 most of the change effort was focused on individual and team learning. Four new courses were developed. Those courses included the philosophy of quality, quality tools and their application, work/life management, and conflict resolution. Some of the courses from the core curriculum were still available. They included courses on problem solving,
Driscoll & Preskill (1996) found out that during the 18 months that Land O’Lakes had been working towards becoming a learning organisation, its employees had learned a great deal. They had learned the value of building the infrastructure and of having an effective evaluation process. They also had begun to recognise the importance of ‘generative learning’ as well as the need to include middle managers in this change effort.

**Hite Jr. & D’Angelo (1996)** conducted case study in Global Information Systems (IS) Organisation, a corporate services function, reporting directly to the CEO of Nortel. Global IS employed about 1,400 people worldwide and provided IS products and services to its internal customers (employees of other corporate functions and the various business units of the corporation). Reorganisation prompted the Information Systems Group to redesign itself as virtual teams to better serve its customers through “one-stop shopping.” This case examined several strategies that supported its shift towards organisational learning: leadership training, an integrated ‘Skills Development Process’ model tied to competency assessment and individualised learning plans, and integration of learning with performance management. Three phenomena led to the evolution of IS as a learning organisation: (1) the organisation structure changes were themselves powerful incentives for improved organisational learning; (2) employee satisfaction teams focused attention on management and employee issues that were integral to organisational learning and well-being; and (3) the emergence of a skills development team provided the means and opportunity to address organisational learning in a systematic way.
This case contributed to individual learning (IL) and team learning (TL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Competencies were identified as basis for skills development model that enabled employees and organisation to plan for training.

**TL:** Goal of learning was to train accounts managers to work in virtual task teams.

Hite Jr. & D’Angelo (1996) identified the following key success factors:

- Employees perceived themselves to have the highest level of marketability in the industry.
- Industry perceived that Nortel employees had the highest marketability in the industry.
- Nortel was perceived as the employer of choice.
- Nortel increased its ability to source skills internally.
- IS employees knew what skills they needed and wanted, and would know where to get them just in time.
- IS employees understood and applied learning tools and processes.

Hite Jr. & D’Angelo (1996) concluded by stating that it would be important for the Information Systems organisation, from top to bottom, to acknowledge the role that learning played in their work life. This was, perhaps, the key success factor that must continually be emphasised throughout the organisation. In a decentralised work environment, in which IS professionals might report directly to customers, the consistency, quality, and standards necessary to maintain the IS function globally would depend on ‘IS professionals learning from each other’.
Denny et al., (1996) studied the case of Rohm and Haas Corporation, a manufacturer of speciality chemicals and plastics (and the inventor of Plexiglass). It had 10 business units under its management and 100 global market managers were selected for the case study. Market managers at Rohm and Haas needed a learning strategy that would overcome the organisational, geographical, and time barriers inherent in their work. Using data from a benchmarking teleconference, from the work profiling system and from jobholders, consultants developed a competency profile of the 'market manager position' and a 360-degree feedback assessment. The electronic learning guide was designed around a spreadsheet and was organised according to the 12 competencies. The guide listed a variety of formal and informal learning resources, and users updated the guide by adding books, training, and other resources they had found helpful. Although the market managers were highly skilled and creative, a few barriers made their transition to leadership positions difficult.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL) and team learning (TL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Competency assessment, 360-degree feedback, and computer-based learning guide enabled 'self-directed learning'.

**TL:** Interactive features of computer-based learning guide enabled 'joint problem solving and collaboration'.

Denny et al., (1996) in their conclusions stated that the basic premise of the company was to give market managers throughout the company 'the opportunity to teach one another continuously and also to gain access to the wealth of knowledge and experiences that had been largely unused'. They hoped that the learning guide became a "living document" that might be
continually updated by the market managers themselves to help meet their specific needs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Thus, the base of knowledge continued to grow and contributed to Rohm and Haas’s "collective improvement." If successful, this electronic learning tool would make information and learning available quickly enough to add value to the clients of every Rohm and Haas business worldwide.

Denny et al., (1996) listed the main lessons learned as shown below:

- The best information, the clearest information, and the sparks of new ideas almost always came from the jobholders themselves.
- Group efforts took extra time and concentration, but they were worth it.
- Having a champion or two made all the difference, especially when breaking through old paradigms.
- The principle of ‘don’t overlook process when creating a new product’ was followed.
- Technology was opening new worlds.

Kenyon & Kuner (1996) conducted a case study in the Virtual School, an on-line network of Tennessee educators. It is an organisation with 10,000 members. Totally 2,500 teachers were selected for the case study. This case showed how computer-mediated communication provided the fuel for ‘informal problem solving and learning’. Work and learning organised the people, rather than the other way around. An important factor in the success of the Virtual School had been the elimination of barriers that teachers encountered when they tried to use the technology. Making the system easy to use, providing computer terminals to teachers, and instituting a toll-free telephone service all had helped to eliminate these barriers. Still,
only about one-fourth of those trained were actively using the Virtual School. Further study was required to identify those conditions that prevented teachers from taking advantage of this opportunity. The most significant factor for success was making the training open to any teacher in the school system. This kind of self-selection for training increased participants’ buy-in. The diversity of the Virtual School population also promoted the growth of the school and resulted in rich contributions of new information. This, too, generated more ‘on-line learning’. Based on their review of the Virtual School, Kenyon & Kuner (1996) gave some suggestions for HRD practitioners who were working with- or towards - building ‘on-line learning communities’ within their organisations as indicated below:

- Facilitate full internet access through a network that is accessible only to members of the organisation.
- Teach and support information discrimination skills. Network access inevitably causes information overload.
- Identify and assess the learning that occurs, and share those results on-line.
- Initiate and facilitate on-line discussions about learning.
- Provide support for on-line learning by recruiting and identifying experts, by collecting and posting successful practices, and by disseminating knowledge of where to go for information.
- Identify and remove barriers to learning and to network use.
- Monitor network activity and encourage dialogue: “You know, you should e-mail Jane about that. She is working on a similar project.”
- Encourage learning that reaches outside the organisation.
This case contributed to individual learning (IL) and team learning (TL) in the following manner:

**IL**  : Individual self-directed learning needs drove the network.

**TL**  : Interactive features of network enabled joint problem solving and collaboration.

**Albert (1996)** conducted a case study in Ultrasound Coronary Systems (UCS), a high technology medical manufacturing and marketing company in California, U.S.A. It develops, manufactures, and markets intravascular ultrasound imaging catheters and systems to and in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease. Company personnel grew from 100 in 1993 to 125 by June 1994. The study was focused on 19 engineers. The case highlighted the creation of ‘new mental models’ for understanding organisational events and taking action. Prior to the learning organisation intervention, 29 executives, managers, and key staff were involved in an organisation development (OD) process of assessment, planning, and implementation. Company-wide task forces developed and implemented recommendations based on data they collected. Albert was their external OD consultant from May 1993 through June 1994.

This first phase of the intervention planted the seeds for a new model for understanding and action-taking throughout the company. The success of the first phase created an appreciation for learning from actual events. A new model emerged in which executives, project managers, and staff began to share information in a more open and candid manner. Had UCS not experienced success with the first intervention, it would not have accepted the idea of a learning organisation. The success of the first phase enabled people to better appreciate the value gained from reflecting on and learning
from their experience. Albert suggested applying the concept of the learning organisation to the product development process—an area in which high-technology companies often experienced management and organisational problems. He conducted focus groups with each of the four engineering teams, the objective of which was to identify factors related to high versus low project success at UCS. Once Albert was satisfied that these groups understood and supported the learning organisation process, he held a series of focus groups.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

- **IL**: Engineers used index cards to identify lessons from past experience.
- **TL**: Focus group discussion enabled engineers to share learning.
- **OL**: New norms were created for systems thinking and work, and for inquiry.

In addition, executives began taking a more active role in the organisational change process. There was a request that Albert begin a similar learning organisation process focused on quality issues. This marked the first time that any UCS personnel initiated an organisational change process. The prior learning organisation focus provided a strong foundation to support the subsequent design and implementation of TQM based on a company-wide, cross-functional perspective. In a meeting with the CEO during June 1995, Albert was pleased to hear that the company was continuing to use the ‘assessment-planning-implementation model’ and, most important, had total ownership of the process. The executive team had integrated the learning organisation focus into “how work gets done through people at UCS.”
Broere & De Jong (1996) took up the case study of AMEV Nederland Insurance Company. The company employed 2,450 staff. For the case study, only the new client administrators were taken. Line management of the company initiated, developed, and carried out an on-the-job training for client administrators to support an extension of their responsibilities. This case showed how training led to a system in which learning was integrated with daily work, a system that linked the cycles of externalisation (developing new expertise) and internalisation (disseminating existing expertise). This discussion of the AMEV case showed how one department of a large insurance company made the transition from a traditional organisation with specialised sections to a more client-oriented learning organisation by managing the cyclical process of externalisation and internalisation. Until 1985, collection activities of the company were divided among four departments. In September 1985, a large reorganisation took place. The aim of the reorganisation was to increase the quality of service by introducing more efficient customer communication and increasing overall company reorganisation. The separate collecting departments were integrated into the central administration management.

Broere & De Jong (1996) observed that the client-administrator’s way of functioning was a result of all the different activities that originated from the reorganisation: on-the-job training was only a part of this. A new kind of management had been introduced as well, and a combination of factors had led to, among other things, the following results: a more flexible workforce, quicker new-hire assimilation and job proficiency, immediate use of new knowledge, fewer errors and higher quality, increased employee involvement and overall job satisfaction, fewer internal and external complaints, and higher employee qualifications.
Although the data on which this case was based had been collected more than two years ago, the on-the-job training process for new client-administrators remained the same. The new department had since integrated with another department, however, and the restructuring had followed the original process closely. The managers who were responsible for the original new client department also had helped to lead other departments through their reorganisation by using the same recipe.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL) and team learning (TL) in the following manner:

**IL:** System was created for people to move in and out of learning: on their own, with coaches, through and after work.

**TL:** Employees used as resources to help one another learn, and create materials to capture learning.

In conclusion, Broere & De Jong (1996) stated that the on-the-job training at AMEV was a viable proposition. Apart from the function it served during and shortly after the reorganisation of the collection department, its current aim—training new employees in a short period to be all-around client-administrators—also was being realised. The training had created a system in which learning was integrated with daily work activities. And it had led to a system in which internalisation and externalisation were integrated on a continual base. Two success factors could be deduced from the case study. First, many collection department employees contributed to the development of the on-the-job training. Second, employees in the collection department were actively involved in the on-the-job training of new hires. The AMEV case showed that this was true in an unexpected way: The whole department reaped the benefits. The organisation as a whole had become involved in the continuous process of developing and sharing expertise.
Mumford (1996) conducted a case study in a British Multinational Corporation, a subsidiary of a Multinational in the United Kingdom. Total size of the employees was 400. The case study focused on top executive team. Mumford acted as a consultant in this company and described his work with an executive team that used the creation of ‘Personal Development Plans’ to foster individual, one-to-one, and group learning. The case laid out a ‘learning pyramid model’ and described what was involved in each stage. Mumford proposed that effective learning must be created and encouraged at the levels of individual, one-to-one, and group learning if the fourth level organisational learning, was to become operational, rather than aspirational. Each level could be seen as a sequential step, and those steps could be envisaged as a learning pyramid as shown in the following figure 3.1.

**Figure – 3.1: Learning Pyramid**

![Learning Pyramid Diagram]

The metaphor of the learning pyramid illustrated that: (1) an organisation must climb up the pyramid, and must cover each step before reaching the top; and (2) climbing gets more difficult as one proceeds towards the top. Mumford did not introduce the concept of the learning pyramid, as it had not yet been designed as a model. He subsequently included a comment in his report on the relevance to the learning organisation of ‘Personal Development Plans’ and further activity on “developing self and others.” Mumford observed that several team members wanted some kind of structured event dealing with teamwork, change, and developing themselves and others. Company officials preferred to start with a workshop on “developing myself and others,” to be followed by a workshop on innovation and change. The concept of the learning organisation was neither a part of the original plan nor a major feature of the “developing myself and others” workshop, even though Mumford discussed it with the group at the end of the activity. Mumford decided not to push the concept earlier and harder, because he believed that focusing on particular behaviours and practices first was the best way to engage managers in more effective learning. In addition, Divisional Director was more interested in solving particular problems than in discussing concepts. Concepts were primarily of interest to those who were theorists in learning styles. Mumford’s learning pyramid could be used as a basis for discussion and, in fact, was developed as a result of reviewing the experience gained through this project. The model enabled participants to recognise what was involved at each stage in climbing up the pyramid.
This case contributed to individual learning (IL) and team learning (TL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Personal development plans were created that emphasised 'informal learning'.

**TL:** Executive group members shared thinking in dialogue sessions.

**Pedler & Aspinwall (1996)** conducted a case study in Fretwell Downing, a specialist software company in the United Kingdom. The size of the employee population was 100 and the managing director of the Co., Richard Plumb was the sole respondent. Pedler & Aspinwall (1996) showed how organisational learning grew through the interaction of individuals in the company. They developed the idea of learning relationships and illustrated this idea by showing how the learning of two individuals interacted over time and influenced business decisions. The case was studied in three episodes. In the first, the company’s need to change became apparent, and Richard decided that he must take “time out” for his own development. In the second, he sought to spread the learning habit and to integrate what he had learnt in developing a different sort of business. In the third episode, Richard used the metaphors of the learning company and the virtual organisation to steer the business. At this stage, the fundamental changes in particular people and in the company as a whole became clear.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Personal learning was fed through formal education and relationships.

**TL:** Learning teams at the university emphasised ‘learning from many disciplines/perspectives’.

**OL:** Individuals who grew influenced company policy.
In summary, the Fretwell Downing story demonstrated how the processes of individual and business development could interact in a reciprocal and mutually reinforcing way. Fisher & Torbert’s (1994) assertion that there could be no organisational transformation without personal transformation demanded serious consideration. Several assumptions on the part of Richard Plumb were important in this case. Chief among these were the following:

- That the company needed radical, not incremental, change.
- That he needed to get outside the company to learn something new.

Another important assumption was that complete succession—the usual process of removing one person from a position and putting in someone else—was not necessary at Fretwell Downing. One of the critical factors that made possible the successful integration of Richard’s new learning within the company was his relationship with Anthony, the company chairman and co-owner. Richard & Anthony were able to debate, argue with, and influence each other. Had this not happened, the move to strategic business units, for example, might have been mandatory. This kind of relationship at the top helped to create in the company wider dialogue whereby ‘constructive conflict’ was legitimised. This ‘freedom to raise questions and challenges’ was essential to real learning. The power of learning was seen in the development of Richard’s conceptual thinking about the company and the language he used to describe it. Without such personal development, his perspective on the company’s evolution from a technical organisation to a learning or virtual organisation would not have been possible.
The relationship between personal and organisational transformation was particularly important in the small firm because of the typically dominant influence of the owner or manager. The centrality of this person meant that the company relied heavily on the thinking at the top. Additionally, the learning style and preferences of this person might set a pattern for those of the company as a whole. The lesson for small business owners was that, if they wanted their companies and the people in them to develop, they themselves must be visibly learning, developing, and breaking patterns. Small companies could have a learning advantage. Such companies, especially when young, often found that learning spreads quickly and easily. Further, a small company could move forward as a unit more easily than a large one. As a company gets bigger and older, especially if it achieves preeminence in a particular business, learning becomes more difficult.

O’Neil et al., (1996) conducted a case study in Volvo Truck Corporation (VTC), one of the leading companies in the truck business. Its head office and executive management team were located in Sweden. The VTC has about 22,000 employees working in more than 70 countries. Around 100 top managers were taken for the case study. VTC launched an executive development programme that not only developed the capacity of individuals to learn but also fostered organisational change through the use of project-based action learning. This case described the five-year initiative and the impact it had on the company through intended and unintended results. The first Volvo Truck Management (VTM) programme was held in 1990. The conceptual underpinning for the initiative was Action Reflection Learning (ARL). Over the five years of the VTM programme, VTC had
engaged nearly 100 managers from 16 different countries in the completion of 20 strategic projects. Upon evaluation of the effects at the individual, team, organisational, and global levels, the following results were found. At the individual level, the managers exhibited:

- A more explicit understanding of themselves and how their assumptions and beliefs influenced ‘how they viewed the world’.
- More openness to change.
- More open, proactive behaviour and communication.
- A better understanding of the importance of others’ perspectives resulting in taking time to listen, reflect, engage in dialogue, and integrate diverse perspectives into decision making and actions.
- An increase in initiation and support of risk-taking activities.
- Improved time management skills.

The changes exhibited at the team level included:

- Greater emphasis on teamwork and team building.
- More delegation of responsibilities.
- Greater empowerment of employees.
- Improved skills in running meetings.
- Increased use of cross-functional teams.
- Increased ability to work in an international environment on international teams.

The changes that took place at the organisational and global levels included:

- An expanded global network.
• A common communication platform through a culture of reflection and dialogue.
• A better understanding of the global business environment.
• A change from “spontaneity” to preplanning.
• A greater emphasis on evaluating work processes.
• More open and honest performance evaluations.
• A greater understanding of other cultures.

There were certain factors that needed to be in place for the VTM programme to be effective as a major change initiative. These included the following:
• Top leadership that supported and acted in accord with the vision and values.
• A truly tailor-made design, built around an interaction among programme staff, company, and participants, that included a balance of reflection and dialogue, lectures, and interventions.
• Support of authentic behaviour in line with participants’ values and beliefs, and engagement of participants’ hearts, heads, and guts.
• Preparation of participants before the start of the programme, and the support of each participant’s supervisor and home organisation during the programme.
• Project work and follow-up on real tasks of importance to the company that were outside the expertise area of the participants.
• Project Team Advisors and a programme staff experienced in working with ARL who could serve as ‘role models’ by “walking their talk”.


O’Neil et al., (1996) concluded the case by stating that the story of the VTM Programme continued into 1996. It was viewed by executives in the company as an excellent way to ‘learn how to learn’ and create breakthroughs for change. Some executives who had served as project hosts had returned as participants and vice versa, so they saw it as a valuable use of their time. The programme was also viewed as a way to serve the company productively through working on important strategic issues and helping it become a global company and a learning organisation.

Dennis et al., 1996 took up the case study of Grace Cocoa, a multinational cocoa and industrial chocolate company in Connecticut. The employee population was 1,800. Top managers numbering 58 were selected for this study. The Company was learning its way towards becoming a global organisation using project-based action learning. This case showed how managers experienced this kind of learning and how they used learning to foster change in the organisation’s culture. At the center of the organisation’s change process at Grace Cocoa was an approach to management development called ‘Action Reflection Learning (ARL)’, a time-tested variant of action learning.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Managers learnt skills to work globally. Project work developed critical thinking, dialogue, and participatory skills.

**TL:** Global network was created to support sharing, collaboration, and sustained learning.

**OL:** Learning intervention was used to change organisation’s culture and structure to support integrated global company.
Dennis et al., 1996 concluded by stating that the picture that emerged was that of an organisation that was making ‘a deep and sustained effort to change its culture’. This effort had already influenced the organisation at the global level in terms of how its business was conducted. There was a statement “Two years ago, Grace Cocoa was a name, not an organisation.” Grace Cocoa was an organisation that was learning its way through the challenges confronting it. Within Grace Cocoa, there was a pervasive pattern of learning and development. Interviews with participants in the leadership forum provided evidence of their having gained considerable personal insight and competencies around working globally, teamwork, communication, leadership, innovation, and change. The process, however, was not one that “fixes people”; some participants did not seem to gain these abilities from the forum. The leadership forum represented a significant organisational intervention, building a strong capacity within Grace Cocoa to respond globally with flexibility and creativity.

Bierema & Berdish (1996) carried out the case study of Ford Motor Company. This case presented an ongoing study of learning organisation implementation at the Electrical and Fuel Handling Division (EFHD) of Ford Motor Company in collaboration with Washtenaw Community College (WCC). Guided by a vision of the learning organisation, EFHD which had embraced TQM, partnered with WCC to develop learning capacity in employees. This case featured the learning model they built and examples of the way in which these ideas were taught. It also described the intentional extension of these ideas to the community in which the company and college were located. EFHD was a global business with 6,135 employees. WCC served more than 10,000 students in the county. In its quest to become a
best-in-class, high-performance organisation, EFHD designed plans to improve work and interpersonal processes based on Peter Senge’s book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). Participants in the learning included EFHD employees and their spouses, community college employees, and other representatives from the community, including EFHD suppliers.

The learning model (Figure 3.2), used in all EFHD learning projects, was developed by the product launch success team.

**Figure 3.2: The Learning Model**

![Diagram of the Learning Model](image)


This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Learning course developed skills for dialogue and learning that were tied to real work projects.
TL: Collaborative skills developed through training in teams and continued through work reorganisation.

OL: Partnership existed between EFHD and community groups to improve total quality of community, not just Ford Motor Company.

At the end of the case study, Bierema & Berdish (1996) came to a consensus that the learning organisation process challenged employees and communities to use their collective intelligence, ability to learn, and creativity to transform existing systems. It helped people connect with each other, their work, and their community. It was not a programme, but rather a new process for 'understanding and learning together'. The EFHD, WCC, and other organisations engaged in the learning organisation process believed that, by using the tools and adopting the values of the learning organisation, they would be able to compete and prevail in ever more complex and dynamic markets and systems.

Grissom (1996) conducted a case study in Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta. It was a multinational company manufacturing beverages and bottling them. The case was aimed at top managers at the international division. Like Grace Cocoa, Coca-Cola had found that creating action learning teams to address real problems in a global business environment was an effective way to train managers to work at a more global level. Using a combination of intensive instruction in leadership and management followed by project work in potential or underdeveloped global markets, individuals learnt to manage while learning about working in new cultures.
The Coca-Cola Company’s business planning process required individual plans from each international division. It became apparent to the senior management of the international business sector that the development of future international business leaders was critical to the achievement of their objectives as a global company. Management Planning and Development (MP&D) was charged with the responsibility for designing and implementing a solution. This solution was to become the ‘Leadership for Marketplace Excellence (LME)’ programme. The programme started with the development of a competency profile that defined the key skills, abilities, and attributes necessary for success as a general manager in the system. The second step was the development of a conceptual model for the programme. The design team felt that a blend of classroom methods and project assignments would accelerate the learning process, reduce risk of failure for the participants, and generally be more acceptable to the organisation. The conceptual model of three phases—the first in the classroom, the second in the field, and the third a regrouping of the class for follow-up—was presented and accepted by senior management. The third step was to contract with a team of instructional designers who worked with internal content experts to develop the classroom portions of the programme.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

IL: Individuals learnt through work on real projects.

TL: Action learning teams were used to capitalise on strengths and differences.

OL: Problem solving influenced organisational markets/profits and eventually leaders’ ability to act globally.
Grissom (1996) concluded the case by stating that Coca-Cola was running two LME programmes annually, training those who would lead Coca-Cola into the next century. Creating leaders to change one person and one team at a time, Coca-Cola plans to be ready to tap emerging markets throughout the world.

Moore & Brooks (1996) took the case study of two communities – Middle Georgia Community (MGC) and Southwest Georgia Community (SGC). This case featured communities that functioned like learning organisations. The case explored strategies used by two informal community groups to develop visions, make them tangible, and involve key stakeholders in their design and implementation. Community learning organisations (CLOs) were informally organised, and their purpose was usually to solve problems or make decisions about community issues. Similarly, MGC and SGC reflected the informal organisational pattern, because they were not traditional organisations with articles of incorporation, by-laws, or elected officers. Instead, both communities formed learning organisations to solve their problems. Each community experienced different levels of success and provided different lessons about community learning organisations. MGC was less successful as a community learning organisation than SGC.

Moore & Brooks (1996) summarised the lessons learned in MGC as follows: Since MGC could not get active participation from more than the initial six to eight participants, it resorted to keeping other groups, such as elected officials, informed of events and projects. The chamber executive director of MGC made special visits to explain what the group was doing, and the group received recognition and approval for its actions. Although
there was informal support for learning organisation planning, actions, and results, the leaders of the CLO in MGC “burned out” after two years of doing all of the work themselves. Some projects, such as the train depot and another alley mural, remain uncompleted. By contrast, the SGC wanted to extend its track record of improving the quality of life of the community by looking into the future and planning for growth and development. The SGC produced a “community vision” of what it wanted to happen in its town and community.

Moore & Brooks (1996) listed the lessons learned in SGC as: The SGC had been able to maintain participation of 20 to 25 people over five to six years. All of the visioning sessions had included broad-based support from the community. After five years, all of the buildings, street improvements, sidewalk changes, and landscaping in the original vision had been implemented and promoted to the public. At vision update meetings, the group had reviewed the original illustration and connected new ideas to the old vision.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Workshop provided skills in visioning and planning.

**TL:** Artist rendering of future vision enabled group to collaborate on joint future to which all could commit.

**OL:** Overlapping memberships in different agencies enabled success in implementation. The community was enhanced and was better able to act in the future.
In conclusion, Moore & Brooks (1996) asserted that both MGC and SGC formed informal learning organisations. In other words, they did not adopt a charter, or by-laws, or become incorporated, but they did discuss issues and design strategies to solve their respective problems. In both communities, individuals in the learning organisations gained new knowledge and insight into issues and community problems. They explored options for solving their dilemmas and designed strategies to implement these solutions. No single strategy appeared to work all the time with every community or learning organisation. Another important factor was allowing time for the group to study, discuss, reflect, and clearly understand issues or problems before suggesting possible solutions or alternatives. Hard work and action plans appeared to be the formula for forming and maintaining learning organisations. Learning and continued participation depended on the members’ ability to see a dilemma or situation, suggest possible options, do the work, and discuss the results.

Bowerman & Ford (1996) took up the case study of Alberta Labour, one of the oldest departments in the Alberta Public Service in Canada. This department staffed 700 employees and everyone was involved in the case study. Alberta Labour adopted a new vision, ‘Quality Service Through Partnerships’, that spurred restructuring, the engagement of new leadership, teamwork, identification of key competencies, and a move towards creating and using business plans for greater accountability. This case showed how learning served as the glue that helped people and the organisation move towards innovation and change. In 1991, a new minister and deputy saw an opportunity to implement major changes in this department. Motivated not only by fiscal constraints but also by a new and exciting vision of what
government could be, Alberta Labour underwent a major transformation that has touched the life of every employee. Alberta Labour adopted a vision, a new view of what the public service could be. A noticeably absent consideration in the traditional system had been the client. A client-centered focus, therefore, had radical implications. The new vision that was eventually adopted—'Quality Service Through Partnerships'—was the beginning of the learning curve for the organisation and its employees. The first major task was to break down the bureaucracy and the barriers that existed between staff members and between disciplines. The structural changes were implemented overnight. Competency profiling for all the disciplines was initiated. Another major change occurred in the area of finance and budgeting.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Learning was tied to restructuring initiatives.

**TL:** Intact work teams were trained together. Teams learnt through working in cross-discipline and project teams.

**OL:** Customer service restructuring drove change. Solutions were based on new partnership with community and industry.

Bowerman & Ford (1996) stated in their conclusion that because of the department's commitment to its business plan, and the results-based budgeting process, there was a constant preoccupation with the results. The fact was that when the new leadership started to implement the changes and teams, many employees shook their heads. They could not envision the future. The new approaches also had forced staff to contend with a
significant amount of 'unlearning'. Despite such obstacles, and the human resistance to change, there were some strong indicators of success. Several awards, planned by a cross-departmental project team, were given to recognise achievements publicly. Individual learning plans were now an integral part of employee performance, and in recognition of this, there were frequent requests for advice on how to start. There was clearly an acceptance on the part of the staff that life had changed. The change had been viewed by some people as an opportunity and had generated enormous excitement; others had viewed it as something to watch and occasionally to resist. A sense of stress and displacement was bound to occur when changes of this magnitude were implemented, particularly in institutions as traditionally stable as government. It was healthy to recognise this inevitability, but even healthier to move on immediately with the change initiative. In four years, this department changed its systems of management, compensation, and classification as well as its way of interacting with its clients. Further, the department developed a planned approach to learning in order to achieve its results. These changes were merely the beginning steps towards becoming a more accountable, and much more valuable public service of the future.

Lippitt (1996) carried out the case study of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an agency of federal government, Washington DC, U.S.A. EPA consisted of approximately 18,500 employees at headquarters and regions across the country. The human resources (HR) department’s mission was to assist the staff in fulfilling the organisation’s goals. Approximately 190 people in HR had historically been guided by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and its federal personnel manual. Because OPM and the manual were also in the process of radical change, the HR department
needed to develop a new road map balancing service and supervision. The consultant described how the Human Resources Department of this agency used a ‘Future Search Conference’ to involve its multiple customers and stakeholders in a nonlinear, concurrent change effort. The case laid out steps taken in planning, implementing, and following up on this large group intervention strategy. Lippitt (1996) gave the picture of organisational change in EPA as follows: It started with a proposed “strawman planning document” and a steering committee to guide the process. Two conferences were held to identify customer needs and to determine future directions for the organisation. To develop an organisational structure at the macro level, a design conference was also held. Detailed structural design plans were provided by volunteer teams for each proposed new organisational segment. Plans for shifting to the new structure were developed concurrently by a transition team. Throughout the process, an aggressive plan for two-way communication was in place. Members of the detailed design team and the transition team were encouraged to contact the director with questions or resource requests. Employees also were encouraged to communicate through e-mail, all-employee meetings, and skip-level meetings. Change came through involvement, communication, learning, and creativity.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** New mindset was needed to support restructuring that included ‘ability to challenge existing practices’.

**TL:** Learning took place through large group interventions and team work.

**OL:** Reorganisation was driven by ‘future search conference’ that was integrated with other strategies.
In his concluding statement Lippitt (1996) gave the results of his case study in EPA. According to him, EPA's strategy for organisational change was both evolutionary and revolutionary. The strategy was evolutionary in the sense that concepts were proposed, analysed, and selected openly and creatively. The plan was flexible and inclusive of all participants. Additional ideas were incorporated into the plan as they surfaced. This case was revolutionary in that rapid individual and management change was required and new ways of doing business were developed. People who were specialists became generalists. The number of managerial levels was reduced, and teams were introduced. Key success factors were—full disclosure, open information flow, and a clear focus on customer needs, employee concerns, and organisational mission. Because the employees worked together towards a common goal, their individual knowledge and abilities were maximised for the organisation's benefit. This resulted in more efficient and effective use of human resources and in increased job satisfaction for the employees.

Woolis & Galosy (1996) conducted a case study of New York City Bureau of Exams. The subject of this case study was the initiative taken by the New York City Department of Personnel (D.O.P) to reinvent city government. In January 1994, the mayor appointed Lilliam Barrios-Paoli as commissioner of the DOP. In September 1994, Barrios-Paoli hired Diana Woolis to be associate city personnel director. In November 1994, Woolis hired Julia Galosy, an outside consultant, to help plan the change and to coach and guide the managers. This case described how Woolis & Galosy supported a move to 'self-managed work teams', sweeping culture changes, and the development of new leadership skills in managers. When Woolis
arrived, she faced several significant obstacles to change—including the organisation’s structure, culture, and information systems.

To overcome these obstacles, Woolis decided to undertake the following:

- Create a compelling reason to change.
- Change the organisation’s structure by flattening the hierarchy and creating teams.
- Change the culture by altering work processes, challenging prevailing assumptions, creating new language, valuing new behaviour, and using dialogue and feedback.
- Help managers to learn new leadership skills as they resolve organisational problems and then use the same process with their own staff.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Leaders were helped to develop a new mindset and take on new roles.

**TL:** Employees learnt to work in self-managed teams. Teams and task forces made recommendations for change.

**OL:** Learning strategy was used to develop leadership and employee capacity while downsizing, reengineering, and restructuring.

Woolis & Galosy (1996) listed the main lessons learned as: learning, resistance, communication, sponsorship, and change strategy.

Wood & Gilbert (1996) took up the case study of Fowler Product Company, a manufacturer of machinery for use in the beverage and packaging industry, Athens, Georgia. Total strength of employees was 80 and everyone was considered for case study. Even though the size of the
business was small, the company adopted TQM, but found that the organisation had to be redesigned to improve work processes and that employees needed new skills to function in the changing environment. The case spotlighted changes in structure, culture, and learning support. In 1991, in an effort to obtain resources, Fowler, the president of the company, helped fund the Center for Continuous Improvement (CCI). The CCI was established to apply TQM concepts in the pursuit of continuous improvement and to bring world-class manufacturing training to the local area. It included members from an array of local businesses, working in a public-private partnership with the Athens Area Technical Institute. By 1992, most of the obvious changes had been completed at Fowler. That year, Rob Wood joined Fowler as vice-president in charge of people development and total quality. He has been in charge of developing and implementing training for Fowler’s employees since that time. Wood & Gilbert (1996) observed that Fowler Products looked at critical measurements such as safety, warranty costs, on-time delivery rates, and defects per million on in-house assemblies and supplier parts, to name just a few. All had shown favourable trends. A change in employee perspective was one of the best indicators of improvement.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Developed individual learning capacity and rewarded learning through generous tuition reimbursement programme.

**TL:** Team-based structure was supported by developing leaders as coaches and by capacity to work in teams.

**OL:** Used learning to enhance ability to think and work systemically for total quality management.

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Wood & Gilbert (1996) in their concluding remarks stated that, in one sense, the fact that few previous attempts had been made to institute formal training offered an advantage: Employees had not experienced the phenomenon of “truncated learning”. “Learned helplessness,” however—another organisational barrier identified by Watkins & Marsick (1993)—was prevalent. Fowler’s generous tuition reimbursement plan overcame this problem by boosting self-esteem through individuals’ success in meeting goals they established for themselves. The increase in self-confidence generated by this programme, when transferred to the workplace, helped people ‘unlearn their sense of helplessness’. Learning, and the sense of responsibility that came with it, was a major element of the successes experienced thus far. The very nature of learning, however, dictated that organisational transitions would be a continuing process. As people learn to do their jobs better, individual jobs and the organisation as a whole would change to take advantage of new information and skills. This snapshot of Fowler Products captured just one moment in its ongoing development.

Finger & Burgen (1996) conducted a case study in Swiss Postal Service (SPS), a government undertaking in Switzerland. The employee strength was 39,000. Finger & Burgen (1996) described the steps they took to help the top 100 managers to collectively identify and address what they saw as impediments to the learning organisation. This case study illustrated the complexity of large systems change. Finger & Burgen (1996) conceptualised the SPS’s becoming a learning organisation as a process of profound transformations, taking place simultaneously on three different levels: autonomisation from politics, internal structural changes, and cultural transformations. Between spring and summer 1995, the consultants sought to
elaborate with approximately 100 top managers the main impediments to the learning organisation, which were listed as subservience to regulations; fear of risks; perfectionism; fear of conflict; linear thinking; communication problems; decision-making processes; and compartmentalisation. By going through the list of key impediments, the top managers of the SPS realised that substantial obstacles still prevented the SPS from becoming a learning organisation.

This case contributed to individual learning (IL), team learning (TL), and organisational learning (OL) in the following manner:

**IL:** Top management learned about personal orientation to change. Training system was put in place for company—wide capacity building.

**TL:** Human resources unit was being transformed around common vision.

**OL:** Indicators were being created to assess individual and collective learning, culture and organisational transformation, leadership capacity.

Finger & Burgen (1996) stated that the initiative taken towards a learning organisation was not without danger. The goal of becoming a learning organisation was an ambitious one, and the obstacles identified by the SPS managers could seem overwhelming. If the SPS could not rapidly demonstrate progress on the road towards the learning organisation, or at least show success in the market, this ambitious ideal might well have counterproductive effects, especially on the managers’ motivation.
Edmondson (1999) presented a model of ‘team learning’ and tested it in a multimethod field study. It introduced the construct of ‘team psychological safety’—a shared belief held by members of a team that the team was safe for interpersonal risk taking—and modeled the effects of ‘team psychological safety’ and ‘team efficiency’ together on ‘learning’ and ‘performance’ in organisational work teams. Results of a study of 51 work teams in a manufacturing company, measuring antecedent, process, and outcome variables, showed that ‘team psychological safety’ was associated with ‘learning behaviour’, but ‘team efficiency’ was not, when controlling for team psychological safety. As predicted, learning behaviour mediated between team psychological safety and team performance. The results supported an integrative perspective in which both team structures, such as context support and team leader coaching, and shared beliefs shaped team outcomes.

Pangarkar & Kirkwood (2002) stated that one of the most significant developments in professional training was the increasing use of technology. Technology presented quick and affordable learning solutions, especially for growing companies. In recent study conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the MASIE Center titled “The Learning Technology Acceptance Study: If We Build It, Will They Come?” it was found that 38 per cent of employees polled from seven Fortune 500 companies said they preferred e-learning to classroom training. Most indicated they were satisfied with their e-learning experiences, learned what they needed faster than through classroom training, and were willing to take additional e-learning courses in the future. Further, it was revealed that learners were drawn to courses that blended e-learning with other forms of instruction and courses where they could learn away from busy desks.
Kolb & Kolb (2005) examined the recent developments in theory and research on ‘experiential learning’ and explored how this work could enhance experiential learning in higher education by drawing on the fundamental theories of Dewey (1897) and Lewin (1938). They introduced the concept of ‘learning space’ as a framework for understanding the interface between ‘student learning styles’ and the ‘institutional learning environment’. They illustrated the use of the learning space framework in three case studies of longitudinal institutional development: the Case Weatherhead School of Management MBA programme, the Cleveland Institute of Art undergraduate programme, and the Case Western Reserve University undergraduate programme. Finally, they presented principles for the enhancement of experiential learning in higher education and suggested how experiential learning could be applied throughout the educational environment by institutional development programmes, including longitudinal outcome assessment, curriculum development, student development, and faculty development.

(b) Learning Organisations

Buyens et al., (2002) took up the case study research focusing on four organisations in Belgium: The insurance company De Volksverzekering or People’s Insurance (DVV), the telecommunication firms Siemens Atea and Alcatel Bell, and an International cleaning service ISS. After analysing the visions and strategies of the four case organisations with regard to becoming a learning organisation, as well as human resource development’s (HRD) role in this process, Buyens et al., (2002) described the factors that affected the achievement (or lack of achievement) of HRD’s envisioned role—the inhibiting factors, facilitating factors and strategies to overcome barriers.
All the Belgian case study organisations were found to be facing some inhibiting factors in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation such as lack of motivation and responsibility for learning from employees; lack of money for new initiatives; lack of understanding of goals, tasks and responsibilities of the HRD department/lack of clear objectives and evaluation criteria for HRD department; lack of motivation and support from management; insufficient learning culture (no tradition, systems and methods).

When HRD professionals were asked to identify factors that supported the development towards a learning (oriented) organisation, a large number of factors were found. The conducive factors were: positive initial results of new HRD initiatives; active involvement of management; many opportunities for training and development; very pleasant work climate in the HRD department.

Different coping strategies were adopted by the case study organisations to reduce inhibiting factors and to enforce conducive factors. Some of the key strategies included were: clarifying the position of the HRD department within the organisation; networking with other organisations who work intensively with the concept of the learning organisation; communication between the HRD department and managers and employees in order to improve products and services.

Vaherva & Woods (2002) carried out the case study research with four organisations in Finland: the electronics producer Vaisala, the paper machine manufacturer Valmet, the Okobank Group, and the metal producer Outokumpu Zinc. All the Finnish case study organisations were found to be
facing some *inhibiting factors* in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation. The most significant ones were: lack of HRD professional/lack of resources; old organisational structures interfered with new ways of functioning; employees did not have enough responsibility over their own development; the distance between the HRD department, *and* management and employees was too large.

A large number of factors that supported the development towards a learning (oriented) organisation were found. The *conducive factors* included: HRD professionals had great expertise in the field of learning and development; personnel development was clearly supported by the (top) management; employees were very motivated to learn; the meaning of lifelong learning had been internalised as a part of everyday work (learning culture); the importance of personnel development was widely understood in the organisation.

To reduce inhibiting factors and to strengthen conducive factors, different coping strategies were adopted by the case study organisations. Most noteworthy were: recruiting new HRD practitioners and delegating more responsibility for training and development to line management, in order to solve the problem of lack of specialists; showing the added value of the HRD department—both employees and managers must see the value of the change towards a learning-oriented organisation, and the value it brought to the workplace, in order to be motivated to learn or support others in learning.
There was also the problematic issue of language – and whether there was yet a common language (or discourse) between researchers and practitioners. The issue of language and terminology was an important one, not least in advancing theory and practice. There were obvious dangers in ‘theory-building’ being too far ahead of practice, which could be a consequence of esoteric and obscure language. Meanings and definitions must, therefore, be further explained and shared if academics and practitioners were to learn from each other and together.

Belet (2002) conducted the case study research, considering four organisations in France: the semiconductor plant, Motorola; the retail organisation Auchan; the hotel and tourist service chain, Accor; and the road transport firm, GT group. All French case study organisations were found to be facing some inhibiting factors in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation. The most significant ones were: production and time constraints; compulsory training system; some courses were outdated; lack of motivation of employees or management; multicultural aspects; unbalanced structure of age pyramid.

A large number of conducive factors were found, such as: support of top management; clear training system/procedures; understanding/sharing of corporate objectives by all employees; learning by increasing contact with customers; impact of training on competency development and impact on remuneration; experienced people involved as trainers; professional HRD staff/academic.

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With regard to strategies employed to cope with inhibiting factors, ‘communication’ was found to be very important. All case study organisations paid attention to communicating clearly to employees ‘why change was necessary, why learning played an important role in the change process of the organisation and that learning took place not only by following courses but also by learning from each other’. This involvement and understanding of employees was considered to be very important in achieving the desired changes.

Pawlowsky et al., (2002) carried out the case study research with four organisations in Germany: the domestic appliance manufacturer, Bosch Siemens Hausgerate; the crop producer, Hoechst Schering AgrEvo, the technical consultancy firm, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and the marketing and sales organisation for Sony Germany, an electronics producer. All German case study organisations were found to be facing barriers in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation. The following list shows the most significant inhibiting factors: insufficient knowledge sharing; other priorities (time pressure, lack of time); lack of motivation from employees (fear of newness, lack of reward in salary or promotion); lack of motivation from management (did not promote or support employee learning); lack of information on the need for learning; lack of information on opportunities for learning; insufficient learning culture; lack of evaluation of learning processes.

On the other hand, a large number of factors that supported the development towards a learning (oriented) organisation were pointed out. The most important conducive factors were: active participation of
employees in their own development process; information on organisational developments and the need for employee learning; clear corporate strategy and objectives; flexible organisational structure; managers promoting employee learning; new working methods (teamwork, learning networks); information on learning in the organisation; transparency of learning goals.

To reduce inhibiting factors and to emphasise conducive factors, the HRD departments followed different strategies. Interesting to note here were the application of new selection criteria such as ‘readiness for change’ for recruitment of employees, and informing employees on learning needs and learning opportunities. Both strategies served to enhance the motivation for learning of the workforce.

Pawlowsky et al., (2002) summarised by stating that, HRD departments in the investigated German case study organisations were already established partners of top and line management and of employees for triggering organisational and personnel development processes. However, all respondents noted that they were just at the beginning of the change process shifting their traditional self-concept of delivering a rather standardised and demand-driven training catalogue towards facilitation, supporting and consulting learning and knowledge management initiatives throughout the entire organisation.

Tomassini & Cavrini (2002) took up the case study research considering four organisations in Italy: the food producer, Barilla; the chemical pharmaceuticals producer, Bayer; the cosmetics manufacturer, Lever; and the barcode manufacturer, Datalogic. All the Italian case study
organisations were found to be facing some *inhibiting factors* in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation, such as: insufficient learning culture; lack of motivation and support from management; lack of motivation and responsibility for learning from employees; lack of time and money.

A large number of factors that supported the development towards a learning (oriented) organisation were: active involvement of management; positive first results of new HRD initiatives; clear HRD communication; innovation-oriented culture.

Communication and a flexible attitude appeared to be the key *coping strategies* for the Italian case study organisations to deal with inhibiting factors and capitalise upon conducive ones.

**Horst & Tjepkema (2002)** took up the case study research in The Netherlands. Four organisations were studied: the chemical producer, Akzo Nobel Chemicals (BU Salt); the telecommunications company, Ericsson; the IC-T service organisation, BAC (the IT center of the Dutch Internal Revenue Service); and the construction company, KIBC. The major inhibiting factors were: lack of time; lack of motivation and support from management; lack of motivation and responsibility for learning from employees; lack of understanding of HRD policy; difficult position competence/resource managers; insufficient learning culture.

The most important *conducive factors* were: clear HRD policy; clear (HRD) communication; increasing learning opportunities and facilities; supporting teams; and support of management. *Strategies to cope* with
constraints differed for the four case organisations. Ericsson was working on providing extra administrative support in order to decrease competence managers workload. BAC wanted to implement ‘director groups’ in order to improve the link between HRD policy and company policy. To stimulate a learning culture, the HRD function worked to increase possibilities for informal learning and knowledge sharing. KIBC, finally, found that improving HRD policy and improving communication and information flows were both very useful in decreasing ‘resistance’ and increasing ‘motivation’ for learning.

Sambrook & Stewart (2002) studied four case study organisations in the United Kingdom: the postal service, Royal Mail; the aero engines manufacturer, Rolls-Royce Aerospace; the insurance company, Royal Scottish Assurance; and the beer producer, Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries. All British case study organisations were found to be facing some inhibiting factors in the change process towards a learning (oriented) organisation. The most significant ones were: lack of time for learning/work load demands; insufficient HRD resources; insufficient learning culture/commitment to learning; resistance to/fear of change; lack of support/skills from management; and lack of written HRD policy.

A large number of factors were found that supported the development towards a learning (oriented) organisation. The most important conducive factors were: people skills/orientation of managers; support and commitment of management; clarity of new role for managers and management development; communication; wide range of HRD resources/facilities; early successes (start of culture change, achievement of ‘Investors in People’-IiP); constant reinforcement, active role of HRD department.
A great diversity of approaches—coping strategies—to deal with the inhibiting factors was found. Communication was one of the common elements, for instance in strategies such as putting a ‘new emphasis on learning as part of the job’, ‘improving communication towards employees on changes’ and ‘working on an internal and external network’. Working carefully as an HRD department was also helpful, for instance by ‘critically evaluating effects of HRD’ and ‘careful planning of HRD activities and policies’.

(c) Learning Culture, Learning Environment, and Learning Outcomes

Tracey et al., (1995) examined the influence of the work environment on the transfer of newly trained supervisory skills by conducting a study in a private organisation that owned and operated 77 supermarkets in four northeastern states of U.S.A. by taking 505 supermarket managers from 52 stores. The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of two specific dimensions of ‘organisational climate and culture’ on the transfer of supervisory behaviours learned in a formal training programme. The work environment was operationalised in terms of ‘transfer of training climate’ and ‘continuous-learning culture’. Climate and culture were hypothesised to have both direct and moderating effects on post-training behaviours. Accounting for pre-training behaviours and knowledge gained in training, the results from a series of LISREL analyses showed that both climate and culture were directly related to post-training behaviours. In particular, the ‘social support system’ appeared to play a central role in the transfer of training. Of course, moderating effects were not found.
DiBella et al., (1996) selected six units within four companies for in-depth study: the production division of Electricite de France (EDF), the engineering department of FIAT Auto, two strategic planning groups in Motorola, and two functional groups at Mutual Investment Corporation. Several criteria were used in selecting these sites. First, they wanted to study both service and manufacturing settings and both European and American firms. They chose two sites where they had access to very senior management and two where they could study organisational units at lower levels. Their study gave the data on how learning took place in four organisations, what gets learned, and the factors and processes that facilitated or impeded learning. Seven orientations for describing organisational learning capability and understanding learning styles were identified. Each of these orientations was conceived as a bi-polar continuum that reflected learning processes.

Knowledge source was defined as the extent to which an organisation preferred to develop ‘new knowledge’ internally versus the extent to which it was more likely to seek inspiration in ideas developed externally. Product-process focus referred to a preference for the accumulation of knowledge related to ‘product and service outcomes’ versus preference to invest in knowledge about basic processes that support products. Documentation mode referred to attitudes as to what constituted knowledge and to the repositories of knowledge that were supported. Dissemination mode pertained to the difference between establishing an atmosphere in which learning evolved and one in which a more structured, controlled approach was responsible for inducing learning. Learning focus had to do with whether leaning was concentrated on methods and tools to improve what
was already being done versus testing the assumptions underlying what was being done. *Value-chain focus* indicated which functional, core competencies were valued and supported. *Skill development focus* involved the orientation towards ‘individual’ versus ‘collective learning’. Organisational learning might be increased by building on existing capabilities or developing new ones. The latter involved a ‘change in culture’; the former involved ‘improving current capabilities’. Organisations could enhance their learning capability through either approach.

**Tennenbaum (1997)** described both conceptually and empirically, how salient aspects of an organisation’s work environment could decide whether continuous learning would occur. He surveyed over 500 people in seven organisations in the USA. The survey results, coupled with data from diagnostic interviews, revealed that each organisation had a unique learning profile and relied on different sources of learning to develop individual competencies. Those organisations with stronger learning environments appeared to demonstrate greater organisational effectiveness. His study identified the key elements of the effective learning environment such as: awareness of big picture, opportunity to learn, tolerating mistakes, accountability/high performance expectations, openness to new ideas and change, policies and practices supporting training, supervisor and co-worker support, and handling situational constraints. Finally he offered the following concluding observations based on his study:

- Continuous learning appears to be related to organisational effectiveness.
- Training need not be the primary source of learning, and more training is not necessarily better, but training can be an effective part of continuous learning.
• Quality and appropriateness of the training, the supportiveness of the work environment, and the use of appropriate training policies and practices determine how well training contributes to continuous learning.

• “Nontraining” options for development are essential for continuous learning.

• Organisations that inhibit the connection between learning and application fail to benefit from their investment in employee development.

• Supervisors play the key role in enhancing or hindering continuous learning.

• There is not one ‘best’ way to enhance continuous learning – it depends on a variety of factors.

• Organisations must periodically diagnose their learning environments.

Ismail et al., (2002) studied the organisational creative climate, learning organisation culture, and their contributions towards innovation within a corporate organisation. They took a sample of forty respondents from three major levels of employment namely, top/senior management, middle/lower management/supervisory, and the technical/administrative support staff in Malaysia. Their studies on ‘innovation’ suggested that ‘organisational climate for creativity’ would play an important role and was a predictor for innovation. However, lately, the presence of ‘learning culture’ in organisation would explain a considerable influencing effect on innovation too. This case study tried to examine the influence of both those variables, separately and simultaneously, on innovation and to determine
which one of the two could be a better predictor for innovation. The results of the study indicated that both learning culture and creative climate simultaneously had significant contribution of 75.8 per cent (F=4.055, P=.001) to the observed variances in the innovation. However, when analysed separately, the ‘organisational creative climate factors’ did not have any influence on innovation, while the learning organisation dimensions did. The results of the study also found that two learning organisation dimensions of ‘systems connection’ and ‘continuous learning’ had significantly high ‘predictive powers’ on ‘innovation’ occurring within the case organisation as compared to the other five learning dimensions such as: dialogue and inquiry; team learning; embedded systems; empowerment and leadership.

Alavi et al., (2002) conducted a quasi-experimental field study to investigate the relative learning effectiveness of two collaborative distributed learning (DL) environments in the context of an executive development programme delivered through a major state university of U.S.A. Two hundred and six executives from a large federal agency participated in the study. The total sample included 121 males and 85 females. They also adopted a framework of hierarchical characteristics of group support system (GSS) technologies, outlined by DeSanctis and Gallupe (1987), as the basis for characterising the two DL environments. One DL environment employed a simple e-mail listserv capability, while the other used a sophisticated GSS. Interestingly, the learning outcome of the e-mail environment was higher than the learning outcomes of the more sophisticated GSS environment. The post-hoc analysis of the electronic messages indicated that the students in groups using the e-mail system
exchanged a higher percentage of messages related to the learning task. The sophisticated GSS users exchanged a higher level of technology ‘sense-making’ messages. No significant difference was observed in the students’ satisfaction with learning process under the two DL environment.

**Thompson & Kahnweiler (2002)** conducted a research with the primary goal of exploring Schein’s theory (1992) of ‘organisational learning culture’ (OLC) and its implied relationship to ‘employee participation in decision making’. Qualitative data was used to rate four organisations on the characteristics of OLC, and quantitative data on participation in decision making were collected from 97 rank-and-file employees across these four organisations. Out of the four organisations selected for the study, three were global Fortune 100 companies in service industries and the fourth was a large U. S. manufacturing company. Results of a regression analysis did not strongly support this proposal, indicating that there was not a significant predictive value of participation in decision making on OLC. The effect on the degree of learning or non-learning in an organisational culture might depend on the types of decisions in which employees were involved. So, practitioners should look carefully at the type of organisation, the nature of the problem, strategic goals of the organisation, who is involved in the decision making, and a host of other issues. In essence, the context of these variables is critical; the variables are functioning in a system, not a vacuum.

**Maria & Watkins (2003)** examined the relationship between organisational members’ perception of learning culture and the concerns about the innovation, and the influence of these factors on the use of one innovation (ISO 9000) in the Malaysian public sector. Their study was
guided by the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord 1987) and the dimensions of the learning organisation (Watkins & Marsick 1993, 1996b). The study involved 628 people from eleven government agencies that had been using the new system for at least a year. The study provided a model for operationalising the assertions and theories of both organisational development and learning organisation scholars, especially that a more ‘adaptive learning-oriented culture’ would facilitate the implementation of change. The examination of learning culture facilitated the understanding of how members within the organisation perceived their learning culture, and subsequently its relationship to their use of the innovation. The analysis of concerns illustrated the ‘fit’ between the ‘innovation’ and ‘feelings and perceptions of the individual members’ about the innovation. On an individual organisational basis, the regression analyses showed that the model was able to explain the variance in use of innovation in each organisation. However, a comparison of regression weights across the organisations told a very different story. The results showed that the combination of variables that explained the use of innovation varied radically from organisation to organisation. The findings raised questions about appropriate levels of analyses for such studies. The study suggested that theories that tried to explain ‘organisational innovation implementation’ be tested across organisations and take into account ‘organisational context’. Otherwise, they could lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Clarke (2005) studied the importance of developing an ‘appropriate learning environment’ in order to foster workplace learning as it was dominating organisational agendas. Yet, much of the literature often lacks empirical support to underpin those conditions suggested as comprising an
effective learning climate or suffers conceptually from failing to specify more clearly the nature of workplace learning. As a result, it was difficult to explain ‘how or why’ differing aspects of an organisation’s learning environment should influence particular learning outcomes. In order to examine relationships between the learning environment conditions and workplace learning outcomes, Clarke (2005) obtained data from a national survey of specialist palliative care healthcare organisations (hospices) in the UK. His findings demonstrated that (1) a supportive training and development infrastructure, (2) empowerment and effective communication, (3) opportunities for reflection and job challenge, and (4) opportunities for formal and informal learning were identified with different types of learning outcomes associated with either workplace learning or training. The results suggested that, "dependent on the types of learning outcomes desired by organisations, different aspects of the workplace environment were likely to be important in fostering an effective learning climate."

Halttunen & Jarvelin (2005) focused their study on the assessment of learning outcomes in an experimental, but naturalistic, learning environment compared to more traditional instruction. In order to design information retrieval (IR) learning environments and instruction, it is important to explore learning outcomes of different pedagogical solutions. Learning outcomes had seldom been evaluated in IR instruction. The researchers selected 57 participants out of 120 students of an introductory course on IR in the Department of Information Studies, University of Tampere, Finland and the analyses illustrated their 'learning outcomes' regarding both conceptual change and development of IR skill. Concept mapping of student essays was used to analyse conceptual change, and log-
files of search exercises provided data for performance assessment. Students in the experimental learning environment changed their conceptions more regarding linguistic aspects of IR and paid more emphasis on planning and management of search process. Performance assessment indicated that anchored instruction and scaffolding with an instructional tool, the IR Game, with performance feedback enabled students to construct queries with fewer semantic knowledge errors also in operational IR systems.

INDIAN STUDIES

Most of the Indian research studies in this field are concentrating more on organisation culture, organisation learning culture, organisational climate and work culture, experiential learning cycle, work climate and HRD climate. There are 8 research studies in this category.

Rao & Srinivasan (2001) examined the differences in perceived organisational culture between executives working in the government and private sector. By using a structured measure, data were collected from subjects comprising 110 from the private sector and 95 from the government organisations. Statistical test revealed significant differences in eight of the ten dimensions of organisational culture. The findings of the study confirmed that organisational culture was perceived more strongly in private sector compared to the government sector. The recent changes in the Indian economy necessitated the government sector organisations to gear up and perform commercially, beyond the social objectives. Since culture tended to have impact on organisational performance, the government sector organisations should change their culture in the direction to meet the challenges emerging from the changing scenario in the backdrop of
liberalisation and globalisation. The encouragement for creativity and adaptability in the private sector was to be emulated by the government sector to foster a knowledge sharing culture to develop entrepreneurship in their organisations. Further research on organisational culture should explore for cultural variation across firms, industries and undertakings, in both the private and government sectors.

Giri & Chaudhury (2004) made an attempt to analyse the nature of 'organisational climate' and the type of 'work culture' prevailing in the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO). The NALCO experience proved that the general notion about the public sector units in respect of work culture was to a large extent imaginary. The company, like most other public sector units, had been constantly striving for enhancing its competitiveness with a focus on the core competencies of managing human resources (career advancement, performance management, rewards management, employment relations, etc.), customer satisfaction and profitability. The organisation had succeeded in its endeavours. The findings of the study indicated that the prevalence of a 'positive work culture,' which appeared to be largely dependent on the nature of organisational climate prevailing in the organisation was one of the most significant success 'mantras' of NALCO.

Agarwal & Bose (2004) examined the relationship between certain aspects of the work climate that may be created with the perception of 'procedural justice' in public and private sector Indian organisations and role efficacy. It was hypothesised that an organisation’s work climate that was participative, innovation-supportive and characterised by interpersonal trust
would be positively related with members’ perception of their organisation’s human resource practices as procedurally ‘fair’. It was further hypothesised that such perceptions of ‘procedural fairness’ would be positively related with ‘role efficacy’ among organisational members. The study was conducted on a sample of 205 managerial and supervisory personnel from two private sector and two public sector manufacturing organisations in North India. The results revealed that a climate that provided system-support for innovation, interpersonal trust between the superior and the subordinate, and participation in decision-making and member welfare significantly predicted perceptions of procedural fairness in the human resource practices of both the private and public sector organisations. In addition, perceptions of procedural fairness were also positively predictive of members’ role efficacy in both the types of organisations. Findings indicated that irrespective of the form of the organisation, management’s attempt to develop the role efficacy of members required the creation of positive work environment which enabled members to perceive as ‘fair’ the procedures used for implementing human resource decisions.

According to Abraham & Priya (2004), organisation culture is referred to a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguished the organisation from the other organisation. This system of ‘shared meaning’ was, on the closer examination, a set of key characteristics that the organisation valued. ‘Work culture’ was defined as a system of ‘shared values,’ which resulted in high performance in organisation. Organisation culture is like the blood flow in the human system that connects and energises the various internal organs. Changes made in the subsystems would be effective only if they were compatible with the organisation
culture. As small or incremental changes were made in organisation, they needed to be turned to its overall work culture. This study brought out the results of a sample study of an organisation - Roots Industries Limited (RIL) located at Ganapathi, Coimbatore, on relationship between ‘work culture and organisation culture’.

RIL started its operation in the year 1970, as a small company in the name of American Auto Service. RIL has emerged as the eleventh largest electronic horn manufacturing company in the world. The study concluded that relationship between organisation culture and work culture enabled the organisation to be successful in all its activities. It was also concluded that work culture was predicted by organisation culture in an organisation. The various findings of the study provided an insight to the managers to implement changes to provide a conducive and congenial culture in the organisation for healthy relationship.

Panda & Gupta (2005) analysed that organisational culture could be conceived and deciphered in various ways. The authors had conceptualised organisational culture from a cognitive perspective. The strength of a culture had been measured on the basis of ‘peer-induced cognitive pressure,’ elicited through ‘subjective-interpretive attribution process’ by administering a questionnaire in a high-tech Indo-American joint venture located in India. Hi-tech Communication Limited (HICOM) was a joint venture between US-based Hi-tech Network System and its Indian Partner Communication Limited. It was incorporated in 1992. HICOM had charted a mission to become a leader in providing managed integrated networking solutions for its enterprise customers. This organisation was seen in India as a successful
organisation in its industry segment. Statistical analysis of the responses made it possible to assess the strength of organisational culture by measuring the degree of ‘peer-induced cognitive pressure (PICP)’ on eight core organisational values identified in this study. Further, paired t-tests helped in understanding the differential pressure experienced by organisational members with respect to these organisational values. On the basis of the findings related to PICP, the authors had found that PICP was high with respect to organisational values that were congruent with the prevailing socio-cultural values compared to organisational values that were not.

This study looked into ‘how the behaviour of the organisational members got influenced by their perception about the attitudes and the behaviour of their colleagues’ by measuring the PICP. The study was designed to explore the strength of an organisation culture based on the ‘cognitive perspective’. It had the usual limitations of a case study. Inspite of that, it provided an insight into how the culture of an organisation could be studied from a cognitive perspective. Another limitation of this study was that data were collected from only one location, New Delhi.

Gupta & Singhal (2006) were of the view that till date there were hardly any research conducted on the experiential learning cycle (ELC) trainings and studying its effectiveness. The present study was carried out in one randomly selected Panchayat Samiti, namely, “Girwa” of district Udaipur. The selection of villages was done purposively. Total 5 villages were selected for benchmark and experimentation. Of these 5 villages, one village was kept as a control group, while 4 villages were selected for experimenting different training approaches.
In this study, ELC training approach was compared with so called conventional training approach — institutional and on-farm situations. ELC developed by Mc Caffery (1986), was proven in this study. ELC is a detailed model of “learning by doing” and clarifies what extension workers and farmers do in a training situation to produce lasting learnings. It allows the participants to manage and share responsibilities for their “learning” with trainers. Research showed that in ELC when the learners were provided opportunities to engage in different activities, reviewed these activities critically, drew some useful insight from the analysis and applied the result in a practical situation, maximum learning took place. It was important that each of the stage in a training session be conducted as specified for learning to occur. The findings revealed that ELC training approach was the most effective approach in improving the knowledge of women because of its ‘participatory’ nature, repetition of messages, learning by doing, use of small/large group exercises, etc., and suggested its use profoundly for the field functionaries.

Thus, Gupta & Singhal (2006) concluded that as far as possible ELC trainings should be organised. But there were functional problems in using this approach, i.e., the trained personnel were required to conduct the training effectively, competency was needed in planning and conducting the ELC sessions, advance preparations were needed, more resources were required, it was more time consuming, and costly, etc. Efforts should be made to make the conventional trainings effective by using a variety of training methods, active learner’s involvement through question answer sessions, repeating/highlighting the main points, giving back-home exercises to the learner, follow-up of the trainings, etc. Further, if the learner was
educated then the reading material, viz, folder, leaflet could be distributed so that they could refer and read them whenever needed. The trainings should also be organised in consultation with farm women as per their convenience and interest, so that they could participate whole heartedly in the training programmes. More learner oriented methods should be used, group work should be encouraged during training as the farm women learnt many new skills through friends and neighbours and training styles should be according to the “learning styles” of the participants.

Bhatnagar (2006) Attempted to measure organisational learning capability (OLC) in Indian Industry, using a standard questionnaire (Ramnarayan, 1996). The data were collected from a sample of 600+ managers randomly drawn from Indian industry, which includes pharmaceutical, I.T., telecom, media, dairy, power and the banking sector, to name a few. The current study reported significant correlations between age and hierarchical level of managers and OLC. One way ANOVA for firm size, and firm type (technology as well as ownership) showed a significant difference in OLC, while ‘organisational life cycle’ stage was not significant.

In conclusion, Bhatnagar (2006) stated that the current study lends credence to measuring OLC in Indian organisations, looking at both managerial and firm’s characteristics that enhance OLC, nature of ownership and type of industry, organisational life cycle stage and organisational size along with demographic variables of age, gender, HR or line manager. No other study in India had tried to empirically associate the above variables with OLC, though conceptual linkages were present. Limitations of research
exists as the study focused only on cross-sectional data. Future studies should look at longitudinal data and evolve case studies for OLC. Future research studies should explore different samples across different cultures.

Purang (2006) stated that most researchers agreed that a congenial HRD climate was extremely important for the ultimate achievement of the business goals. It was a phenomenon experienced by employees and often referred to by expressions like ‘environment,’ ‘atmosphere’ and so on. Climate at the individual level was a summary perception of the organisation’s work environment that was descriptive rather than evaluative in nature. Another approach to climate was the cultural approach, which proposed that climate arises from intersubjectivity of members as they interact within a context established by an organisation’s culture. In the Indian context, ‘type of organisation’ influenced the culture prevalent in the organisation. Since climate was an outcome of culture, this study attempted to compare the HRD climate perceptions of public, private and multinational organisations. The study compared the perceptions of middle level managers from five organisations; two private sector, two public sector and one multinational organisation on ten dimensions of HRD climate. The study used the survey research method for data collection. Overall 247 middle level managers responded from all the five organisations.

This study showed that the employee’s perception regarding the HRD climate was significantly better in the ‘private sector’ and ‘multinational organisations’ in comparison to the public sector organisations. Since the climate perception influenced the satisfaction, performance and motivation levels of employees, it was an important aspect which organisations could
not afford to ignore. It was therefore very important for public sector organisations to focus on improving the HRD climate prevalent in their organisations. These organisations should focus on various HR policies and practices like encouraging active employee involvement and interaction in the day-to-day functioning of the organisation, giving information to the human resources regarding their potentials. Focus needed to be given to 'developmental interventions' and training in the organisations that helped the employees grow and achieve greater efficiency. Appraisal and reward mechanisms should be such that make the employees feel safe, happy and help develop their potentials to the maximum. Thus, to improve the productivity of the employees in the organisation it was important to focus on various aspects of the HRD climate prevalent in the organisation.

CONCLUSION

The research in the domain of individual, team and organisational learning is still in its infancy stage. Most of the earlier research contributions are either descriptive or prescriptive or conceptual in nature, and a few of them are based on anecdotal evidences rather than rigorous research findings and a thorough theoretical grounding. By and large, previous researchers relied mostly on qualitative-empirical research by employing either single or multiple case study research methodology.

In total, 49 research studies were identified and critically examined from the view point of present study. Out of them, 41 studies (83.7%) were carried out abroad and only 8 studies (16.3%) had Indian origin. More often than not, these studies were disintegrated with a risk of 'missing the wood for trees!' A careful analysis of the earlier research revealed that the
previous researchers mainly focused on learning *levels* (individual, team and organisation) or learning *entity* (learning organisations) or the learning *context* (learning culture, environment and outcomes) without ideological underpinnings and a holistic context. In fact, the domain of ‘learning’ is multi-dimensional, multicultural, and multidisciplinary in nature. Accordingly, it presents a kaleidoscopic view of a highly complex and dynamic process of unlearning, relearning and commitment to the process of lifelong learning. As a prerequisite condition, every individual, team and organisation must be in a position to ‘change to learn’, ‘learn to change’ and ‘learn to learn’ with a view to earning and sustaining competitive advantage. All said and done, learning is both a process and outcome, and it is certainly context-specific in nature.
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