From One to Many:
an Exploration of the Links between Management Development and Organisational Learning

By

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A thesis presented to the University of Western Sydney in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce (Honours)

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© Patrick J McGirr
This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my late mother-in-law Janice Muldoon. Janice passed away in 2008 after a long fight with renal failure.

Janice filled a Cathedral on her passing because of her selfless sacrifice and cheerfulness in the face of adversity.

She was known to love unconditionally. She supported my wife Jane and me, and the grandchildren, through every step of the last 20 years. She instilled in us all her love of music and nature. Her faith was a practical one based in loving others without judgement.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in part or in full, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, in a climate of rapid change, a steady increase in expenditure on management development programs has been attributed to its perceived potential to address organisational needs. A key premise is that management development programs add to organisational learning. However, there is a lack of evidence to support that management development and organisational learning are linked. This Master Honours research investigates a management development program, and contrasts the assumptions made by the designers of that program with those held in the organisational learning literature in order to establish if there are some links. The purpose is to establish the extent to which the management development design overlaps with organisational learning philosophy, in preparation for future PhD research.

The research aims to identify whether the designers of a management development program hold implicit beliefs about knowledge and learning that impact on the program design and have implications for organisational learning.

Three themes are identified through a review of the management development literature, encompassing both traditional and more recent approaches in the field. These three themes are termed ‘functional/performance’, ‘context/contingent’ and ‘learning/process’. Each is based on distinguishable sets of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning processes. The major learning perspectives in the organisational learning literature are then mapped using existing meta-reviews, and are compared with each of the three themes derived from the management development literature. Some key incongruities between the two bodies of literature are identified. The proposition is that if any similar incongruence is identified in the design of an actual management development program, there would be implications for both the design of the learning activities and sequences, and the extent to which that program is linked to organisational learning.

This qualitative research aims to develop a deep understanding of the assumptions about knowledge and learning held by the designers of a management development
program. Such an understanding is pivotal to identifying the influence of these assumptions on the design of management development interventions. The program design and implementation is considered to have potential implications for organisational learning. Additional to a close examination of documentation, such as program manuals and trainee development plans, the research methods include semi-structured interviews with 6 program designers and 5 trainees. Texts and transcripts are examined to allow matching of themes identified in the literature and the exploration of any other emergent themes. The methods selected enable the researcher to closely examine linkages between management development and organisational learning in the context of a management development program in health.

Traditional management development literature predominantly privileges learning theories based on *individual* behavioural and *individual* cognitive development. This differs from the contemporary organisational learning literature which has a greater emphasis on constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives of learning. There are significant gaps between the two bodies of literature with regard to the treatment of individual and social learning perspectives. It is not clear if and how individual behavioural change translates into collective behavioural change. This gap is found to be mirrored in practice by the designers of the management training program within the Health Services context. From a theoretical and practical perspective, these differences have implications for program implementation and the program’s links to organisational learning. The specific program studied is not optimally designed to link to organisational learning as defined in the organisational learning literature. Since the organisational learning literature has extensively researched actual learning processes within organisations this can be considered a deficiency.

Potential opportunities for improved intervention design are identified. These include critical analysis of theory, reflecting on workplace project/action-learning experiences, applying ideas within a work context, supplemented with partnering or mentoring by experienced practitioners coupled with the use of reflective journals. These approaches use a combination of conceptual and practical pedagogical approaches drawing on both cognitive and constructivist learning theory.
The research highlights the possibility that organisational learning outcomes may be enhanced with program interventions that include the use of learning practices embedded in work settings. Such program designs would focus on establishing conditions or activities that help individuals to continually learn within the context. The research study highlights a gap in the management literature at the moment. This is considered to be a potentially fruitful area of further inquiry in the field of management development and education.
Organisations spend many resources on management development. A key premise is that management development programs add to organisational learning. However, the literature is lacking in evidence to suggest that management development and organisational learning are linked. This Master Honours research investigates the underlying assumptions of an existing management development program, and contrasts the assumptions made by the designers of the program with organisational learning literature to establish if there is a link. The purpose is to establish the extent to which management development design values overlap with organisational learning philosophy, in preparation for future PhD research.

This chapter first provides a background to the research. Then it defines the research problem and identifies contributions of the study. This is followed by an outline of the research objectives and methods for the study. Finally, it will provide an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the research; overview of the field of study and definitions

This thesis explores the links between management development and organisational learning. The literature on management development has disciplinary origins which are quite distinct from those of organisational learning. The definition of management development adopted for this study is that management development is any planned intervention aimed to improve a manager’s ability to lead or manage and/or achieve performance improvements within the work context. Fox (1997) distinguishes this from management education which is more focussed on developing “analytical and critical skills in the academic disciplines related to management” (p22). Management development is largely delivered by market mechanisms whereas management education is generally delivered in the public sector in the Australian context. Understanding the processes through which organisations learn and adapt is a central theme in the organisational learning literature (Azmi 2008; Raz
and Faldon 2005; Schulz 2008). It is defined as a “process of change in individual and shared thought and action, which is affected by, and embedded in the institutions of the organisation” (Vera and Crossan 2003, p123). How the individual manager’s learning is linked to organisational learning is not explicitly discussed in much of the management development literature. Also it is not known the extent to which the above two theoretical areas overlap.

1.1.1 Management development background

In a meta-review of the management development literature, Cullen and Turnbull (2005) have noted that different research paradigms have emerged since the 1990’s. The most recent to emerge was referred to as management learning and it has developed alongside the more traditional or orthodox approach to management development. Traditional management development primarily emphasises improving the functional performance of individual managers (Garavan et al. 1999). Interventions are often conducted independent of the context but may include a component which involves application on the job. The focus is more on individual knowledge or skill acquisition influenced by individual cognitive or behavioural theories of learning. This implies a “unilateral process of information transfer from a knowledgeable source to a target lacking that information” (Raz and Faldon 2005). Traditional approaches to management development remain the most common way that management development is conducted. In the review of the literature in Chapter 2 the traditional management development paradigm was found to contain two major themes. In this thesis these are termed the functional/performance and context/contingent themes. The functional/performance theme places emphasis on the acquisition of explicit knowledge about good management practice whereas the context/contingent theme places emphasis on the removal of barriers to the application of knowledge in the organisational context.

In contrast, the newer management learning paradigm focuses on “the whole range of professional attempts to manage learning, including the narrower case of learning to manage” (Fox 1997, p25). It is a more descriptive and interpretive research paradigm which explores situated (social) learning that occurs in the work context. There is an influence from learning theories such as constructivism (Chiva and
Alegre 2005). Any learning is considered to be “contingent on social interaction within specific socio-cultural settings” (Raz and Faldon 2005, p166). Therefore, the management learning paradigm provides a third theme in the management development literature, which is termed ‘learning/process’ in this thesis. This theme will also be explored in Chapter 2.

The two research paradigms identified above represent different underpinning assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning. It is important to identify these different underlying sets of assumptions because they may have implications for the design of any intervention and the outcomes likely to occur. This is explored in detail in Chapter 2.

1.1.2 Organisational learning background

Organisational learning as a concept has undergone considerable development over several decades with a significant upsurge in publications from the 1990’s onwards (Easterby-Smith 1997). Chiva and Alegre (2005) argue that the field has developed around two main perspectives, one being described as “cognitive” (influenced in its core assumptions by individual oriented psychology and individual learning theory) and the other a more “social perspective” based more on social learning theory and sociology (p51). This view is supported by other leading writers in the field (Easterby-Smith et al. 2000; Cook and Brown 1999; Gherardi 2001, 2000). The current trend is for many more publications in the latter social perspective (Antonacopoulou 1999; Antonacopoulou and Chiva 2007; Blackler 2004; Brown and Duguid 1991; Chiva and Alegre, 2005; Cook and Yanow, 1993; Elkjaer, 2003, 2005; Fenwick 2006; Lave and Wenger 1991; Shultz 2008; Weick 1991, 2001). In this latter perspective learning is seen as part of a collective process within a social system. Learning occurs in a social context as a consequence of both individual and collective learning processes. Organisational learning is no longer viewed as the sum of individual learning (Kim 1993; Schulz 2008; Ulrich and Jick 1993). Interest is increasing in how individuals learn through and in practice (Fenwick 2006, 2008). This descriptive and interpretive research on how organisational learning occurs in the work context is relevant for the design of any management development intervention.
1.1.3 Commonalities between management development and organisational learning

Individual, group and collective learning processes have increasingly been seen as potentially relevant to the whole pursuit of flexibility and adaptability and innovation in organisations (Hayes and Allinson 1998; Hayes, 2007; Taylor et al. 2002). These themes have increasingly been reflected in the intended outcomes for management development interventions because of the perceived strategic benefits for organisations (Cairns 1998; Canon 1995; Hopfl and Davies 1995; Lane and Robinson 1995; McClelland, 1994; Osbaldeston and Barham 1992; Ready et al. 1994; Trim 2004). It also represents the strongest emergent theme in contemporary organisational learning literature, as outlined above. The commonality is in terms of the desired outcomes but the divergence is in how these may be achieved.

1.1.4 Differences between management development and organisational learning

Contemporary organisational learning literature reflects an increased questioning of the dominant model of ‘learners’ as individuals processing information and a shift in focus toward “an image of learners as social beings who construct their understanding and learn from social interaction within specific socio-cultural settings” (Gherardi et al. 1998, p275). This appears to contrast with the predominant emphasis in traditional management development literature, which is more focussed on the improvement of the ‘functional performance’ of individual managers with the purpose of building the firm’s competitive advantage (Garavan et al. 1999).

The above overview of the two bodies of literature has provided evidence that some important differences exist in the implicit assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning in each. This is despite the language on purported outcomes in each body of work sounding increasingly similar.
1.1.5 Identification of the gap in the literature

The focus of this research is on the link between management development and organisational learning. This link bridges a divide in the literature. Differences exist between management development and organisational learning based on differences in disciplinary background. These differences reflect different worldviews on the nature of knowledge and learning, the methodologies used and the focus of the research. The different views could have implications for the design of the intervention and the achievement of organisational learning. This provides a rationale for the selection of the research problem to be investigated.

1.2 Research problem, research issues and contributions. The research problem

The research problem is that, whilst there is some overlap between management development and organisational learning, it is unclear how the two concepts are linked. To test this, this research identifies whether the designers of a management development program make implicit assumptions about learning that have impacted on the program design and implementation, in ways which have implications for organisational learning.

The designers of management development programs, consciously or not, have certain views about how people learn, what skills and attitudes they need and how they might apply these in the workplace. It is suggested these views can influence the design of the management development intervention, the type of learning tasks selected and the processes established for applying learning in the workplace. These choices may have implications for any organisational learning that might occur as an outcome of the intervention.
1.2.1 Research objectives

This research aimed to identify the assumptions held by the designers of a management training program in a health services context. Of particular interest were any assumptions held by the program designers about the nature of knowledge or how people learn either individually or collectively.

This broad aim was to be achieved by the following research objectives:

1. to identify the broad categories of assumptions about learning and knowledge (to be referred to herein as ‘paradigms’) that exist within the management development literature;

2. to discuss some relevant theoretical and practical implications of each paradigm for organisational learning;

3. to identify the assumptions about knowledge, skills and learning processes held by the designers (and for comparison, the trainees) of an actual management development program;

4. to explore the relationship between the paradigms held by the program designers and their particular approach to the design and implementation of the program and;

5. to discuss any implications of the findings for organisational learning.

In this study these objectives are operationalised by asking and answering the following research questions:

- What are the assumptions about knowledge and the nature of learning (paradigms) that can be identified within the management development literature?
• In what ways are the assumptions identified congruent or incongruent with the assumptions in organisational learning?

• What assumptions about knowledge and learning are held by the designers (and for comparison, the trainees) of an actual management development program?

• How have the assumptions held by the program designers affected their choices about program design or selection of learning processes in the program? and,

• What therefore were the links to organisational learning in practice?

These questions will be addressed in a specific context using a specific program within Health Services in New South Wales.

1.2.2 The research context

The study was undertaken by exploring a Management Training Program (MTP) under the auspice of the Australian College of Health Care Executives (ACHSE) (NSW Branch). The ACHSE is a peak body providing professional development programs for Executives in the Health Sector in New South Wales. The MTP is part of a 30-year commitment by the ACHSE to develop future practicing managers and executives specifically for the Health Sector. As the Program is funded by the Department of Health in NSW it represents a significant investment in Management Training. The MTP is a two year full-time work-based program with all aspects of trainee employment, field placement, administration and programme design and delivery coordinated by the ACHSE (NSW Branch). The trainees are employed full-time for two years and concurrently undertake a part-time two year Post-Graduate Diploma or Masters Degree in Health Services Management via distance education through Charles Sturt University (NSW). The Masters Program includes face-to-face access to tertiary lecturers at monthly study days at the ACHSE’s State Offices. In summary, the MTP delivers learning opportunities through three broad components; work placement, postgraduate studies and professional development at the College study days.
This program does not follow any obvious or single teaching and learning philosophy making it suitable for the nature of this study. There is ostensibly a mix of pedagogical approaches and learning philosophies embedded in the MTP design. Given the commitment to an extended work-based component spanning two years it is possible to explore any aspects of the design that may contribute to organisational learning. My own background is in management and management development in the health and human services sectors over a long period. I have developed a conviction that benefits could be derived in designing and implementing development interventions based on a deeper understanding of the individual and collective learning processes occurring within the organisational context.

1.2.3 Research Contribution

This research project provides an opportunity to make a contribution to the scholarly literature as it explored the available theory on management development and its consistency with the theoretical development within the more developed body of descriptive research, which is organisational learning. Examining the extent of the congruence between the two streams of literature, and a program in practice, has been justified on the basis that it was relatively immature field of research (Creswell 2003).

It was noted above that incongruencies were clearly inherent in different conceptualisations of learning and knowledge within the organisational learning literature and management development literature. Fenwich (2006) has noted that there is emerging interest in understanding the possibilities of combining the two seemingly incongruent views of learning in practice. The individual view of organisational learning is linked to individual psychological learning theories and a positivist epistemology. Fenwich argues that this fails to “capture the multiple modes of knowing in action as social actors interact” (2006, p287). Both Cook and Brown (1999) and Spender (1996, 2003) explore similar ideas centred on bridging different forms of knowledge in an action context to achieve the development of new knowledge or organisational learning (also see Blackler 2004). This line of inquiry remains at the cutting edge of research in the field of management learning and
organisational learning as well as educational psychology (see Fenwich 2008; McInerney 2005).

This research is a potential precursor to a PhD study that will provide further opportunities to make a contribution to the scholarly literature as it adds to theory on management development and its consistency with a more developed body of descriptive and interpretive research, organisational learning. This can also lead to the development of new practical models for management development intervention largely unexplored to date in the management development literature.

1.3 Justification of the research

The level of expenditure on management development arises partly from claims about what it can do in terms of its contribution to organisational learning. Management development has attracted significant investment globally estimated at as much as US $45 billion annually with about 75% of those funds going to programs run outside university-based business schools as in-house programs in workplace settings (Fulmer 1997, Long 2004). The costs of these programs are often from $100,000 to $250,000 representing a significant investment (Fulmer 1997; Clarke 1999; Long 2004). Issues relating to whether the programs are achieving their aims are of obvious importance to organisations given the level of investment.

Examining the extent of the congruence in the two streams of literature, and a program in practice, is justifiable as there is a general lack of descriptive theory on how management development contributes to organisational learning. By definition, descriptive research on organisational learning is not focused on prescriptions of how to enhance or improve learning in the workplace context. Therefore there is an inherent ‘gap’ between the theory and the practice. The gap of interest in this research is between the ‘practice’ of management development and the theory about learning processes within the context of organisations. A core purpose is to identify whether there is a problem with the linkages between the two worthy of further investigation.
1.4 Methodology

The epistemological stance for the inquiry was based on interpretivism (Schwandt 2003) and it is therefore using a qualitative methodology. The interpretivist point of view is that the researcher needs to grasp the *meaning* that “constitutes human actions” (Habermas 1970 cited Easterby-Smith 2002, p30). The viewpoint of this study was that it is possible to develop an understanding of the assumptions held by the designers of a management development programme. Developing such an understanding was seen as pivotal to examining how these assumptions impact on the design of the intervention. This could also have theoretical implications for organisational learning, deserving of further enquiry (analytical generalisation).

This (qualitative) methodology was considered the most applicable to the research project as it explored an area that has been relatively unexplored to date in the literature. As the research is focused on learning and the assumptions about learning held by the designers involved in the management training program it is appropriate to use a research methodology that can incorporate the designer’s perspectives.

1.4.1 Methods

The research methods selected focused on gathering qualitative data to increase the general understanding of the assumptions held by the key stakeholders (called ‘designers’ in this study) (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002). The methods included an analysis of available documentation on the program philosophy, structure and learning activities as well as transcripts from semi-structured interviews held with 85% of the program designers and a sample (10%) of the trainees. Six of the seven available members of the program steering committee were available for interview with the remainder not available due to work commitments. Five trainees self-selected for interview after a request for volunteers. The key design group were all members of the Steering Committee for the MTP and all were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. The Steering Committee monitors the effectiveness of the program, provides industry input into the program design, evaluates the program, reviews placements within the program, makes recommendations and provides feedback to the NSW State Branch Council of the ACHSE.
The data analysis was guided by themes identified in the literature, discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The data analysis was commenced using themes about learning identified in the management development literature. For example two key themes were improving the trainee’s functional knowledge and achieving more effective application of that knowledge within the organisational context (skill development). Themes grounded in the texts were identified such as those that reflected values and beliefs held by the program designers that could impact on programming decisions. Any other emergent themes based on particular decisions made during the implementation phase of the program were noted and discussed. These were found to reflect theories-in-use about learning as opposed to espoused theories (Argyris and Schon 1974). The semi-structured interview questions provided an opportunity for a deep exploration of the texts to see if there were key themes that matched the paradigms identified in the literature. These methods allowed close examination of some assumptions held by the program designers about the nature of knowledge and learning. These findings were analysed (Chapter 4) and this led to some conclusions about the potential implications for organisational learning.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The Thesis has five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter and has set the scene for this study. Chapter 2 provides a critical review of the literature in management development and makes comparisons with the organisational learning literature. It explores the underpinning assumptions about learning and knowledge in the management development literature as well as the main assumptions for organisational learning, a body of literature that has already been well mapped and explored in this way. A key purpose in Chapter 2 is to explore the extent of any incongruence between the assumptions about learning and knowledge in the two streams of literature and to explore any implications for the design and implementation of management development programs. Some key implications for organisational learning will be discussed. This provides the broad theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 3 provides the philosophical framework for the use of qualitative research. This underpins the rationale for the methods used for data collection and analysis.
This chapter also addresses the limitations in the construct of the study. Chapter 4 provides a data analysis of the interview data and a detailed discussion of the findings and the themes identified.

Chapters 5 presents conclusions and recommendations considering research issues, and any implications for theory, practice and further research.

1.6 Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1: Definition of Terms</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Term</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
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<td>Organisational Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management development</td>
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<td>Management Education</td>
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1.7 Delimitations of scope and key assumptions, with their justifications

The coverage of this study is limited to one training development programme run within the Area Health Services within NSW. This is because a key purpose of the research was to identify whether a problem existed that was worthy of further investigation at a higher level. This research project was not searching for fundamental laws or generalisable ‘truths’, but rather, sought to understand deeper elements of a specific program design in context.
The study covers the field of management development which needs to be distinguished from other literature focused on evaluation or workplace learning. The latter fields of inquiry are more based in research work undertaken within the field of Human Resources Development. Traditionally, management development as a body of literature has developed its own research traditions which have been outlined in detail in Chapter 2. Engestrom and Kerosuo (2007) found that research on management development largely developed in “relatively isolated niches” (p340). It has done so without much “comparative debate and collaboration” with other related disciplinary areas (p340). Clearly, opportunities exist for bridging these divides within the research communities but a detailed examination of other bodies of literature is beyond the scope of this study.

Given that the field of organisational learning has distinct disciplinary origins the research has focused more on contemporary research within the organisational learning literature. This is because a distinct trend has emerged in the last two decades within the literature of organisational learning which has redefined accepted understandings of organisational learning. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. New understandings of organisational learning have developed from descriptive and interpretive research which explores the so-called "natural" learning processes within organisations (Cullen and Turnbull 2005). This stream of descriptive research has emerged predominately from academic researchers (Dehler et al. 2001; Fenwick 2008; Fox 1997; Le Deist and Winterton 2005; Raz and Faldon 2005; Schulz 2008; VanVelsor and McCauley 2004).

1.8 Chapter summary

In this thesis further exploration of the implications of designer conception upon the efficacy of management development is undertaken. A key premise is that the design of a management development program will impact on the outcomes in terms of organisational learning. In particular, organisational learning may be compromised if incongruence exists between the assumptions about learning in the literature of management development and those held in the organisational learning literature. Therefore the underpinning assumptions about learning and knowledge
made by the designers need to be explored in detail and the implications for organisational learning examined.

The next Chapter (2) begins the more detailed examination of the management development literature and organisational learning theory and the key assumptions about the nature of learning and knowledge.
2.1 Introduction

This research examines the relationship between the underpinning assumptions about learning and knowledge, the learning processes proposed for a management development intervention and the potential implications for organisational learning. This Chapter will provide a framework for addressing the question “do the designers of a management development program hold implicit assumptions about knowledge and learning that impact on their program design and have implications for organisational learning?”

Key underlying assumptions about learning and the nature of knowledge in the management development and organisational learning literatures are identified. Any similarities and incongruities are discussed and analysed in terms of implications for program design and organisational learning.

First, the key concepts of knowledge and organisational learning are outlined. Second, in the management development and management learning literatures, an outline of three themes is provided where each theme is based a different research focus. The traditional paradigm provides two distinct themes, termed ‘functional/performance’ and ‘context/contingent’, while the management learning paradigm provides the third theme, which is termed ‘learning/process’. Each paradigm is based on a different set of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning. Kuhn established that when different paradigms are based on different epistemologies, language use, research methodology and demands on scientific reliability they may be distinguished from each other and can be difficult to bridge. (Kuhn 1962 cited Schulz 2008).

Third, an analysis of the implications of each theme for choice of program content and learning processes is conducted. For example, the functional/performance theme
places emphasis on the acquisition of explicit knowledge about good management practice whereas the context/contingent theme places emphasis on the removal of barriers to the application of knowledge in the organisational context. Each may have different implications for how the learning intervention is designed.

2.2 How is knowledge defined in this thesis?

Newell et al. (2002) suggest two perspectives with regard to the question “what is knowledge?” (p81). Firstly, a structural perspective considers knowledge to be a discrete cognitive entity, largely static and objective, which can be recognised, stored and utilised in a managed way (Brown et al. 2003). It is presumed that individuals receive and develop knowledge in a uniform and predictable way.

In contrast, a processual or constructivist perspective of learning and knowledge sees the individual as having a unique view of the world that is framed by their perceptions, experiences and understandings (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Knowledge is embedded in practice, action and social relationships. It is created through social processes and the interplay between individuals and the collective (Newell et al. 2002). Constructivism is a perspective that holds that knowledge is co-constructed in social contexts, where learners are not passive receivers of information, but active constructors of meaning (Cullen 1999). Ortony (1993) presents the constructivist approach as one where knowledge comes from the interaction of information and the individual’s pre-existing knowledge, within a context.

This distinction between the structural and processual approaches is important because it frames our views on learning. If we conceive of knowledge as structural we view learning as a process of acquiring information. On the other hand if we view knowledge as processual we view learning as a process where the learner actively constructs meanings.

In order to compare and contrast organisational learning and management development literature, the next section first discusses each body of literature separately, starting with a review of the organisational learning literature.
2.3 Review of the organisational learning literature

A review of 50 leading peer-referenced journal articles and texts on organisational learning found this literature to be well mapped by its leading exponents. It is not the intention here to provide a meta-review of all of this work (for meta-reviews see Dodgson 1993; Easterby-Smith 1997; Easterby-Smith et al. 2000). Rather, an overview of the major perspectives in the literature and the key debates and themes that have emerged is provided, particularly those regarding the underpinning assumptions about learning and knowledge which are central to the research problem. The purpose of this literature review is to highlight the different research perspectives, rather than comprehensively map all of the organisational learning literature from a chronological or a historical perspective.

2.3.1 The six ontological disciplines of organisational learning

Easterby-Smith (1997) identified six academic disciplines in organisational learning by categorising academic researchers into different disciplines focusing on their ontological position with regards to the “social phenomena that are considered to be the core of organizational learning” (p1086). This is a potential key to unlocking some differing assumptions about how researchers view the nature of organisations and how that influences their focus of inquiry. The disciplines represent the different foci of inquiry of the researcher as illustrated in Table 2.1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Key Research Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Psychology and OD</td>
<td>Human development</td>
<td>Cognitive organisation; development; communication and dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Management science</td>
<td>Information processing</td>
<td>Knowledge; memory; feedback; error correction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Organisation theory</td>
<td>Social structures</td>
<td>Effects of power and hierarchy; conflict of interest; ideology and rhetoric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Strategy</td>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>Organisation/environment interface; learning between organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Production management</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Learning curves and productivity; designed to production times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Cultural anthropology</td>
<td>Meaning systems</td>
<td>Culture as enabler of organisational learning; values and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As outlined in Table 2.1, each of the six disciplines has a unique disciplinary focus. If an author views an organisation as an entity that gathers and processes information then the research focus will be on the potential of the organisation to learn through feedback or how people filter information. In contrast, if a researcher’s view is of an organisation as a social system then the focus will most likely be on learning within a social context and the process of construction of knowledge within that context.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1998) recognise that there are some recurrent debates across the disciplines. One related to this research is a concern whether organisational learning is viewed from an individual/cognitive perspective or as a social/cultural process. Of relevance for this research is the author’s contention that intervention methods are likely to vary according to the view on learning adopted by the researcher. However Easterby-Smith et al. do not explore these issues in depth as their purpose was primarily to argue that the field of organisational learning is multidisciplinary and to identify future research possibilities. The next section further clarifies some underpinning assumptions that have been identified in the organisational learning literature. These assumptions can be categorised into four psychological perspectives underpinning organisational learning, as is discussed next.
2.3.2 Four perspectives of organisational learning

DeFillipi and Ornstein (2003) reviewed over 70 articles spanning 15 years of organisational learning literature and inductively categorised them into four broad perspectives on organisational learning. The author’s method was to identify alternate psychological perspectives underpinning organisational learning.

DeFillipi and Ornstein’s findings were that four perspectives exist within the organisational learning literature:

1) a social construction perspective;
2) an information processing perspective;
3) a behavioural-evolutionary perspective and,
4) an applied learning perspective.

First, the social construction perspective emphasises the social dimensions of organisational learning and behaviour. Easterby-Smith’s sociology and organisation theory and cultural anthropology perspectives have similarities with this perspective. DeFillipi and Ornstein (2003) point out that this perspective draws on processual views of knowledge and how it is constructed. Learning is embedded in a social context and occurs in the interactions between people (Orr 1990 cited DeFillipi and Ornstein 2003). The more contemporary work done on communities of practice (Lave 1993; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 2004) explores how learning occurs within communities which share common practices. This perspective emphasises how people construct meanings and learning as they participate in action together (Brown and Duguid 1991, 2001). There is therefore a strong recognition of the importance of learning within a socio-cultural context (Cook and Yanow 1993). There is an emphasis on learning as part of practice which DeFillipi and Ornstein note differs from canonical practice where knowledge is imparted or generic skills development is emphasised.

Second, DeFillipi and Ornstein identify the information processing perspective which views organisations as “systems of information” and focuses on the improvement of organisational processes (2003, p24). Easterby-Smith’s (1997)
management science discipline is very similar to this perspective. A leading exponent Huber (1991) defined organisational learning as the acquisition of knowledge within any of its units that is recognised as useful. March (1991) focused on how organisations accumulate knowledge and store it. The stored knowledge becomes part of the organisations shared mental model. DeFillipi and Ornstein note there is clear evidence of a mix of cognitive and behavioural perspectives of learning within this research perspective. Cognitive perspectives are evident in the assumptions about mental frameworks used by individuals, and shared schemas existing in organisational contexts. This needs to be understood in terms of shared cognition based on cognitive learning theory as opposed to the constructivist learning perspectives discussed above. Behavioural perspectives of learning are evident in that there is emphasis on behavioural patterns being changed in organisations (stimulus-response) based on what has worked successfully on previous occasions. The success acts as a reward and the behaviour is repeated (Skinner 1969).

Third, the behavioural-evolutionary perspective has a direct emphasis on changes to organisational routines and procedures (and even systems) as a result of organisational learning. For instance, Nelson and Winter (1982 cited DeFillipi and Ornstein 2003) developed an evolutionary theory on how organisations learn as they encode inferences from history into routines that guide the behaviours of organisational members. DeFillipi and Ornstein point out that this perspective also draws on both cognitive and behavioural models of learning. There is also an emphasis on the fact that prior knowledge and learning influences future knowledge and learning (drawing from cognitive psychology). Current knowledge and capabilities influence the organisation's capacity for future learning (Nelson and Winter 1982 cited DeFillipi and Ornstein 2003). There is a strong behavioural perspective evident in the emphasis on how the consequences of actions influence organisational learning (acting as ‘rewards’ that increase the likelihood of repeat behaviours).

Fourth, the applied learning perspective has similarities with the social construction perspective but emphasises active intervention to improve and change organisational practices. Easterby-Smith’s (1997) psychology and OD discipline is similar to this perspective. This applied learning perspective, according to DeFillipi and Ornstein
(2003) is underpinned by concepts of American pragmatism (Dewey 1933, 1938) emphasising the contextual nature of action, the importance of productive inquiry and how people learn from experience. According to Dewey learning and experience is always grounded in a context. Similarly, Kolb (1984) and Revans (1982) developed the action/reflection cycle and emphasised project-based learning, action learning and action research projects. Action based learning interventions focus on problem-solving and reflection on current behaviours and routines. In short, there is a mix of cognitive, behavioural, constructivist and social learning theories underpinning the applied learning perspective. DeFillippi and Ornstein suggest that this is a "liberating aspect of applied learning perspectives" (p31).

There are strong similarities across pairs of the DeFillippi and Ornstein (2003) perspectives above. The constructivist perspective and the applied learning perspective share strong common assumptions about knowledge and learning based in social learning as defined above. The information processing and the behavioural-evolutionary perspectives share strong common assumptions about learning based in behavioural psychology. Cognitive psychology is common to all four perspectives. It is not suggested these perspectives are mutually exclusive but there are differences in the emphasis on the type of learning that is central to organisational learning. This distinction will aid the process of matching for congruence with the management development literature in terms of learning theory.

Similarly, Chiva and Alegre (2005) identify two perspectives in the organisational learning field based on psychology and individual learning and the second based on sociology and social learning. These authors note that there has been a strengthening of the social perspectives in organisational learning in contemporary literature beyond 2000. These differences in emphasis are based on different views about the nature of knowledge and learning and have important implications for the design of training interventions and the development of organisational learning.

DeFillippi and Ornstein (2003) note however that there is a “paradigmatic shift in psychology ...towards an integration of perspectives” and that a “similar shift is underway in the world of organisational learning” (p32). The authors also note that the applied learning perspective is using multiple perspectives indicating it is a stronger reflection of current research directions in the field.
Fenwich (2006) refers to the difference between “cognitive-possession” and the “socio-cultural” perspectives in organisational learning (p286). The authors express concern that there is a tendency that these categorisations can create juxtapositions that place one perspective against the other. These tensions are clearly inherent in different conceptualisations of learning and worldviews of knowledge within the organisational learning literature. Fenwich is interested in understanding the possibilities of combining the different dimensions of learning in practice. Fenwich uses a participation metaphor to attempt to conceptually bridge the divide. A “participation” metaphor recognises that “learning is socially complex in nature and that learning through participation involves an interaction among different aspects of learning and knowledge development in an action domain” (2006, p287).

The different organisational learning perspectives presented above differ in the extent to which they recognise the interaction between individual and social learning in the context. Elkjaer (2003) uses the term social learning theory to emphasise learning that emerges within the situation or within a context (this is similar to other organisational learning theorists who use terms such as ‘situated learning’ (Brown and Duguid 1991); ‘practice-based learning’ (Gherardi 2001, 2008); ‘learning as cultural processes’ (Cook and Yanow 1993). Social learning theorists consider both the issues of human development and how people are ‘embedded’ in their external world as part of the learning process. Individual learning theory places more emphasis on the development of knowledge (epistemological dimension) but less emphasis on the development of identity as part of a social process (ontological dimension) (Chia 1997; Elkjaer 2003). To illustrate this distinction a specific management development intervention might emphasise individual learning about good management practice as opposed to the building of a person's identity as a competent management practitioner in context.

Clearly, different underpinning views on learning may have implications for how any learning interventions are designed and the type of learning processes that are emphasised. Thus far, this literature review has identified differences in learning theory that may have pedagogical implications for the design of any management development intervention. Some implications will be explored in more detail later in this Chapter (Section 7). Next, a review of the management development literature
identifying underlying assumptions of learning is presented. These assumptions are then aligned with the underlying assumption of organisational learning as identified above. This will highlight any missing links between management development and organisational learning.

2.4 Review of the management development literature

2.4.1 Introduction to review of the management development literature

I will outline below the key elements of the three themes I have identified in the management development literature. My search was based on databases in the field including ‘Business Source Complete’, ‘ProQuest’, ‘ABI/Inform’ and ‘Jstor’ using the subheadings of Management (or Executive or Leadership) Development (or Training or Education) and Management (or Executive or Leadership) Learning. This was also combined with an advanced search with Organis(s)ational Learning. Ninety five (95) journal articles and/or books were evaluated spanning the period from the 1980’s to 2008 and can be summarised as follows.

The three themes identified are:
1)  *functional/performance*;
2)  *context/contingent* and,
3)  *learning/process*.

Each of these themes will be overviewed below and the key assumptions about knowledge and learning processes identified and discussed. This will allow for a more focused examination of the congruence with the different perspectives identified in organisational learning.

A search was conducted of the text in each theme to identify explicit or implicit references to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values, learner prerequisite knowledge and the preferred choice of learning processes. Not all the literature in academic journals specifically prescribes the preferred intervention design so in some cases the text required close examination to identify its implicit meaning. Tables 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 will assist in identifying links between the assumptions about knowledge and learning.
and the preferred choices of learning processes. This will be followed by a discussion of the implications for organisational learning in each theme.

2.5 Theme 1: The functional/performance literature

Consistent with a functional/performance theme the purpose of management development is to build ‘good management practice’ through the development of behaviours, cognitions and skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation (Burack et al. 1997; Hopfl and Davies 1995). The presumption is that individual managerial learning, and acquisition of appropriate theoretical knowledge (content), will lead to application of that learning in the organisation and will thus contribute to improved organisational performance (Cairns 1998; Canon 1995).

Within the functional/performance theme it is assumed knowledge about current good management practice can be acquired, and it can be applied to improve an organisation’s performance. This is consistent within the structural perspective of knowledge discussed earlier in the Chapter (Section 1.1). This view assumes a “unilateral process of information transfer from a knowledgeable source to a target lacking that information” (Raz and Faldon 2005, p165). The functional/performance theme is driven, not by learning theory per se, but by the normative imperative for any ‘investment’ in a MD intervention to be closely linked to improved performance or measurable results in the globalised world economy (Cairns 1998; Zenger et al. 2000).

2.5.1 Key elements in the functional performance theme

There are at least three main points of emphasis in the functional/performance theme. The three include:

i) the need for strategic alignment of the MD effort with organisational goals;

ii) the development of the individual manager (to improve functional performance), and,

iii) the influence of behavioural and cognitive learning theory evident in the emphasis on the use of competency-based approaches.
(i) Alignment with Organisation Business Goals and Performance

A key purpose of a management development program is instrumental as it emphasises building management cognitions and skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation (Lane and Robinson 1995; Hopfl and Davies 1995; McClelland 1994; McKenna 2004; Trim 2004). Design considerations emphasise the ‘alignment’ of the managers’ capabilities with business objectives to improve outcomes (Cairns 1998; Canon 1995; Osbaldeston and Barham 1992; Ready et al. 1994; Trim 2003).

ii) Individual Development

Cullen & Turnbull (2005) examined definitions of management development over several decades and found that “the majority of early definitions of management development focus on …something that is done to [individual] managers in order that they might be improved changed, or developed” (p337).

iii) Behavioural in orientation and competency-based

Managerial competencies remain foundational to functional/performance approaches to management development (Mighty and Ashton 2003; Burack et al. 1997; Mumford et al. 2000 cited Viitala 2005; Teare 1997; Teare and Dealtry 1998). Competencies are developed to guide leadership development at all levels (Barrett and Beeson 2002 cited Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004) and may include an emphasis on both technical and people skills (Raush et al. 2002). Contemporary competency sets include more holistic aspects based on a mix of functional/technical skills and social skills or emotional intelligence (Le Deist and Winterton 2005).

Few of the competency-based approaches explicitly deal with the link between individual learning and organisational learning. Knowledge is primarily viewed as individual and explicit similar to what has been described as the ‘epistemology of possession’ (Cook and Brown 1999). While the congruence with behavioural change is emphasised, the complex processual relationship between individual learning and
organisational learning as outlined in the organisational learning literature is not explored comprehensively.

2.5.2 Implications for the intervention design and implementation: functional/performance theme

Table 2.2 shows the emphasis on the development of individual cognitive, analytical and functional skills in the functional/performance theme. Core competencies, relevant to the specific functional role, in the market/industry context are frequently used as a guiding framework for the intervention. Training methods generally include the use of external experts to assist with the acquisition of established knowledge on best practice. Knowledge is considered as a commodity which can be transferred. Knowledge is available about established good practice in management and this can be appropriated in the organisational context via the individuals who acquire that knowledge. This could be via workshops or links to formal education programmes at the tertiary level. Use of hands-on ‘real world’ business problems and case studies are considered ideal to augment the learning processes and to give it authenticity. A deeper analysis of the links to organisational learning has been provided below.
### Table 2.2: Functional Performance Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Learner Starting from?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasis on both abstract (declarative) and functional knowledge. Explicit knowledge of good ‘functional’ management practice is the guide to content selection and skill acquisition. There are generic models of good management applicable across all sectors (generic competencies).</td>
<td>Emphasis on cognitive and analytical skills as well as functional skills. Core competencies can be customised to ‘fit’ current business goals and be relevant to current market/industry context. Capacity to interpret the environment, handle complexity and diversity.</td>
<td>Values established theory, explicit knowledge and the role of experts. Most valued if knowledge can be translated into improved ‘functional performance’. Places value on strategic planning activities being linked to program objectives and outcomes. Values acceptance of change and a proactive orientation to the environment.</td>
<td>Build from an established ‘inventory’ of knowledge and skills required. This inventory is established based on business goals. Undertake skills audit to identify gaps in skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Functional/Performance Theme: Choices of learning processes

Skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours can be acquired by some combination of education, training, development and experience. Methods generally include the use of external experts to assist with the acquisition of established knowledge on best practice. This could be via workshops or links to formal education programmes at the tertiary level. Often competency-based approaches utilised. Use of hands-on ‘real world’ business problems and case studies considered ideal to augment the learning processes.
2.5.3 Implications for organisational learning: functional/performance theme

As shown in Table 2.2 above, this theme emphasises individual, behavioural approaches to management development. This most closely corresponds with the categorisation of organisational learning literature used by DeFillipi and Ornstein (2003) called the information processing perspective and the behavioural perspective. There is an emphasis within the theme on the acquisition of individual knowledge which, it is assumed, is applied in the organisational context.

This theme does not specifically deal with how individual learning becomes shared learning. Individual cognitive perspectives are apparent in the recommended program designs but there is no specific discussion on how ‘mental models’ (or cognitive frameworks) developed by the target individuals link to shared mental models developed within organisational contexts. Similarly, behavioural perspectives are evident in the functional/performance theme but there is less emphasis on how collective behavioural patterns are changed in the organisation.

The framing of the intervention design reflects the underpinning assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning processes. Managers can acquire knowledge about best practice and apply that in the organisational context. It is assumed this will contribute to the achievement of business goals within that context. The link to organisational learning is not clear within this theme. If a management development programme in practice is designed based on similar assumptions the linkages to organisational learning may be unclear. There is little evident in the design of the program specifically to enhance any linkages to organisational learning.

2.6 Theme 2: Context/contingent literature overview

The context/contingent theme draws on key concepts in the functional/performance theme but recognises that the success of MD programs is contingent on the support for the program in the context. Consequently programs need to be adjusted to suit the specific situation and changes need to be made in the situation to enhance the application of learning. A well aligned MD program which is integrated within the
organisational system is considered to be potentially a “core capability” that can contribute to long-term competitiveness (Mabey 2004, p507).

### 2.6.1 Distinctive assumptions about knowledge and learning in context/contingent theme

Literature within the context/contingent theme shares some key assumptions with the literature in the functional/performance theme. There is a focus on individual development and behavioural change but with more emphasis on the practical application of new knowledge or learning in a productive way in the organisational setting. This emphasis on the application in the context appears on face value to imply there may be a closer consideration of the link between individual and collective learning in the workplace. This is not actually the case. The underpinning view of knowledge is that it is a “commodity” that can be transferred. Fenwich (2008) identified an acquisition perspective in this literature which characterised learning as an individual human process of storing new concepts and skills or behaviours. The authors identified a preoccupation in this literature with transferring that acquired knowledge to practice. This literature is not advocating practice-based approaches based on constructivist theories of learning and knowledge development. Within the context/contingent theme this application is to be enhanced by integration of the management development intervention with other related organisational sub-systems (such as Organisational Development). This does not represent a fundamental divergence from the first theme but this literature does clearly recognise that situational factors can affect the effectiveness of a development intervention.

### 2.6.2 Key elements in the context/contingent theme

There are at least four main points of emphasis in the context/contingent theme. The four include:

i) a need to reduce barriers, and strengthen the facilitators to learning in the workplace;

ii) the need to consider individual learner characteristics;
iii) the need to integrate the intervention with other related sub-systems, and
iv) the influence of *behavioural* and *cognitive* learning theory.

This is evident in the emphasis on observable outcomes and measureable improvements in organisational routines or practices.

**(i) Reduce barriers and enhance facilitators to learning**

The context/contingent theme encompasses a broad range of research streams including potential barriers or facilitators to effective implementation in the organisational context. Belling et al. (2004) argue that supporting *transfer* of new skills and continued learning within the organisation is vital to making the best use of the management development investment (also see foundational work by Wexley and Baldwin 1986). Belling et al. cite extensive research which identifies obstacles to effective implementation of new knowledge on the job. They found that barriers included "lack of managerial support; time and workload issues; resistance to new ideas; short-termism; lack of opportunity and responsibility; physical structure of the organisation; performance and reward; organisational politics and hidden agendas" (2004, p242).

**(ii) Identify learner characteristics**

Another important facet, when considering learning transfer, included the characteristics of the individual learner (Russ-Eft 2002 cited Belling et al. 2004). Learner characteristics will impact on how the individual learns and on the application of that learning in the work context. Individual characteristics that may affect the capacity to apply new learning in the workplace may include a range of biographical, psychological and personal elements. Research in this area often focuses on the individual managers’ experiences following attendance at management development program (Tannerbaum and Yukl 1992 cited Belling et. al. 2004).
(iii) Integration with other organisational sub-systems

The management development intervention is considered as a ‘sub-system’ within the context of the wider dynamics of the organisational system (Doyle 2000; Ramirez 2004 cited Mabey 2004). Doyle (2000) argues management development and organisational development (OD) must be essential complimentary activities or sub-systems in the organisation (Ready et al. 1994). More effective outcomes can be achieved with tighter links to performance management and reward systems or other change management programs in a systemic way.

(iv) Behavioural in orientation and competency-based


2.6.3 Implications for the intervention design: and implementation systems/context theme

Table 2.3 below illustrates the emphasis in the context/contingent theme on integration of the management development intervention with other organisational change development efforts. The view of knowledge remains structural as defined earlier in the Chapter. Knowledge can be successfully acquired and transferred into the organisational context. This process can be enhanced by minimising barriers such as a mismatch between the program delivery and the learning styles of learners. It is recognised that cultural and political barriers can exist within an organisation that will inhibit the effective application of new knowledge. So this theme recognises the necessity for managers to develop skills in managing within the context. However there is no explicit recognition of how knowledge is developed
within the social context and how that affects organisational learning processes. The selection of learning processes therefore is not considered as a central concern. The researchers in this field are more focused on identifying variables that enhance more effective application of new knowledge. An emphasis is placed on identifying ways to more effectively support learning transfer in order to make best use of the management development investment.

**Table 2.3: Context/Contingent Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitudes/Values</th>
<th>Learner Starting from?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shares the same assumptions about knowledge as the functional/performance theme.</td>
<td>Ability to manage in a complex and dynamic organisational context. The focus is on developing wider ‘change management’ expertise.</td>
<td>Acceptance that an organisation is a more pluralist arena. Managers should value opportunities for development, take on new responsibilities and create change.</td>
<td>Recognises the existence of existing knowledge and experience particularly about the organisational context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management and OD professionals expected to understand the interdependence between the organisation and its sub-systems.</td>
<td>Ability to overcome barriers and constraints to the utilisation of any new knowledge acquired.</td>
<td>Emphasises the need for managers to change what they actually do in the context as an outcome of new knowledge (behavioural emphasis).</td>
<td>Assumes existing knowledge of management as it generally targets managers in current positions of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers need to understand the significance of organisational factors such as culture and politics in inhibiting/facilitating development outcomes.</td>
<td>Capability to challenge the rules of the system.</td>
<td>Recognises the important of both antecedent and follow-up components to the intervention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of knowledge associated with internal complementary HR systems such as organisational development, performance management and reward systems (Tseng and McLean 2008).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Choices of learning processes**

Stresses the importance of establishing related HRM activities. MD needs to be supported with increased training, assessment and evaluation in the organisation. Generally this would be linked to strategic and operational planning and to performance management systems.

Methods include formal interventions such as the use of workshops as with the functional performance theme. This would be supplemented with greater emphasis on the use of an on-the-job training component. Ideally authentic managerial processes (or real-world projects) would be used.
2.6.4 Implications for organisational learning: context/contingent theme

This theme shares the emphasis on individual development and behaviourism with the functional/performance theme but places more emphasis on the appropriation of any new knowledge or skills developed in the organisational context. The theme therefore draws on both behavioural and cognitive views of learning. There is some similarity with the two categories in the organisational learning literature identified by DeFillipi and Ornstein (2003) called the information processing perspective and the behavioural-evolutionary perspective. The context/contingent theme and these two perspectives in organisational learning share common assumptions about the importance of behavioural change within the organisational context. How individual cognitive learning links to shared cognitive learning in the context is not specifically explored in depth in the context/contingent literature. The emphasis on individual development is stronger than the emphasis on the development of new routines or changed behaviours in the organisational context. The assumption is that the competent individual can overcome barriers or resistance to change.

2.7 Theme 3: Learning process literature

2.7.1 Overview

In the learning process theme management development and learning occur in interaction with others within the technical, social and cultural context of the organisation (Garavan et al. 1999). The learning process approach implies an ‘embedded’ approach to learning within the context and is linked to the contemporary management learning stream discussed in Chapter 1 (Brown and Duguid 2001; Contu and Wilmott 2000; Garavan and McCarthy 2008; Tsoukas Vladimirou 2001; Gherardi 2008).
2.7.2 Distinctive assumptions about knowledge and learning in learning process theme

The learning process approach implies an underpinning philosophy of social constructivism (Raz and Faldon 2005) and socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1978). Knowledge is considered to be constructed in interaction; situated in practice, and relational and dynamic (Blackler 2004; Bruner, 1966; Bruner and Haste 1987). Constructivist approaches move beyond a conceptualisation of learners as individual actors, to learners as “social beings who construct their understanding and learning from social interaction within specific socio-cultural and material settings” (Edmondson 1999 cited Easterby-Smith 2000, p787).

The constructivist therefore promotes a more open-ended learning experience where the methods and results of learning may not be the same for each learner (Wiessner and Sullivan 2007). From the point of view of instructional design greater emphasis would be placed on the learning environment so that purposeful knowledge construction can occur. This may mean the inclusion of real-world, case-based learning environments rather than pre-determined instructional sequences. Emphasis is placed on the stopper importance of reflective practice and the collaboration and construction of knowledge through social negotiation.

2.7.3 Key elements in the learning process theme

There are at least three main points of emphasis in the learning process theme. These are not mutually exclusive but closely interrelated areas of research interest. The three focus on:

i) action learning tradition;

ii) bridging individual and collective learning (practice-based learning) and ‘communities of practice’ and;

iii) power perspectives and critical pedagogies.
(i) Action Learning Tradition

Action learning can be traced in its origins to work done by Revans (1982) as early as the 1950s in the British coal mines. Within action learning frameworks it is considered there can be no learning without action and no deliberate action without learning (Pedler 1997). Action learning perspectives recognise the individual undergoes learning and development within the context of organisational development and problem solving (Hudspith and Haydn 2002; Limerick et al. 1994; Zuber-Skerritt 1995). Contemporary perspectives at times include critical management pedagogies which are discussed further below.

(ii) Bridging Individual and Collective Learning (‘Practice-Based’ Theory and ‘Communities of Practice’)

Fenwich (2008) researched publications on collective learning in nine journals during the period 1999-2004. The authors found that a predominant topic occupying the majority of these articles concerned the “relationship of individual and collective learning processes in work activities” (p229).

Brown and Duguid (1991) identified that learning is as much the practical accomplishment of becoming a practitioner within the context as it is the acquisition of knowledge about the practice abstracted from the context (see also Lave and Wenger 1991). Cook and Brown (1999) distinguished between the concepts of knowledge and knowing. The latter concept of knowing focused on knowledge embedded in practice. The capacity to ride a bicycle is a form of knowing (Polyani 1966). Knowing-how to do something is related to the act of doing it. We cannot learn to ride a bike from a training manual.

Marshall (2008) argues a cognitive dimension to knowing does not have to be incompatible with a socially situated, constructivist and processual view of learning. The author rejects the dualistic orientation of cognitive theory which tends to separate cognition and action. Practice-based theories have broadened the understanding of knowledge and include “embodied, collective, and culturally and
historically aspects” (p416). The authors explore the potential for the integration of the two perspectives.

Realin (1997, 2007) has worked to develop a model of work-based learning for managers. In the program design, Realin draws on Polyani's (1967) distinction of explicit and tacit knowledge and on concepts from socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1978). Vygotsky emphasises the collective and situational nature of knowing-how to do things (or ‘knowing’ in practice). Put another way, practitioners work through problems in daily practice knowing-how to get things done. This is tacit knowledge (or ‘knowing’) and is “deeply rooted in action and involvement in a specific context” (Polyani 1966, p48).

Realin (1997, 2007) advocates a broader range of pedagogical approaches to management development interventions. For instance, learning processes need to include the trainee engaging in critical analysis of theory, reflecting on workplace project/action-learning experiences, applying ideas within a work context, supplemented with partnering or mentoring by experienced practitioners coupled with the use of reflective journals. Realin attempts to use a combination of conceptual and practical pedagogical approaches drawing on both cognitive and constructivist learning theory. The interaction of the individual and the collective occur in an interdependent and interactive way so this reflects and attempt to bridge any gap between individual and social learning processes.

(iii) Critical Pedagogy

Critical theorists such as Mingers (2000) argue that individual management education courses take a positivist stance, assuming that there is a given “unquestionable body of valid knowledge that must be presented and then assimilated by the student” (p221). Critical theorists question the privileging of one primarily functionalist view of knowledge (Anderson and Thorpe 2004; Kellie 2004; Wilmott 1997). They advocate the use of critical pedagogies to challenge exiting received wisdom and discourses. Willmott (1997) identified links between action learning and critical management practice. Willmott advocates an approach that
enables managers to better develop habits of critical thinking and prepare them for responsible citizenship.

2.7.4 Implications for the intervention design: and implementation learning/process theme

Table 2.4 below illustrates that the learning process theme is characterised by an alternate processual view of knowledge as defined earlier in the Chapter (Section 2.2).

Within the learning/process theme knowledge is seen as developed or co-constructed in a specific context. This influences the preferred choices about learning processes. Modes of learning will be more practice-based seeking to develop both explicit and tacit forms of knowledge in context (Anderson and Thorpe 2004; Realin 2007; Zuber-Skerritt 1995).

Learning is acquired through experience, and deeper reflection on that learning further contributes to that learning experience (Realin 1997). Contemporary researchers recommend moving beyond conventional action-learning teams and using teaching and learning processes that include problem-solving, interaction in storytelling, reflective discourse, and Socratic dialogue (Olsson et al. 2008; Wiessner and Sullivan 2007). The common theme is that the learning is more contextualised and that critical thinking is developed (Foster et al. 2008).

The collective level is considered to be crucial in the learning process. Much of the literature however is focused on developing theory as opposed to recommending specific models for change of practice in management development (Fox 1997; Richter, 2003).
Table 2.4: Learning Process Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitudes/Values</th>
<th>Learner Starting from?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moves towards an epistemology of practice that adds praxis to classroom education (Realin 2007).</td>
<td>Capacity for reflection-in-action. Problem-solving, ability to shape strategic agenda, capacity to engage in teamwork and influence others.</td>
<td>Values are organisation specific. Values of reflection, praxis and professional interaction.</td>
<td>Assumption of specialist and generalist knowledge in a management context. Recognises tacit-non explicit aspects of management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejects close adherence to conventional professional education models.</td>
<td>Emphasis on ability to engage in reflective observation and problem centred learning.</td>
<td>Greater emphasis on the subjectivity of practice.</td>
<td>Assumes trainee managers can work with a group of other inexperienced managers from inside or outside the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognises existence of tacit knowledge and know-how (Polyani 1966).</td>
<td>Capacity for third-order learning (Bateson, 1972 cited Anderson and Thorpe 2004, p659) where students become conscious of new ways of approaching problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>An understanding of current theories-in-use is assumed as it cannot be drawn from the literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem and definitions are not considered objective facts but constructions.</td>
<td>Seeks to build managers critical capacity to better interpret and understand their practice within both the organisational context and broader socio-cultural context.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of action-learning principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks to develop an understanding of problematic managerial situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes are not always clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Choices of learning processes**

Brings together a range of disparate learning processes each with a different justification for learning within a work context. Methods traditionally included action learning in context. Could include ongoing engagement in ‘communities of practice’.

Experiential learning, real-time experiences and problem solving in a social context (Kolb 1984). Use of methods to question existing interpretations of best practice.

May include the use of images and visual media to support understanding of managerial sense-making activities (Weick 2001).

May include cognitive mapping to explore the relationships between constructs. Also may include storytelling and argument analysis. Reflective discourses used to examine the premises for existing interpretations of situations.

Methods can also include critical epistemology to promote a heightened consciousness of language in use.
2.7.5 Implications for organisational learning: Learning process theme.

This theme shares the emphasis on applied learning and constructivism highlighted in the perspectives called applied learning and social construction identified by DeFillipi and Ornstein (2003). The central emphasis in these perspectives is on how people construct meanings and learning as they participate in action together. There is therefore a stronger recognition of the importance of learning and development taking place within the context. The applied learning perspective in the organisational literature shares preferences for learning methodologies with the learning process theme in management development. Both emphasise project-based learning, action based learning and reflection on current behaviours. There is a greater emphasis in the learning/process theme on collective or social learning as opposed to individual learning. Social learning theorists within the organisational learning literature do not separate learning from the context and argue that the context provides possibilities for learning. Individuals interact with other people within a context and both “produce, and are products of, the situations that they interact within” (Elkjaer 2003, p43). There is in principle considerable congruence between the learning/process literature in management development and DeFillipi and Ornstein’s (2003) applied learning and social construction perspectives in organisational learning. The challenge remains that research within the learning/process theme has primarily been driven by academic researchers and it has not yet been extensively adopted in practice (Fox 1997; Richter 2003).

2.8 Summary of implications

From a comparison of the two groups of literature (encompassing the three themes just discussed) it would seem that the traditional functional/performance theme within the management development literature predominately privileges individual, behavioural and cognitive development. The links to social learning or changed behavioural routines and procedures in the organisational context are not as clearly articulated. From a theoretical and practical perspective this would have implications for the way in which programs are designed and the achievement of outcomes from these programs. There is clearly a greater emphasis on individual
acquisition of knowledge and skills based on received wisdom about good management practice and less emphasis on how this is appropriated in the organisational context.

The context/contingent theme within the management development literature does attempt to address barriers and inhibitors to the appropriation of new knowledge by the individual in the organisational context. Its exponents however hold a similar set of assumptions about learning and development to those in the functional/performance theme. Similar views are held in respect of learning being primarily individual, behavioural and cognitive. Attempts are made to remove barriers to individuals applying newly acquired knowledge. Attempts are also made to more effectively integrate MD interventions with other organisational sub-systems relating to performance measurement, rewards and organisational development. But it is still somewhat unclear how the intervention focuses on the development of new capabilities in the organisational context.

The learning process theme in the management development literature more clearly focuses on learning processes within the organisational context and is therefore more clearly matched with contemporary organisational learning literature. It shares an emphasis on applied learning approaches and social learning. It does not however have a clearly articulated position on what direction is set for the learning efforts. It is not always clear how the management development intervention would specifically contribute to organisational learning.

The organisational learning literature that is allied to the learning process theme is more focused on descriptive research, exploring learning within a context. The organisational learning literature is not prescriptive in nature.

### 2.9 Implications for practice

These different research perspectives have implications for how learning interventions could be shaped, particularly those with an intended outcome of increased organisational learning. How program designers view knowledge can
shape and influence their ideas about the learning process, and their choices about the design of a development intervention.

Contemporary Human Resource Development researchers are exploring such distinctions and identifying opportunities for improved development interventions. For instance, Fenwich (2006) noted that HRD practice could be enriched by more fully incorporating practice-based theories. Practice-based theories focus on learning that occurs as part of the dynamics of individuals acting within the cultural forces of the organisation. It also extends to the relations of individuals with each other in the context of the activities they are undertaking. A more traditional ‘acquisition perspective’ to a development intervention views individuals “as consuming and storing new concepts and developing skills and behaviours that add to organisational resources” (Fenwich 2006, p287). This traditional approach is influenced by cognitive and behavioural theories of learning predominately. On the other hand a practice-based approach to learning focuses on the individual’s meaning making and establishing conditions or activities that helps individuals to continually learn. This latter approach is influenced by constructivist and socio-cultural views of learning. Different views on knowledge and learning processes affect how development practitioners frame an intervention.

Recent scholarship in work based learning however tends to accept that the learning process could include both the individual and collective of learning interacting within the context. Fenwich notes however that the individual “knowledge acquisition” approach is still prominent in HRD Journal publications “despite the availability of more systemic, multifaceted and action-based learning theories introduced to HRD more than 15 years ago” (2008, p288). This statement highlights that practitioners and theorists in the field are recognising the potential in exploring the impact of differing views on learning and knowledge and its link to organisational learning.

### 2.10 Chapter summary

It is apparent that there are some significant differences in the underlying assumptions between the literature on management development and the literature on organisational learning. This is a particular concern because much of the
management development literature purports to contribute to organisational learning and improved organisational actions and outcomes. However it is not clear precisely how organisational learning is going to be achieved in practice. There are significant discrepancies between individual and social learning approaches and between individual skill and knowledge development and collective changes to routines and procedures in organisations. The organisational learning literature itself does not provide the answers. It is mostly descriptive and interpretive research emphasising how learning actually occurs in the organisational context.

However it can be tentatively postulated that management development programs are not rigorously designed to effectively contribute to organisational learning as described in the organisational learning literature. Since the organisational learning literature has extensively researched actual learning processes in organisations this would appear to be a serious deficiency in the management development literature. Precisely how management development could or would contribute to organisational learning is unclear. This is particularly the case for management development programs based on the assumptions about learning and knowledge based primarily on individual learning theories. Individual oriented theories are more particularly deficient in bridging the gap to collective learning and the development of organisational actions. Another way of saying this would be that individual oriented management development programmes do not link in any explicit way to organisational learning. This research study focuses on whether the designers of a management development program, in practice, hold any similar assumptions about knowledge and learning processes. Once these assumptions are identified in practice the impact on the program design and implementation can be examined as well as the links to organisational learning.

Chapter 3 will outline in detail the methodology and methods adopted to answer my research questions. It will provide a precise guide to how my thesis questions were operationalised. It will identify the philosophical stance of the inquiry and a background on the selected management allotment intervention, its design and learning objectives and the unique characteristics of specific context in which it is delivered.
3.1 Introduction

My central research question in this study was to identify whether the designers of a management development program held implicit assumptions about knowledge and learning that impacted on the program design and links to organisational learning. In Chapter 2 the literature on management development was reviewed in detail. The three themes identified were derived from two major paradigms based on different sets of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning processes. In addition the major perspectives in the organisational learning literature were mapped using existing meta-reviews by some of the leading researchers in the field. Similarities and incongruities between the two bodies of literature were then discussed particularly in regard to the underpinning assumptions held by the authors about the nature of knowledge and learning processes. The premise was that if any incongruence was also identified in practice there may be implications for the extent to which that program would link to organisational learning. My central thesis questions pertinent to the field study were:

- What sets of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning were held by the designers of a management development programme in practice;
- What was the influence on choices about the program design and implementation;
- In what way did any findings match/not match the different sets of assumptions identified in the management development literature, and;
- What therefore would be the implications for the development of links to organisational learning?

Clearly there is an implicit proposition that should the assumptions about knowledge and learning held by the designers of a management development programme in practice be incongruent with those embedded in the organisational learning literature
there may be implications for any linkages to organisational learning. However the purpose of this study is not to establish whether in fact organisational learning was developed as an outcome of the program under examination. This study was not an evaluation of a management development programme. The purpose of the study was to identify whether there may be a problem from a theoretical and practical perspective that was worthy of further study and exploration.

This research project therefore provided an opportunity to make a contribution to the scholarly literature as it explored the available theory on management development and its consistency with the theoretical development within the expanded body of descriptive and interpretive research i.e. organisational learning. The concept of examining the extent of the congruence between the two streams of literature, and a program in practice, was justified on the basis that it was relatively immature field of research (Creswell 2003). This reflected a general lack of descriptive and interpretive theory on how management development contributed to organisational learning.

3.2 Research Model and Methodology

The epistemological stance for the inquiry was primarily based on interpretivism (Schwandt 2000) and it is therefore a qualitative methodology. The interpretivist point of view is that the researcher needs to grasp the meaning that constitutes human actions. My viewpoint was that it was possible to develop an understanding of the assumptions held by the designers of a management development programme. Developing such an understanding was seen as pivotal to interpreting the influence of these assumptions on the design of the intervention. This could also have theoretical implications for organisational learning, deserving of further enquiry (analytical generalisation).

The approach adopted was to seek to understand the situation from the interviewee’s perspective. The intention was to identify the designers’ worldviews based on their assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning. As an outcome it would be possible to explore how these views had influenced the design of the program. This would underpin a theoretical discussion on the links to organisational learning.
The methodology adopted was however not a purely grounded approach (Goulding 2002; Strauss 1987 cited Berg 2004) as theoretical frameworks were developed from the review of the literature. This underpinned the building of an understanding of the perspectives of the participants in the study. The process involved the combination of two methodological perspectives influenced by differing philosophical traditions and these are referred to as Emic and Etic (Lett 1996).

Emic research aims to construct accounts in terms of the conceptual categories that are meaningful to be objects of the study. Etic research seeks a description in terms that may be applicable to another situation. My approach initially resembled an Emic research perspective as defined by Pike (1967). An Emic perspective focuses on the building of meaning within the population studied. In my research I attempted to identify the conceptual schemas of the study participants in the context where the MTP was conducted (i.e. in terms of their own understanding). The study is therefore culturally and historically bound (Berry 1990; Morris et al.1999) and conclusions and findings would not be generalisable to other cultures or contexts.

On the other hand, Pike (1967) defines the Etic perspective as one that relies upon the use of extrinsic frameworks or categories that have meaning for the researcher. Pike suggests this can be useful for penetrating and refining the researcher’s understanding of an Emic system. In the case of my research questions it was important to explore the specific responses of the program designers guided by key thematic frameworks identified from the literature. I reviewed the situation and developed a description using an Etic lens. A rich description of one program in detail (Emic) was developed and some propositions about different antecedents and consequences that could become the subject of further research and investigation (Etic). Both approaches were used intentionally in a symbiotic way (Berry 1999). Pike rejects any notion that either approach has a greater claim to knowledge than the other. Nor does Pike view the different approaches as mutually exclusive but on the contrary as complementary (Berry 1999).

There remain of course more radical philosophical positions that could be taken within the interpretive field of research. These were reviewed as a means of highlighting any potential deficiencies in the philosophical approach that was
adopted above. The Emic and Etic approaches described above blend influences from alternative perspectives drawing on differing epistemological foundations. The position taken in this research study was one that integrated different the Emic and Etic perspectives in the process of analysis. Some attempt was made to synthesise differing perspectives to improve on the methods adopted.

The position adopted in this study was that it was not possible to take a purely neutral position and rely on the independence of empirical data. It was intended to achieve authenticity by developing a rich and nuanced understanding of the situation under inquiry (Emic) combined with a constant refinement of the description using theoretical frameworks (Etic). The two types of analysis blend. Mott-Steverson (2008) argues this is a “well-established and respected method of qualitative analysis mixing analytical reasoning and inductive approaches” (p432). This will be explored in more detail in the following methods section of this chapter.

3.3 Research Procedure

The research procedure included a review of the management development literature to provide foundation for the research and assist with the development of the interview questions. In addition, extensive document analysis was undertaken and finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with program designers and trainees.

3.4 Sources of data

3.4.1 Documentation

An initial examination of the training manuals, history of the program and annual reports of the College provided a good indication of the program objectives, the level of commitment to positive outcomes both individually and organisationally and the actual structure of various activities and learning experiences within the program.
3.4.2 Program designers

The program has a 30 year history within the New South Wales Health Services. The Management Training Program Steering Committee operates under the auspices of the Australian College of Health Service Executives (NSW Branch). This group had the specific terms of reference to monitor the effectiveness of the program, provide industry input into the program design, evaluate the program, review placements within the program, make recommendations and provide feedback to the State Branch Council of the College. More importantly the committee comprises key people that have a long standing association with the College. The steering committee therefore comprises people with direct involvement both in the development of the program and with the implementation of the program within the Area Health Services. This would include practitioners within the Area Health Services from Learning and Development as well as Administration and Clinical Services. This also included a key person from within the central secretariat for NSW Health as well as key decision-makers within the Australian College of Health Service Executives (NSW Branch). This group was suitable for interview about the design of the program.

3.4.3 Program participants

The trainees for the program are selected annually. In 2006 for instance there were 70 applicants for the program, 25 interviews and 16 trainees recruited. These trainees are placed in a number of different Health Services during their first year of training. It was possible to access a small selection of trainees from both the 2005 and 2006 intakes. This provided ample opportunity to explore any different insights into the learning processes and learning outcomes held by the participants within the program. This would of course offer an opportunity to uncover any underlying tensions between the intentions of the designers of the program and the perceived outcomes for the participants.

Access to interview the trainees about their experiences and placements within the Area Health Services in terms of the Management Training Program was possible, but did not extend to observing the trainees at work within the Area Health Service.
This would have required a separate ethics clearance process via the New South Wales Department of Health Central Secretariat as well as the individual Area Health Services. This was not considered necessary based on the type of study that was being undertaken and the research questions under investigation.

### 3.5 Data collection methods

#### 3.5.1 Review of program documentation

The key source document for review of the program was the 2006 Handbook on the Management Training Program published by the Australian College of Health Service Executives (ACHSE) and the manual provided to new trainees for the induction programme titled Training Manager Assessment Program also published by the ACHSE (2006). Both these documents provide detailed information on a broad range of factors including the history, structure and objectives of the program. This manual provides a clear overview of the expected outcomes from the program, the competencies expected to be developed within the Certificate IV in Business (Front-Line Management) and the requirements for the Postgraduate component, as well as the roles and responsibilities of key persons such as the placement coordinator and the placement supervisor.

The purpose in reviewing this documentation was to gather an understanding of the explicitly stated learning outcomes for the program and the proposed learning processes to be used to achieve these outcomes. This would also provide valuable data when looking for any themes consistent with the three models identified in Chapter 2 of this thesis. For example the ACHSC Management Training Program Handbook explicitly states:

> The program emphasises the practical application of management skills in the real world of health management. This emphasis provides opportunities for problem-solving, analytical skills and specific role practice to occur within a framework of competency-based guidelines on expectations (2006, p8).
This paragraph could be interpreted to reflect the functional/performance theme of management development with its core emphasis on competency development. But arguably, there is also a strong emphasis on work-based placements and problem-solving within the context of Health and this could indicate either of the other two themes identified.

The 2006 Handbook also contains detailed guidelines for the placement organisations (i.e. the places where the trainees will undertake the work-based placement). This component of the Manual sets out in detail some specific outcomes to be considered when the placement supervisor arranges different practical experiences for the trainee. These draw on the Certificate IV in Business (Front-Line Management) and emphasise competencies such as managing people, resources, activities, information, quality, projects, change and innovation as well as developing a general understanding of the Health Industry. The Manual also contains a set of appendices which set out pro-formas for the establishment of a Performance Agreement and Appraisal process between each trainee and the placement organisation. Documentation is also provided to assist the trainees (in consultation with the placement supervisor) to develop a Personal Development Plan.

The review of the documentation provided an opportunity to initially identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the program designers had identified for development. A review of a sample Personal Development Plan demonstrated the proposed linkages between this planning process and the competencies in the Certificate IV in Business (Front-Line Management). This also provided evidence that a variety of learning paths were being used for the attainment of the Competencies such as work-based projects, formal training sessions and a review of the available literature. It was also possible to identify the proposed learning activities and training paths that have been detailed for the placement supervisors. However, the two Manuals did not provide any detailed or highly developed statements about teaching philosophy or preferred pedagogical approaches. So this highlighted the needs to further explore this issue based on deeper research by semi-structured interviews with the program designers and the trainees. This review of the documentation primarily established the suitability of the program for further study rather than supporting any analytical generalisations.
The review of the Manuals available on the MTP was undertaken using the three themes identified in Chapter 2 as an analytical framework. The documentation was reviewed to identify specific statements about intended knowledge outcomes, the skills that were intended to be developed (whether they were to be collective or individual etc.) and the values and attitudes. The document was also searched to explore any specific pedagogical approaches to learning.

### 3.5.2 Development of semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were a ‘respondent’ type interview (Powney and Watts 1987 cited Robson 2002). The specific questions (Appendices 4 and 5) were structured to reveal whether any of the responses provided by the interviewees could be categorised into the themes identified in the literature.

In Chapter 2 three themes were found in the management development literature and a summary was provided in Tables 2.2 to Table 2.4. The Tables contained specific statements in the literature about:

1) the knowledge, skills or attitudes to be developed and;
2) the preferred learning processes.

This analysis guided the selection of questions for the semi-structured interviews.

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were therefore designed to follow this same thematic structure in Chapter 2. For example, a set of questions were designed to identify what new knowledge, skills or attitudes the trainees were expected to develop as an outcome of the MTP. The purpose of these questions was to explore what assumptions the designers held about knowledge itself (and how it is acquired) by asking what specific knowledge would be developed.

A second set of questions focused on how the trainees would be expected to actually develop knowledge, skills and attitudes or use any new knowledge (share new ideas or apply newly acquired knowledge in different situation contexts). These questions were focused on the situated or contextual aspect of knowledge and learning.
The third set of questions focused more clearly on expected organisational outcomes. These questions focused on precisely how the group of trainees would be identified as different in the work context as compared to a group that had not undertaken the training. This third set of questions explored both why those outcomes might be different for individuals and how the overall outcome from the group of trainees would be evidenced in an organisational setting.

The interview questions were therefore designed to specifically explore three key aspects pertinent to the design of the management development program. These were questions on

1) the specific content of the program including the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be developed;
2) the learning processes used; i.e. the types of learning activities included; and
3) the intended outcomes for both the individuals participating in the program at the workplace level.

1. Learning Outcomes expected from the MTP.
This first set of questions explored the designer’s general understanding about the program purpose, design, and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be developed. These questions were coupled with questions that were more specific to the trainees. The more specific questions were designed to explore the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to be developed by the trainees. This would permit the researcher to examine any assumptions held by the designers about learning and explore its impact on the program design.

In Chapter 2 the functional/performance theme was shown to place greater emphasis on the individual acquisition of knowledge and skills and the subsequent appropriation of that knowledge in the work context (Lane and Robinson 1995; Hopfl and Davies 1995; McClelland 1994; Trim 2004). In direct contrast, the learning/processes theme emphasised learning processes which occur within the social and cultural context (Bruner and Haste 1987; Edmondson and Woolley 2003). Identifying the designers’ assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning as a process is a central purpose in my research.
2. Learning processes used in the MTP.

This second set of questions was more focused on the learning processes that are being used within the MTP. These questions were designed to explore how the designers considered the relationship between the knowledge, skills and attitudes being developed, and the choice of learning processes. These questions specifically allowed for exploration of how new knowledge may be developed through engagement in the MTP learning activities. The relationship between the designer’s conception of knowledge and learning and their choices of learning activities could be explored. Identifying such a relationship is a crucial aspect of my research as it is considered to be relevant to any discussion of links to organisational learning.

The questions in Section 2 are more specifically targeted to explore whether the program has been developed with any emphasis on the relevance of the social context to the learning processes. In Chapter 2, it was noted that the learning process theme in the management development literature viewed learning as much as the practical accomplishment of becoming a practitioner, within the context, as it was acquiring knowledge about the practice abstracted from the context (Brown and Duguid 1991; Cook and Brown 1999; Lave and Wenger 1991). Individuals interact with other people within a context and both produce, and are products of, the situations that they interact within (Elkjaer 2003). The questions in Section 2 aim to uncover how the designer has considered the interaction between any new knowledge constructed by the individual in the formal program components with practical know-how developed in the field placement. For example how is any knowledge or skills developed in the study days (or in the formal tertiary component) linked to the development of learning how to complete a task in the work context. Conversely, how does any practical ‘know-how’ that is constructed in the work context get harnessed back in the study days or as part of the formal tertiary study component. The aim of these questions was to identify the views held by the interviewees on how knowledge is gained (or constructed), how learning occurs, and how it interacts with existing know-how in the work context? This set of questions provides the opportunity to explore any links between the assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning identified in the first set of questions and choices about the learning processes discussed in this second section. This is central to
answering my research problem because it sets up a framework for any discussion on links to organisational learning.

3. **Expected Outcomes in the work context after completion of the MTP.**

These questions were designed to elicit the designer's expectations about changed trainee behaviours in the work-context (as an outcome of the program). The questions explored issues such as how the MTP graduates could be distinguished from non-graduates in terms of their workplace performance and attitudes. This would permit the researcher to examine the designer’s expectations in regards to outcomes within the organisational context. This provides some opportunity to explore the links to organisational learning that the scope of this project did not extend to, in an attempt to evaluate program outcomes in the organisational context.

In Chapter 2, a context/contingent theme in the management was identified in the development literature which emphasised the importance of reducing barriers to application of learning and the need to build supporting mechanisms in the work context. Belling et al. (2004) cited issues such as “poor managerial support; time and workload issues, resistance to new ideas or organisational politics” as possible inhibitors to the use of learning or new ideas in the workplace (p.242). Other issues according to the context/contingent theorists may be individual trainee’s orientation to learning and motivation to apply that learning a workplace (Tannerbaum and Yukl 1992 cited Belling et al. 2004). Finally in Chapter 2 it was noted that there had been considerable criticism of management development programmes for their failure to achieve actual behaviour outcomes in the workplace (Brown 2003; Mabey 2002, 2004; Doyle 2000). The questions in Section 3 were therefore designed to give the designers and trainees an opportunity to reflect on their expectations about outcomes in the actual context. The emphasis on behavioural change primarily forces both the designers and trainees to think beyond stated objectives or explicit outcomes in formal documentation.

It should be reiterated that the questions in Section 3 were restricted to exploring expected changes within the target group of trainees. As stated in Chapter 1, a broad evaluation of actual organisational change is beyond the scope of this study. This study explores whether or not the assumptions about learning held by the
designers of a management development program are congruent with those embedded in the organisational learning literature. Any possible implications for the intended program outcomes would initially be purely propositional based on an identified mismatch between two bodies of theory.

3.6 Population and sampling

The Management Training Program (MTP) Steering Committee has terms of reference that include monitoring and evaluating the MTP as well as to oversee the design and structure of the program. It is a forum designed to ensure the continued relevance of the MTP and to review its effectiveness based on current industry input.

The purpose in conducting semi-structured interviews with this target group was to explore in more depth any underpinning assumptions about knowledge and the nature of learning held by these designers. Given that the literature review, detailed in Chapter 2, had identified that three themes existed within the management development literature one key objective of the semi-structured interviews was to follow a guiding set of questions designed to provide the researcher with an opportunity to analyse the responses and categorise them. This would assist in identifying any mental models held by the designers about learning and preferred management development practices. The choice of semi-structured interviews allowed sufficient scope to explore other emerging issues of relevance to the interviewees.

All of the population designated as ‘designers’ were invited to be interviewed. All were approached through the ACHSE State Secretariat. The initial contact and information sheet was sent to the prospective interviewees via the State Director for ACHSE (NSW). This constituted a group of seven people who represent the key stakeholders on the steering committee responsible for the ongoing review, design, management and development of the MTP program. There was a strong consistency in the responses across this population group in respect of the specific knowledge and competencies that trainees were expected to develop. However all interviews were completed (with the exception of one due to unavailability) as the different
stakeholders represented different stakeholder sub-groups within the total population group of designers. In total therefore 6 of the 7 designers were interviewed.

Additionally, a sample group of the trainees were interviewed. These trainees self-selected (volunteered) after being approached as a group with information about the research project during an induction day. All of the 40 trainees initially approached were subsequently sent an e-mail and offered the opportunity to simply volunteer by return e-mail. Six trainees responded and that group conveniently constituted a mix of first and second year trainees, a mix of genders and a blend of urban and regionally based placements. This was considered to be a representative group of the whole group for the purposes of cross-checking data obtained from interviewing the designer target group.

The purpose in interviewing the trainees was to cross-check their responses about the program as they would bring a perspective based on their actual experiences in the field. This would highlight any barriers or facilitators to learning that they had experienced. Ample opportunity was available to explore other emergent issues that had arisen in the context. For example, were there any underlying tensions identified between the intended outcomes (as planned by the designers) and the actual outcomes for the trainees?

3.7 Ethics approval

Approval for the study was obtained in advance through the approved process developed by the University of Western Sydney. This involved providing an outline and justification for the research questions, the establishment of the worthiness of the research and the detailing of the proposed methodology and methods. This documentation is placed before a panel of 15 academic staff, professional and community representatives for vetting and approval. Clear protocols were established for formally approaching the organisation, the obtaining of written consent from all participants in the study and the provision of information sheets detailing the rights and responsibilities of the researcher and the participants (See Appendices 1, 2, 3). The protocols included the obtaining of prior consent in writing for all interviews. The selection of participants was via sampling methods that were
approved by the Ethics Committee. All participants were assured that no personal identifiers would be used on the transcriptions or in this final report. It was made clear to the participants that their participation (or not) would have no bearing on their employment status and would not adversely affect their continuation of employment with the organisation. The approval period covered the period from 2006 to 2008 inclusive.

3.8 Data analysis

Initially, the analysis of the semi-structured interviews was guided by different themes identified in the literature. These thematic frameworks guided the setting of criteria for a first brush coding process (a manual coding process highlighting specific blocks of text that reflected a specific theme identified in the literature in Chapter 2). I also used inductive approaches to ensure the grounding of my analysis in the data. This meant using open coding to identify any other emergent themes in the texts (Berg 2004). Miles and Huberman (1994) recognise that researchers can start with some general themes from the literature and inductively develop further themes and sub-themes more grounded in the text. The use of both deductive and inductive techniques balanced the different philosophical positions discussed in the philosophy section of this Chapter. In practical terms it was therefore important to combine open coding with the use of coding frames in an iterative way (Berg 2004).

Thematic analysis was used to review the documents and text from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis was a device to get access to the words and accounts offered by the interviewees (Berg 2004). The purpose was to develop a deep understanding of the participant’s perspectives and exemplify that understanding through the application of thematic frameworks (Emic and Etic methods combined). The approach was to gradually make sense of the program designers’ mental models and conceptual frameworks about the program by cataloguing and classifying the text from the interviews (Miles and Huberman 1994). This was initially undertaken manually using brush coding which means simply identifying themes in the text and matching those to themes in the literature. It was possible to identify contiguous blocks of text that represented a particular theme.
identified. So to cite an example one interviewee stated in response to a question about the learning processes in the MTP:

…So they need to be able to step into a manager’s role of some sort and there are a number of placements where they do step into a business management role. It’s a real position and when you are in a real position, that’s when it becomes meaty and you can actually apply that learning. If it’s not meaty, then you know, you don’t get the opportunity to apply that learning well….Designer 2 (D2).

The interviewee reflected an emphasis on the importance of being able to work in a real role and apply the learning developed earlier in the study days or from the postgraduate program. So by matching to the themes in the literature it could be argued that the interviewee was reflecting assumptions about the most effective way to develop managers. There was an emphasis on learning about effective management practices balanced with the opportunity to apply that new knowledge in a practical way. So the response recognises the importance of practical application of newly acquired knowledge about management, and this matches a theme within the management development literature. That matching theme is focused on the building of “competent” managers (based on accepted knowledge and practice about what constitutes good management). To be competent self-evidently requires effective application on the job. This illustrates that it was possible with brush coding to match the participants responses to different themes in the literature. Based on the frequency of the responses matched to various themes it was possible to put an informed argument about the sets of assumptions held by the designer being interviewed. This allowed for testing of the extent of the congruence between what is stated in the literature and what is occurring in management development practice.

As most of the qualitative data was in the form of free-flowing text (with the main units of analysis being text from semi-structured interviews), techniques for whole-text analysis were used to assist me in making judgments about contiguous blocks of text (Ryan and Bernard 2000). As demonstrated above initial themes were identified from the literature as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) followed by the building of codes which included “a detailed description of each code, the inclusion and exclusion criteria and exemplars from the real text for each theme” (Ryan and Bernard 2000, p781). The codes themselves were used as devices to identify the
themes in the text from the semi-structured interviews. The research explored the links and relationships between the various themes and concepts in theoretical models.

As stated above, because it was my intention to explore the views about knowledge and learning processes held by the interviewees it was important to use methods of analysis that went beyond counts of textural characteristics. I also wanted to identify *latent content* as described by Berg (2004). This meant identifying what had not been mentioned because the interviewees considered it taken-for-granted knowledge. Strauss (1987 cited Berg 2004) distinguishes between *in vivo* codes and *sociological constructs*. *In vivo* codes are the literal words used by the interviewees and so may focus on specific behaviours or processes. However as the inquirer, I also was applying external constructs identified from the literature relating to knowledge development and learning processes. The uses of these external theoretical frameworks provided an opportunity to add interpretation that might be missed in an *in vivo* analysis (Berg 2004). Of course, it was important that any interpretations identified in the coding process were considered tentative as contradictions emerged through more thorough analysis and comparison with the theoretical frameworks. The process of analysis was iterative throughout.

Ryan and Bernard (2000) distinguish between the *linguistic tradition* and the *sociological tradition* as methods in analysing qualitative data. My research more closely reflected the sociological tradition as it focused on the analysis of text as a lens into understanding the meanings developed by the participants in the study. I primarily focused on the analysis of the free-flowing texts from the semi-structured interviews. At the heart of this analysis was thematic analysis and coding of the whole text. The central purpose was to identify themes and build codes while iteratively constructing and develop theoretical frameworks. Essentially it was expected that the semi--structured interviews would reveal the mental models held by the designers and the participants about the learning outcomes of the program and the reasons for the learning processes adopted.
By categorising the questions for interviewee’s responses into three distinct sections, as mentioned above, a framework was established for the matching process between the assumptions held about the nature of knowledge and learning by the designers and the trainees in the MTP and the management development literature (see Appendices 3 to 6 give samples of the interviews texts and the categorisation into themes identified in the literature). The methods used also allowed for a comparison of the responses between the designers and the trainees. The frameworks will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

3.9 Limitations of the research

As stated earlier this is an interpretive study. It is focused on one Management Training Program being implemented within the NSW Health System. Any findings from the study cannot be considered as generalisable other than in an analytical sense of the term (Yin 1994). This is a recognised limitation in the design and construction of the study and the methodology adopted.

The questions in Section 3 were restricted to exploring expected changes within the target group of participants. An evaluation of actual organisational change is beyond the scope of this study. This study explores whether or not the assumptions about learning held by the designers of a management development program are congruent with those embedded in the organisational learning literature. Any possible implications for the intended program outcomes would initially be purely propositional based on an identified mismatch between two bodies of theory.

Due to time and geographic constraints it was beyond my capacity to check for authenticity by cross-checking with participants on the interview data and any conclusions being drawn. There are particular political sensitivities within Health that made this too difficult as the management training program was about to routinely reviewed by the funding body (NSW Department of Health).

In terms of the methods adopted some limitations arose as a result of time constraints and difficulties in observing the participants actually undertaking project work in the workplace context. The emphasis on interviewing individuals and not including a
focus group or work-based observations places some limitation on the conclusions that can be made about collective learning which is so central to organisational learning. The timeframe for the study is limited and therefore any longitudinal effects cannot be investigated. These limitations were not considered significant as the research problem was clearly defined and answering the research questions as defined in Chapter 1 was still achievable for the participant group in this study.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the philosophical position of this research study and established its methodology. The remainder of the chapter has detailed the way in which the research design was operationalised. Most importantly it has been established that the work undertaken in Chapter 2 on the literature has provided a framework for the use of methods and data analysis. Three themes were identified in the literature based on specific sets of assumptions about knowledge and learning outcomes from management development programs. The selection of research questions was designed to support the identification of particular themes within the literature. The emphasis within the research is therefore on unearthing the underpinning assumptions about knowledge and learning held by the designers of a particular Management Training Program. This is to allow the researcher to explore the implications for organisational learning. The process of data analysis closely matches the thematic framework established by reviewing the literature but does allow for an understanding of the participant's perspective and for the identification of an expected or emergent themes. The next chapter will discuss the results from the analysis of the data in detail.
Chapter 4
Presentation of Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methodologies and methods being used to address the thesis questions were outlined. The purpose of this chapter is to present and interpret the data. As outlined in Chapter 3, the research methodology was influenced by different philosophical traditions referred to as Emic and Etic (Lett 1996). The former seeks to understand the perspective of the population studied (in my case the designers and participants in a specific Management Training Program) and the latter seeks to develop an understanding that may be applicable to another situation.

In practical terms this has meant that the analysis of the documentation and semi-structured interviews has been guided by themes identified in the literature as discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The analysis of the research data has included identification of any themes that matched the literature and any further themes grounded in the texts particularly from the semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were specifically designed with the purpose of identifying specific themes from the responses.

The research aimed to identify whether the designers of a management development program make implicit assumptions about learning that had impacted on the program design and implementation in ways which could have implications for organisational learning.

The literature review identified three major themes titled: functional/performance, context/contingent and learning/process. The functional/performance and context/contingent themes share similar underpinning assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning but have a different focus on how knowledge is most effectively applied in the organisational context. The learning/process theme has distinctly different sets of underpinning assumptions about the nature of knowledge.
and learning processes. It was argued that these different underpinning assumptions would influence the design of management development programs in practice, and, consequently could have implications for any links to organisational learning.

This chapter explores an existing management development program within the Health Services context to investigate whether similar underpinning assumptions to those identified in Chapter 2 were made by the designers of a program in practice.

4.2 Context

The Australian College of Health Service Executives (ACHSE) (NSW Branch) formally took over the administration and management of the Management Training Program investigated in the study in 1992. The College undertook a number of major reviews, consulting both the University of New South Wales and the providers of the Management Training Program in the United Kingdom. The ACHSE introduced the use of the NSW Vocational Educational & Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) accredited Certificate IV in Business (Front-Line Management) (see Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook 2007) as a core structural component of the program.

It was apparent from the documentation available that the program design in 2006 was shaped around individual competency development. The trainee’s competency development was linked to the trainee assessment criteria and the selection of work-based activities (Management Training Program Handbook 2006). Most of the designers interviewed discussed the relationship between the competencies to be developed and the selection of work-based activities and projects (See Table 4.1 below). This emphasis most closely matched the functional/performance theme within the management development literature discussed in Chapter 2. Interestingly, the Certificate Level IV in Business (Front-Line Management) included competencies such as providing leadership in the workplace, facilitating change and innovation and developing a workplace learning environment. These competencies reached beyond the individual to the individual acting or learning in an organisational context.
When interviewed, one of the designers specifically discussed the importance of the inclusion of competency standards and her active role in redeveloping the program to include them (interview with Designer 4 (D4)). The inclusion of the Certificate IV in Business (Front-Line Management) was therefore quite deliberate. The Front-Line Competencies were considered by training and development professionals at the time as the appropriate benchmark for the knowledge, skills and attitudes for entry-level managers. The rationale for the use of these competency models was their potential to contribute to improve productivity and innovation in the workplace. This is predicated on the development of a high standard of competence by the individual trainee (Management Training Program Handbook 2006, pp4-6).

A further evolution in the design of the program under study occurred in 2006/2007. This was the decision to include a distance education program as a mandatory component in the Management Training Program. The program selected was a Post-Graduate Diploma or Masters in Health Services Management offered through Charles Sturt University. This postgraduate program was to be a substitute for the Certificate IV in Business (Front-line Management). From 2007, it was to be mandatory for all trainees to complete the Postgraduate Diploma or Masters component of the Management Training Program. The latter change was not explicitly detailed in the written documentation available at the time as the Handbook for the program had not been updated beyond early 2006. The trainees interviewed were therefore experiencing a transitional phase as their training period spanned the two-year period of 2006/2007.

Other elements of the documentation provided additional insights. The Trainee Manager Assessment Program 2006 is supported with a Manual. The Manual reviewed was one that accompanied an induction program held in January 2007 with the first year intakes. This was provided by an external private provider. All trainees spent two days completing the induction program at the commencement of the two-year period. This covered a range of conventional training modules covering teambuilding (using Belbin's team roles), the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Time Management and Change Management. Practical guidance was also provided on the use of reflection (and journal entries) and this was linked to the Monthly Reports that the trainees were required to provide back to the ACHSE during their
field placements. The pedagogical approach for the Induction Workshop was stated to be based on *adult learning* principles (Knowles 1970 cited Smith 1998). This implied an emphasis on the learner’s experience in the learning process, and their orientation to learning based around relevant problems and the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to learn (Smith 1998). An extrinsic motivation would be the opportunity for job promotion or gaining a position within an Area Health Service upon completion of the program. A key purpose in adult learning is to assist the learners to identify key areas they need to focus on in their development and to assist them in considering possible learning paths that might be available to them. The use of the learning development plan in the Management Training Program would be an example of this approach.

There was some evidence of an influence of the key concepts discussed in the learning/process theme as outlined in Chapter 2. The documentation referred to the use of in-field experimentation as part of the work-based component of the program. There were several activities that included participation, discussion and reflection on the ideas presented in a social context. Both the Manual and the Handbook made reference to the use of experiential-based learning. The Management Training Program Handbook 2006 detailed a commitment to the importance of the learning environment being one that integrated the formal learning into a work related situation. There was recognition that each participant’s learning opportunities would vary depending on the complex organisational dynamics within the workplace. This demonstrated a sub-theme within the documentation that contained elements of both the context/contingency theme identified in Chapter 2 and the learning/process theme. For instance the objectives of the program, set out in section 5 of the Handbook, recognised the environmental context within which health service management occurs (Objective 1) and the importance of the questioning of healthcare issues from a political, industrial and social perspective (Objective 2).

Evidence of the use of methodologies from the learning/process theme were most evident in Appendix 2 of the Handbook. The process for Personal Development Planning was set out and learning paths were identified. There was recognition of the importance of work--based projects, mentoring and belonging to a professional association, reflecting the influence of these alternative traditions in management education and development.
In summary, a review of the written documentation highlighted a strong influence of the functional/performance theme in the program design. This was particularly evident with the use of competency-based programs based on industry competency models (Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook 2007). Core elements of the program were taught separately from the practice environment. The induction, study days and the postgraduate component were focused on the individual trainee acquiring knowledge about current theory and practice. The off-site components of the program were aimed at preparing the trainee for the two-year in-field placement where application and practice could occur. The in-field experience was however primarily structured around providing opportunities for competency development and assessment. A key aspect of the relationship between the trainees and their appointed supervisors in the Area Health Services was the reporting and assessment process linked to competency development. Significant opportunities existed nonetheless for the use of learning processes that could match the context/contingent or learning/process themes identified in the management development literature. As stated above, the documentation illustrated an awareness of the availability of alternative approaches such as experiential learning which were reflected in the learning/process theme. The assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning underpinning this particular program were not self-evident. Closer examination of the texts from the semi-structured interviews provided rich data to explore more deeply the designers’ views about the nature of knowledge and learning and the choices they had made about learning processes in practice. The next section presents the findings and interpretation of the interview data.

4.3 Comparing and contrasting literature and interviewee responses

This section interprets the designers’ responses and makes comparisons with the responses received from the trainees to the same questions. The method of analysis is outlined in the previous chapter. Below are several tables. Each table shows the question abbreviated in the left column and the interviewees’ responses adjacent categorised into one of the three themes identified in the literature. The result is a matrix or array which reflects the theme into which the text from the interviewee’s transcripts fit for each question. Some cells in a matrix remain blank as the
respondent’s answer may have been so indistinct that I could not confidently categorise that response or in some cases the interviewee was unable to answer even with some prompting or rephrasing of the question.

### 4.4 Planned learning outcomes from the MTP: Designer responses

A set of introductory questions that covered program purpose, key competencies to be developed, the preferred MTP design and the desired outcomes were put to the program designers. The findings are set out in Table 4.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question (Abbreviated)</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature. (Six designers interviewed labelled D1 to D6).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

From Table 4.1 above it can be seen that from the designers interviewed, a total of 17 responses have been classified as reflecting the functional/performance theme, 19 the context/contingent theme and 6 the learning/process theme. The majority of responses in regard to the program purpose, or key competencies to be developed were in the functional/performance theme. However the responses that examined the
benefits to trainees or new knowledge to be developed or benefits to trainees fell almost exclusively into the context/contingent theme.

The first aspect is perhaps not surprising. Clearly the designers have a responsibility for overseeing a program which represents a considerable investment. They express an expectation that the key competencies to be developed will be ones that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation. So the responses on desired outcomes from the designers reflect this viewpoint. More specifically, on the program purpose 4/6 responses reflect the strong emphasis on the development of skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation.

A key assumption is that the development of appropriate knowledge about management precedes the application within the organisation. The application is of paramount importance to the designers in general. One interviewee stated:

*We're teaching the managerial skills, and when they get into their placements and certainly when they finish the program and get into more senior management positions, that's when they've got to use their skills and that's when they've got to start managing people (D1)*

The question on the new knowledge developed produced an interesting set of responses from the designers. The responses were not categorised into the functional/performance theme but the context/contingent theme. The designers recognised that the acquisition of new knowledge was not purely as a result of the external training components in the MTP. In fact, 100% of the designers’ responses showed that ‘new knowledge’ is perceived as being developed in observing within the health context. It appears this is a strongly held value within the governance group that trainees need to be exposed to the unique political and cultural characteristics of health services. This conclusion is supported by phraseology in both the text of the interviews and in the hardcopy documentation reviewed earlier in this chapter.
Trainees may have undertaken university degrees and this gives them a look at what management is about but... nothing beats that seen in practice. I am talking about the realities of what a manager has to do on the ground trying to juggle competing commitments and demands. (D2)

It appears on a first look there may be a paradox evident in the designers’ responses to the Section 1 questions. It is recognised that observing management on-the-job is closer to the ‘reality’ of management within Health Services. Nonetheless, there remains a strong belief that industry-based competency standards should form the core knowledge and skills framework for the MTP. The designers accept this must be balanced with observation on-the-job and gaining practical experience. This is a key characteristic of the context/contingent theme as discussed in Chapter 2. It stops short of being classified as the learning/process theme because the designers’ responses reflect a view that the trainees need to learn about the unique characteristics of health services as opposed to engaging in learning processes embedded in an action context.

In the learning/process theme learning is seen as inseparable from the context. The designers’ responses may appear paradoxical but are most likely consistent with the worldview in the functional/performance theme and the context/contingent theme. This is because on consideration of all the answers given by the designers their worldview on knowledge and learning appears to be more about acquisition and application as defined in the literature. The trainees acquire knowledge and learn about the application of the knowledge on the job, taking into consideration the cultural and political context.
4.5 Planned learning outcomes from the MTP: Trainee responses

The same set of introductory questions was asked of the trainees. The results are set out in the Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Analysis of Section 1 Questions on Planned Learning Outcomes: Trainees Responses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question (Abbreviated)</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature. (Five trainees labelled T1 to T5).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of program?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of this MTP design?</td>
<td>Context/ contingent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to trainees?</td>
<td>Functional/ performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New knowledge developed?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New attitudes, beliefs and values developed?</td>
<td>Context/ contingency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 4.2 out of a possible 40 trainee responses on this table (8 questions x 5 trainees), 8 have been classified as functional/performance, 12 as context/contingent and 15 as learning/process theme. Both designers and trainees share a strong emphasis on the context/contingent theme with a high number of responses categorised into that theme in the Tables 4.1 and 4.2 above.

One difference of interest is highlighted in the response to the question of the new knowledge that the trainees develop. The designers’ answers were categorised all in the context/contingent theme showing their strong emphasis on the health context. The trainees’ responses were categorised in the learning/process theme. Both sets of responses acknowledge that knowledge related to the context is crucial. The trainees
highly value opportunities to actually do something practical on-the-job as opposed to observing others or doing administrative tasks. Although the trainees’ responses are similar to the designers’ on key competencies, new knowledge is seen to be developed in the process of actually managing in the organisational setting, and has therefore been classified as belonging to the learning/process theme:

*I think more attention needs to be paid to the first year placements, in terms of giving people an appropriate placement to gain the skills they should get... you walk in with no real, no real experience, no knowledge of the health system... and you're just dumped into this job you are expected to do... [Sentence incomplete] T1*

They'll say, "You just do this, you do that". And then it becomes a lot like an administrative job. T4

*I think I probably would look at more contracting a person [trainee] for 12 months... so you got that sort of real solid experience...some sort of rotation through different management roles....so it's not sort of "yes, follow me around". T5*

When you actually go into management... it's actually quite different... you gained this underlying knowledge of what's actually occurring, especially the politics of an organisation and how this affects the management and management structure. You feel that you are really gaining this knowledge of basically, but not the written part of your job. T3

On desired outcomes the trainees again place a dominant emphasis on the learning/process theme which contrasts somewhat with that of the designers. There is far greater emphasis on experiencing management in the situation and on the trainee’s developing their identity through that interaction in the workplace setting.

### 4.6 Learning processes used in the MTP: Designer and trainee responses.

Both groups were asked specific questions pertaining to the learning processes integrated into the Management Training Program. The questions were once again classified in tabular form and are depicted in Table 4.3 below.
Table 4.3: Analysis of Section 2 Questions on the Learning Processes of the MTP: Designers Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question Abbreviated</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context?</td>
<td>Functional/performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of project teams?</td>
<td>Learning/process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How training prepares trainees for work-based activities?</td>
<td>Functional/performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows that the designers responded to these questions 17 times in the functional/performance theme, 12 times in the context/contingent theme and 9 times within the learning/process theme.
Table 4.4 shows a different picture. Table 4.4 below shows the trainees responded to the same questions with just 4 responses in the functional/performance theme, 9 responses in the context/contingent theme and 22 in the learning/process theme.

Table 4.4: Analysis of Section 2 Questions on Learning Processes in the MTP: Trainees Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question: Abbreviated</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning experiences used in the MTP?</td>
<td>Functional/ performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments to the content or learning processes?</td>
<td>Functional/ performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harnessing of learning from the field in the study days?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of project teams as opposed to individual tasks?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How formalised training prepares trainees work-based activities?</td>
<td>Learning/ process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How participants utilise their learning from the MTP in the work context. What difficulties they face?</td>
<td>Context/ contingent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 indicates that there are some general agreements that the opportunities to learn are enhanced or inhibited by contextual factors. The trainees place a far greater emphasis on being given opportunities to engage in the right learning processes. For the questions on “utilisation of learning from the study days” and “harnessing of
learning from the field” the trainees almost predominantly responded with answers that were classified in the learning/process theme. In particular, trainees emphasised opportunities for interaction with other trainees or opportunities for the interaction in the work context. This was seen as a valuable source of learning and acquiring new ideas. Trainees often discussed the first-year of the program and the benefits that they felt were derived from communication and interaction, something they felt had been lost in the second year of the program with the introduction of a Masters in Health Services Management. A typical comment was:

*Last year [2006] we were doing the communication course [to utilise learning from the study days in the work context]. We got to learn how people do things differently....I got a good discussion going around, and I think being in different placements, it increased our discussion level.....you got a feel for what the trainees were going through... T4*

*[This year 2007]... there really isn’t time to actually share, throw an idea in the air and just talk about it. At the moment I feel all we are doing is discussing at lunchtime, that’s all we are doing [i.e. to harness the learning from the field in the study days]. The study days are more focused on the assessment [for the Masters Degree]. It really does not give us time to talk about particular health issues. T3*

On the other hand two designers were not aware of how learning from the field was harnessed during the study days (or vice-versa) and could not comment. The majority of the designers’ responses were categorised in the context/contingent theme. The designers recognised that some contextual constraints/inhibitors would impact on the extent to which learning in the study days was used in the work context. The designers were more inclined to conceptualise learning processes in terms of outcomes achieved (or not achieved) or to consider the characteristics of individual trainees as a moderator of learning and application in context.

*It’s not always going to happen, depending on what the placement is, and whether there are enough staff. I don’t think there is, it’s pretty hard to measure, how the effect could be. D6*

*The concern I have is whether or not the trainees actually had that sort of knowledge and experience to be able to progress the project they are given. D3*
I’ve been involved in the program [for a long time] and honestly couldn’t tell you about how the students are utilising the learning that they are doing in the organisation, in terms of the task set to them in the study days, I honestly couldn’t tell you. D3

In summary, in respect of the tables on learning processes the trainees place emphasis on engagement with others, on-the-job learning and use of real-time “management” experiences. In contrast, some designers presume that the acquisition of theoretical knowledge by the trainees would lead to application in the organisation. However most designers recognise that application may be constrained by contextual factors. So the designers recognise that aspects of the program structure and implementation could impact on its effectiveness within the context.

There was one exception with the designer group. One designer based within an Area Health Service (D2) placed a strong emphasis on the importance of action and reflection on the changing of the ‘self’ (the trainee) as an outcome of engaging in practice. However this designer had difficulty articulating how these principles had specifically been incorporated into the learning processes for the MTP. The trainees’ responses more strongly reflect the importance of learning in the situation from practice and experience. The trainees also recognise the social aspects of learning and implicitly referred to some relationship between individual learning and shared learning.

The trainees and designers share common views about the importance of the individual characteristics of each trainee being a moderator of learning outcomes and application in the workplace. Both groups referred to the level of motivation or initiative shown by the individual trainees being a moderator of learning outcomes. Both groups recognise that significant limitations/barriers to effective application of what has been learnt can exist within the Area Health Services. This might include lack of managerial support, time and workload allocation issues.
4.7 Final expected outcomes after the completion of the MTP: Designers and trainee responses.

Table 4.5 below shows that in response to questions about the expected final outcomes that may be evident in the organisational context the designers gave 8 responses classified as functional/performance, 8 responses classified as context/contingent and 4 responses classified as learning/process.

Table 4.5: Analysis of Section 3 Questions on Expected Final Outcomes: Designer Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question Abbreviated</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differences in outcomes between individual trainees?</strong></td>
<td>Context/contingent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For trainees in the health prior what changes?</strong></td>
<td>Functional/performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparing two groups and people, one having undertaken the MTP what differences?</strong></td>
<td>Functional/performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand Table 4.6 below indicates that the trainees gave 5 responses classified as functional/performance, 11 responses classified as context/contingent and no responses classified as learning/process.
Table 4.6: Analysis of Section 3 Questions on Expected Final Outcomes: Trainees Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question Abbreviated</th>
<th>Responses categorised into three themes identified in the literature.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For trainees in the health system prior to the program, what changes are expected in how they approach their jobs?</td>
<td>Context/contingent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing two groups and people, one having undertaken the MTP what differences?</td>
<td>Context/contingent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What distinguishes each group in terms of actions and behaviours?</td>
<td>Functional/performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses from both the designers and the trainees to the questions in Section 3 on the expected final outcomes overall show a degree of consistency (Tables 4.5 and 4.6). Responses emphasise a blend of individual characteristics and contextual factors influencing what outcomes might be achieved.

The designers were somewhat circumspect about their expectations given the age of the trainees and their general lack of experience (Table 4.5). The designers retain strong expectations that the worldview of the trainees will be broader and their conceptual frameworks will have been expanded with a better understanding of management competencies and a better understanding of the health context.

However the predominant sentiment from the designers was caution considering the real constraints within the Health System that could inhibit the trainee’s ability to perform on-the-job.
You hope that all of them will come out capable of being employed as a manager at some level. I don’t think it [the MTP] necessarily achieves that for everybody. We’re really looking for the ones able to move a bit further. I think the postgraduate program is probably going to deepen that pool of potential. D2

Health is a highly regulated industry. And I think it’s quite confronting to the trainees when they first start to work in health. So some of them will stay a while and then leave. Being the generation they are, I would suspect that they will probably dip in and out. D3

The trainees placed a strong emphasis on the context and the individual. The trainees recognise that the context could constrain opportunity and learning but that highly motivated individuals may be able to overcome this constraint.

Asked about the differences in outcomes between individual trainees T5 stated:

I guess it depends, not everyone is going to have a great experience, for some people it will be fairly mediocre. Some people get into it; others coast and just have the experiences that are given to them without too much worry. I think some people are happy to drift. Some people have a crack time and may leave... not every trainee is going to be assertive and ask for things. T5

Both groups of interviewees mentioned differences that would be evident between the two groups on-the-job, and these included things such as the capacity to network, having a macro view, tenacity, an appropriate conceptual framework, greater confidence and a better capacity to progress through the system into more senior positions. Essentially both groups emphasised individual cognition and a different mindset as being significant. However, there was no strong evidence emerging from these responses that give any indication about organisational outcomes.

Essentially, the patterns that emerge from both sets of responses in Section 3 reflect an inherent conservatism in the program. Both trainees and designers in this particular participant group see management development as being, at least in part, an adaption to the social norms and values of the host organisation. There is recognition of social, political and cultural barriers to the application of new knowledge. However the challenge is viewed in terms of the trainees needing to adapt to the health context so that they can effectively manage in that specific
cultural and political context. Obviously the nature of the Health Services context impacts on this finding. This need to adapt to the context of Health Services is reflected in the higher number of designer responses that were in the functional/performance theme or the context/contingent theme. An emphasis found in the data is on the importance of the development of industry-standard knowledge about management, and the importance of effective functional performance (application) in the workplace. For this to occur, the participants in this study suggested that an understanding of the social, political and cultural context is essential. In addition, it was found that an emphasis on the need for each individual to develop context specific behaviours and knowledge is considered good management practice. Participants also commented that individual learning styles are potential barriers or facilitators to learning in the context. Further, organisational conditions are recognised as having the potential to impact on the effective development of trainees’ competencies. However, this particular cohort did not emphasise the development of new knowledge or changed practices within the organisational context. The emphasis is on the trainees learning and adapting within the current cultural system.

4.8 Key findings; what does it all mean?

When comparing and contrasting the themes from the literature with the results from the interviews, three key findings have been identified.

First, the program designers gave more responses categorised as the functional/performance theme, and the context/contingent theme as opposed to the trainees. The trainees leaned more towards the learning/process theme and the context/contingent theme. The designers have a worldview based on the assumption that the development of industry-standard knowledge about management is an important prerequisite to effective functional performance in the workplace. However, it also seems they hold strong values that any theoretical knowledge must be balanced with a practical understanding of the health context. The trainees’ responses reflect the need for the actual doing of something to contribute to their learning. The trainees hold similar views but see appropriate opportunities for responsibility as crucial for learning. The trainees’ responses reflect their belief that
practice and experience help build their identity as a manager. The designers’ responses indicate a worldview on the nature of knowledge and learning processes that fits within the traditional management development paradigm.

The second key finding is in regard to program design issues and choices about learning processes. The designers were more strongly inclined to draw on the assumption that individual learning by the trainees about good management practice would support application in the workplace. A critical change was made to the program in 2006 that reflected this emphasis. The program moved from being based around competencies to being based around an external Masters in Health Services Management. Learning about the context was viewed by the designers as critical and this is gained through on-the-job exposure and observation. However the choice of learning processes was not specifically guided by a philosophical position or pedagogical approach that emphasised experiential learning or learning in a social context. The designers viewed knowledge development as being moderated by the individual characteristics of the trainee and resource constraints within the context. In contrast, the trainees were more acutely aware there were actual barriers to their knowledge and skills development in the organisational setting. These constraints were more significant to the trainees because they affected their ability to learn and develop new knowledge as opposed to purely affecting their ability to apply existing knowledge.

The trainees’ responses reflect an implicit awareness that learning about management is inseparable from the ‘situation’ of management reflecting the learning/process theme. The trainees also recognise the importance of the social aspects of learning (with some implied recognition of the relationship between individual cognition and shared cognition). There is some emphasis on the importance of shared reflection as much as on individual reflection. The designers show a relatively low level of awareness about the specific choices about learning processes. There is some evidence therefore that the worldview about the nature of knowledge held by the designers has impacted their choices about the design of the program and the learning processes selected.
4.9 Chapter summary

In conclusion there is evidence that the designers of the program make assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning that mirror the assumptions in the traditional management paradigm. As identified in Chapter 2, this paradigm contained a functional/performance theme and a context/contingent theme. The designers’ responses were categorised predominately as consistent with these two themes, indicating they held a rational or structural perspective of knowledge and perceived learning as largely individual, cognitive and behavioural. The choices they made about learning processes and program design were affected by these assumptions. Key opportunities to develop learning processes embedded in the context were not pursued despite there being significant opportunity over the two-year work placement. In fact, decisions had been made that specifically moved the program in a direction that placed greater emphasis on individual development separate from the organisational context. It should be acknowledged of course that these findings emerge from a specific participant group within a very specific context and timeframe and that any conclusions cannot be generalised to other settings without further research.
Chapter 5
Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter will outline the conclusions from this study. The Chapter is specifically focused on detailing the answers to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 Section 1.2 in which the research objectives and the questions designed to operationalise those questions were detailed. This will be followed by a discussion of the implications for theory and future research. At the outset it was stated that a taken-for-granted assumption with many management development interventions is that they contribute to organisational learning. For the participant designer group in this study any link between the intervention and organisational learning was not clearly articulated. This was considered to be a deficiency considering the extent of research into how organisational learning occurs in organisational contexts. An opportunity is identified for future research to extend this existing study in different contexts.

5.2 Summary of findings on the research questions

This research study aimed to examine a management training program in a health services context. Of particular interest were the assumptions held by the program designers about the nature of knowledge and how people learn. The assumptions held by the designers were compared with those identified in literature on management development. The findings were considered to have potential implications for any links to organisational learning:

The research problem was to be investigated by answering the following questions:

1) What are the assumptions about knowledge and the nature of learning (paradigms) that can be identified within the management development literature?
2) In what ways are the assumptions identified congruent or incongruent with the assumptions in organisational learning?

3) What assumptions about knowledge and learning are held by the designers (and for comparison, the trainees) of an actual management development program?

4) How have the assumptions held by the program designers affected their choices about program design or selection of learning processes in the program;

5) What therefore were the links to organisational learning in practice?

The research questions posed above will be discussed and answered in the following sections.

5.2.1 What are the assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning that can be identified within the management development literature?

Two broad paradigms were identified in the management development literature based on different underpinning assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning (Chapter 2).

The first paradigm, titled the traditional management paradigm, is based on assumptions about the nature of knowledge that Newell et al. (2002) define as a structural perspective. In a structural perspective knowledge is considered to be a discrete cognitive entity, largely static and objective, which can be recognised, stored and utilised in a managed way. This traditional paradigm in the management development literature contained two distinct themes termed the functional/performance and context/contingent themes. While these two themes shared similar assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning, placing them within the traditional management paradigm, each had a distinct research emphasis. The functional/performance theme was focused on the development of the individual manager drawing on established explicit knowledge on ‘good management practice’ and the alignment of the management development intervention with the strategic
goals of the organisation. The context/contingent theme was more specifically focused on removing barriers to effective learning transfer in the organisational context.

The second paradigm, *management learning*, in the management development literature is based on a different set of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning. This is described as a processual or constructivist perspective of learning and knowledge Newell et al. (2002). A *processual* perspective of knowledge sees the individual’s knowledge as more subjective framed by their perceptions, experiences and understandings (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Knowledge is co-constructed in a social context. This was found to be mirrored in the learning/process theme within the management development literature. This theme had an emphasis on descriptive and interpretive research on learning in the organisational context. Literature within the management learning paradigm was primarily driven by academic researchers. These researchers place less emphasis on the development of descriptive models for management development interventions.

The literature review therefore highlights distinct sets of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning in the management development literature. This established a framework for matching the underpinning assumptions with those in organisational learning literature (Section 3.5.2). This framework made it possible to establish whether any congruence or incongruence exists between the literature and the management development programme in practice.

### 5.2.2 In what ways are the assumptions identified congruent or incongruent with the assumptions in organisational learning?

Comparing and contrasting the assumptions identified in 5.2.1 above and those held in the organisational learning literature is a complex and multifaceted task. This is because a review of the organisational learning literature indicates that, over the last three decades, several different research disciplines have emerged. The different disciplines within the organisational learning literature were discussed in detail in Chapter 2 in Section 2.1 and 2.2. The different disciplines were based on the
ontological position of the researchers with regard to the “social phenomena that are considered to be the core of organisational learning” (Easterby-Smith 1997, p1086). How the researchers viewed organisations impacted on how they investigated organisational learning. If a researcher’s view of an organisation was that it is a social system then the focus of the research would be on learning within a social context and the process of construction of knowledge within that context. This would involve different research foci and the use of different research methodologies and methods.

Some convergence in research focus has occurred within the organisational learning literature from the early 1990s. The shift has been toward the researchers’ more frequently holding “an image of learners as social beings who construct their understanding, and learn from social interaction, within specific socio-cultural settings” (Easterby-Smith et al. 1998, p275). This image of learners and organisations reflects socio-cultural or constructivist theory (Vygotsky 1978; Cook and Yanow 1993). This differs in fundamental ways from the earlier research which viewed organisational learning as the sum of individual learning, based on individual cognitive and behavioural models of learning (see a critique of this early approach by Kim, 1993).

As stated in Section 5.2.1 above the traditional management development paradigm predominately privileges individual behavioural and cognitive learning theory. It is therefore not drawing on multiple perspectives of learning evident in the contemporary organisational learning literature (DeFillipi and Ornstein 2003). The emphasis remains predominantly on individual acquisition of knowledge and its subsequent application. The management learning paradigm was found to make assumptions that are more congruent with contemporary organisational learning literature. There are therefore some congruities between the management learning literature and the contemporary organisational learning literature. However researchers in the latter paradigm are generally more focused on descriptive and interpretive research into so-called natural learning processes within organisational contexts (Fox, 1997). The development of this theory has therefore been less widely adopted in practice.
The links to organisational learning are not explicitly explored in much of the management development literature, most particularly the literature within the traditional management development paradigm. This is despite the fact that much of the literature purports to achieve outcomes in the organisational context such as greater flexibility, adaptability and learning (Cullen and Turnbull 2005; Espedal 2005). Therefore it is suggested that any links to organisational learning have not been strongly developed through rigorous research (Section 2.7). It is therefore of interest to determine whether this incongruity is also reflected in the current practice of intervention design.

5.2.3 What assumptions about knowledge and learning are held by the designers (and for comparison, the trainees) of an actual management development program?

The assumptions held by the designers in the participant study group largely mirrored those identified in the traditional management development paradigm. In other words, most of the responses of the program designers were categorised as consistent with the functional/performance theme, and/or the context/contingent theme (Section 3.1; Table 4.1). The designers have a worldview based on the assumption that the development of industry-standard knowledge about management is an important prerequisite to effective functional performance in the workplace. This is balanced with strongly held values that any theoretical knowledge must be partnered with a practical understanding of the context.

The designers’ responses indicated a worldview on the nature of knowledge and learning processes that fits within the structural perspective of knowledge and individual cognitive and behavioural perspectives of learning. Essentially therefore it was possible to find a match between assumptions held in the traditional management development literature and those held by the designers of a program in practice. This therefore leads to an examination of how this impacted on the choices the designers made about the program design and learning processes to be included. Interestingly, the trainees’ responses reflect a greater perceived need for interaction with others in a social context and opportunities for practical experience as crucial for their learning (Section 3.2 Table 4.2).
5.2.4 How have the assumptions held by the program designers affected their choices about program design or selection of learning processes in the program?

The design choices made by the designers in the study most closely reflected the functional/performance theme and the context/contingent theme in the management development literature (see Section 4.2 Tables 2.2 and Section 4.3 Table 2.3 in Chapter 2). Evidence supporting consistency with the functional/performance theme includes the following:

- There is an emphasis on the use of external experts and industry-standard knowledge ‘about’ good management practice. For example Table 4.1 in Section 4.3 indicated a strong set of responses in the functional/performance and context/contingent themes. The designers felt they had a responsibility for overseeing a program which represented a considerable investment within Health Services. The inclusion of a postgraduate programme was viewed as an opportunity to attract a higher calibre of trainee to the program. The view was expressed that the high-level management education component of the program would broaden the trainees’ frameworks (D1). This decision had implications for the design of the program as it changed the use of the study days and opportunities to engage in what could be described as learning in the social context (Elkjaer 2003).

- The emphasis is on building the trainee’s functional competence in key areas such as financial management and human resources management as well as other areas such as communication. The interviews with the designers, and the review of the documentation in Section 4.1, indicated the program was redesigned in the late 1990s using the NSW Vocational Educational & Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) Certificate IV in Business (Front-line Management) as a template. The competency assessment framework forms the basis for assessment of trainee’s skill development (Section 4.1). This places an emphasis on individual cognitive and behavioural development. Knowledge and skills are required and subsequently applied within the context.
The observable behavioural elements are crucial to competency assessment and evidence gathering.

- The work-based component of the program was retained to ensure trainees received ‘practice’ in the development of their individual functional skills. However this was more characterised as an example of the context/contingent theme. Design efforts therefore were targeted to reduce barriers to the application of knowledge acquired or learning in the workplace. Despite some reference to experiential learning in the program documentation (Section 4.1) the designers’ responses to the interviews (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2) indicated they viewed on-the-job training as developing an understanding of the political and cultural context. The designers were less able to discuss any specific aspects of the program design that may have contributed to the development of new knowledge in the context (Table 4.3).

- A key decision occurred in 2006/7 which was to change the program to include the Graduate Diploma or Masters in Health Services Management through Charles Sturt University to replace a VETAB accredited Certificate Level IV in Business (Front-Line Management). On close examination the change was found to reinforce an underpinning emphasis by the designers on the acquisition of industry-standard knowledge about good management practice. The trainees’ responses to questions on the learning processes within the program (Table 4.3; Section 4.4) indicated that the trainees were aware of some disruption to learning processes in the program that had occurred as a result of this decision. However the findings also indicate that the design principles reflected the context/contingent theme in regard to the work-based component of the program. This was because the focus is more on overcoming barriers in the context or developing a better understanding of the context in order to achieve more effective application of knowledge and skill.

Overwhelmingly, the choices about learning processes made by the participants in the study were found to be influenced by individual their individual-oriented theories of learning. This conclusion was reached by comparing the underpinning assumptions made by the designers with the underpinning assumptions identified in
the management development literature. Assumptions based on individual orientated cognitive and behavioural learning were matched with choices about learning processes in Chapter 2 (see Table 2.2 and Table 2.3).

The research questions aimed to identify whether the designers of a management development program held implicit assumptions about learning that had impacted on the program design and implementation in ways which could have implications for organisational learning. The findings indicate that for the group of designers in this study there was a relationship between the designer’s worldview of knowledge and learning and the learning processes adopted in the intervention. The learning processes used in the intervention could not be clearly linked to organisational learning as defined in the contemporary organisational learning literature because there was little or no emphasis on learning activities that would have been consistent with the learning/process paradigm (Table 4.3).

5.2.5 *What were the implications for organisational learning in practice?*

As discussed in Chapter 2 contemporary organisational learning literature has a strong focus on the relations of individuals with each other in the context of the activities they are undertaking. It explores the individual’s meaning making and the conditions or activities that help individuals to continually learn in a collective domain (Antonacopoulou 2001; Chiva 2007; Blackler 2004; Brown and Duguid 1991; 2001; Chiva and Alegre 2005; Cook and Yanow 1993; Elkjaer 2005; Fenwick 2006; Lave and Wenger 1991; Shultz 2008; Weick 1991, 2001). This latter approach is influenced by constructivist and socio-cultural views of learning (Section 2.4).

The designers in the participant study group did not have a clearly articulated position on the *interaction* between any new knowledge constructed by the individual as a part of the formal program components (i.e. study days or the postgraduate study in Health Services Management) with the practical *know-how* developed in the field placement (Section 4.3 Table 4.2 and Section 4.4 and Table 4.3). Certainly, learning about management in the workplace was highly valued by the participant group. However, with this participant group it was not
clear how the management development intervention would specifically link to organisational learning.

5.3 Implications for theory

Engestrom and Kerosuo (2007) argue that there is a growing need to develop “systematic methodological guidelines for interventionist studies of learning” within work activities (p340). These authors argue that at present various strands of action research and other intervention methodologies “live in their relatively isolated niches without much comparative debate and collaboration” (2007, p340). In a similar way this study identified that the traditional management development literature has evolved for the most part alongside the organisational learning literature, without much evidence of cross-fertilisation of ideas (Chapter 2 Section 2.7).

The findings of this study, while limited to one program and one participant group, highlight that a problem of significance could exist. The study reflected the findings from an examination of the organisational learning literature and the management development literature (Section 2.7). There is a lack of research on how management development interventions link with organisational learning coupled with a lack of research on effective ways to establish those linkages in practice (Richter 2003, Arvaja et al. 2007; Steiner and Mahn 2000). This research has therefore identified a possible need for more robust theory-development on the linkages between management development and organisational learning. Such theory development needs to occur prior to the development of robust, practical models to guide intervention practices.

Current researchers suggest future theoretical development is specifically needed on the linkages between individual and collective learning within a practice-based management development framework (Marshall 2008; Richter 2003). There is intense interest in how individual and collective learning interact within an action domain (Cook and Brown 1999; Brown and Duguid 1991, 2001; Fenwich 2008; Garavan and McCarthy 2008; Marshall 2008; Richter 2003; Spender 2003; Schulz, 2008). Generally this interest is linked to the use of alternate pedagogical approaches (see Table 2.3) that incorporate the interaction between the individual
and others in a context (Gherardi 2001, 2008; Wenger 2004). It is suggested theory development is needed on this aspect of management development interventions.

5.4 Implications for further research

Given the limitation of this study to one program in one context further research is required to extend the study to other contexts and programs using the same methodology. The different context may include different levels of management or different industries. This would give a stronger indication that some generalisations can be drawn in regards to the findings.

As stated in the introductory chapter, this thesis is a precursor to a PhD study that will provide further opportunities to make a contribution to the scholarly literature. There is an opportunity for theory development on management development interventions and its linkages to organisational learning. An outcome of this theory development could be the development of new practice-oriented models for intervention more specifically aimed to utilise individual and collective learning processes.

5.5 Chapter summary

This study found that the worldview and assumptions of program designers about the nature of knowledge and learning impacted on their choices of learning processes. The learning processes selected were not clearly linked to organisational learning. As the study used a methodology specifically developed to investigate the research problem an opportunity exists to extend the study to other contexts. The research problem concerning a lack of congruity between theory and practice was confirmed to exist in a specific context and in a specific timeframe. It is suggested that this problem is of significance and could be further investigated using a similar methodological framework. This study confirms that research into links between organisational learning and management development are theoretically further advanced than in practice. Hence, the interaction of knowledge between the individual and a collective, or from ‘One to Many’ is now firmly on the research agenda.


Choueke, R., West, P., 2002. The MSc management development: a programme in management or a management of that process? A study focusing on the MSc in management development at Edge Hill. Education + Training, 44 (6), 271-280.


Development, Gower: Aldershot.


Appendix 1: HEEC 05 086 Ethics Approval

25 May 2005

Patrick McGirr
5 Florabella Street
Warrimoo NSW 2774

Dear Patrick

Re: Management Development: Is it building organization learning? HREC 05/086

The Committee has reviewed your application and the project mentioned above is approved.

You are advised that the Committee should be notified of any further change/s to the research methodology should there be any in the future. You will be required to provide a report on the ethical aspects of your project at the completion of this project. The form is located on the Research Services Web Page.

The Protocol Number HREC 05/086 should be quoted in all future correspondence about this project. Your approval will expire 30 December 2007. Please contact the Human Ethics Officer, Kay Buckley on tel: 02 47 360 883 if you require any further information.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Elizabeth Deane
Chairperson
UWS Human Research Ethics Committee
Dr Debra Blackman
Appendix 2: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Research Project

Title: Management Development (MD): Is it building organisational learning?

I have read the enclosed Information Statement on the above project and I understand what my involvement will be in the research project as a participant, and wish to give consent for my involvement in the following components:

Tick the appropriate box or both boxes:

**SEMI-STRUCTURED ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW/S: Yes** ☑

All participants will remain anonymous, as there will not be any identifiers used on the transcriptions or in the final report. Please note that the interviews will be taped.

Participating is entirely voluntary. Any participant may withdraw his/her contribution at any time during the course of this research without providing an explanation. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your employment status.

I hereby give my consent for my involvement in the research in the components indicated above:

Signed _________________________________________ Date _______________

Name____________________________________ Contact Tel. No.____________

Please return to:

Mr Patrick McGirr
School of Management
University of Western Sydney
Building I Rm 2.19
Kingswood
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith South DC NSW 1797
Appendix 3: Information Statement for Interviewee

INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR INTERVIEWEES:

Participants in MTP

Research Project

Title: Management Development: Is it building organisational learning?

A research study is being conducted by the University of Western Sydney (UWS) with the approval of ACHSE (NSW Branch), which is exploring the assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning processes that are implicit in the design of the Management Training Program (MTP). The purpose is to explore the implications of the findings for organisational learning or ‘learning capability’ within the health services context.

You are invited to participate in this research study as a participant in the MTP in NSW. The research will be undertaken using two methods; one will be interviewing a range of stakeholders involved in design and delivery of the MTP as well as a sample group of participants, and the second will be through direct observation of a number of actual in-house MTP study days.

The reason for interviewing a sample of participants in the MTP is to cross-check if the assumptions about learning and knowledge held by the key stakeholders and designers are consistent with those held by participants. The research is not an evaluation of individual learning outcomes. The purpose is to explore the implications of the findings for organisational learning in a health services context.

The individual interviews will be semi-structured and will take one hour to conduct and these will be recorded. In some instances a further follow-up interview may be required, subject to mutual agreement. Strict confidentiality and privacy of any views expressed is assured as it is recognised that any breach of confidentiality in a work context would be potentially harmful to participants. There will not be any identifiers used on the transcriptions or in the final report. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form that will clearly set out these conditions of consent.

Participating is entirely voluntary. Any participant may withdraw his/her contribution at any time during the course of this research without explanation. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your employment status.
The primary research is to be undertaken by Mr Patrick McGirr a student in a Master of Commerce (Honours) in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). Associate Professor Deborah Blackman based at the University of Canberra will be an external advisor to the project.

If you require further information before you may your decision whether to participate please feel free to contact me.

If you choose to participate please complete and sign the Consent Form attached and return to:

Mr Patrick McGirr
School of Management
University of Western Sydney
Building U9 Rm. 1.09, Nerimba Precinct
Quakers Hill NSW 2763.

Or for your convenience you may confirm your availability by contacting me on my mobile on 0402 129 484.

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is HREC 05/086. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee/Panel through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883 or 4736 0884). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 4: Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews with Designers.

**Section 1 Expected Learning Outcomes from the MTP**

- Generally speaking, what is the purpose of work based management development programmes?
- What key competencies are most desired?
- What do you think is the best approach in designing a management development programme?
- From your perspective what are the most desired outcomes from the MTP?
- In what way do the participants benefit?
- What new knowledge do the participants develop? How is this demonstrated?
- What new attitudes are developed as a result of participation in the MTP?
- What new skills do the participant's develop? How are these skills demonstrated?

**Section 2 Learning processes used in the MTP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light grey indicates possible probing questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of learning experiences do you build into the program? How did you structure the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the course was underway, did you make any adjustments to the content or learning processes? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effectively do participants apply their learning to the work context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you harness and build on the learning from the work placement/project/context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it that trainees participate in project teams rather than on individual tasks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can trainees learn in a group setting that they cannot learn as individuals? Give Examples. How do the participants generate and share knowledge in the learning processes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways does the classroom training prepare trainees for participating actively and creatively in project teams?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the basis for selecting work based experiential activities for trainees?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the benefit to trainees in participating in these work based experiential activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What aspect of the classroom training transfers into the project situation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideally, trainees utilise their learning from the MTP course in the work context. How do you do this? What difficulties did you face?

**Section 3 Expected Outcomes after Program Completion**

- What different outcomes are you expecting across the group? Why Why not? How much individual variation do you expect in what people gain or learn from the program?
- If you consider only participants who were in the health system before the MTP program, what changes did you expect to see in the way they approached their jobs?
- If someone compared two groups of people-those who have undertaken the MTP and those who have not-what differences would you see in terms of how each approached their jobs? How would MTP trainees act or think differently on the job? Why? |
- What actions do you want the graduates to maintain or sustain within health services? What distinguishes MTP graduates from non-graduates in terms of actions and behaviours? Could you tell them apart-what things would distinguish them?
## Appendix 5: Questions for Semi-Structured interviews with Trainees

### Section 1 Learning Outcomes from the MTP

(Light grey indicates possible probing questions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking, what from your perspective is the <strong>purpose</strong> of a work based MTP?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What key competencies do trainees develop? Why were these selected? Use some examples to explain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in your view is the best approach in designing a management development programme? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From your perspective what are the most desired outcomes from the work-based component of the MTP?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what way do you as a trainee benefit from the MTP?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What new knowledge do trainees develop? How is this acquired?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What new attitudes, beliefs and ideas are developed as a result of the new knowledge developed in the MTP? How is this demonstrated by trainees? By you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What new skills do trainees develop? By you? How is this demonstrated by the trainees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 2 Learning Processes used in the MTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of learning experiences have been built into the program? Why do you think it is done that way? How is the program structured? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the course was underway, were there any adjustments made by the college to the content or learning processes? What is your understanding of why this was done?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How effectively do you as a trainee utilise your learning from the study days of the MTP in the work context once completed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When trainees return to the study days after participating in experiential activities in the field, how do the MTP trainers harness what was learned from that experience? How? Give examples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important do you think it is that trainees participate in project teams rather than on individual tasks?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways does the classroom training prepare trainees for participating actively and creatively in work based experiential activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the basis for selecting work based experiential activities for trainees? What do you think is the benefit to trainees in participating in these work based experiential activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideally, trainees utilise their learning from the MTP course in the work context. How do you do this? What difficulties did you face?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 3 Expected/Outcomes after the completion of the MTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What different learning outcomes do you see between individual trainees in the MTP?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much individual variation do you see in the individual knowledge gained from the program?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you consider only participants who were in the health system before the MTP program, what changes did you expect to see in the way they approached their jobs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were able to compare two groups of people-those who have undertaken the MTP and those who have not-what differences would you see in terms of how each approached their jobs? How would MTP trainees act or think differently on the job? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once trainees have completed the whole program how will they do their job differently? What do you think will distinguish MTP graduates from non-graduates in terms of actions and behaviours? How would someone tell them apart-what things would distinguish them?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 6: Section 1 Questions: Designer Responses on Planned Learning Outcomes (paraphrased)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>Purpose of program</th>
<th>Key competencies</th>
<th>Concept of this MTP design</th>
<th>Desired outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>The provision of qualified and trained managers for the health system.</td>
<td>The utilisation of resources, financial and human</td>
<td>It is important to have a relationship between the workplace learning and theoretical learning. It's about linking the two together. For example even though we do the masters programme in health service management it's really about understanding what it all means. You won't understand that until you try something.</td>
<td>To give the trainees a range of appropriate experiences that health manager needs. By rotating the trainees around each gets a balance of experiences. They will get some understanding of how the management of health services in NSW actually hangs together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>The development of a talent pool coming through the system. Works as a graduate management training program to identify future talent.</td>
<td>Understanding the nature of management. It's about having the work experience to back up achieving the competencies. Obviously the context makes a big difference. Take the dilemma of decision-making. It is beneficial for the trainees to see senior executives in the process of debating and making decisions and working their way through the dilemmas that are faced in the health context. The trainee can interpret what's going on in these situations and this I see as important.</td>
<td>There is a need for a structured workplace learning program with flexibility. You need that linked to placement supervisor and/or a senior manager/sponsor-mentor who is not the supervisor. This person is someone the trainee could talk to about the overall experiences. The rotation could be every four to six months to allow greater stability and a greater opportunity to build a connection and understand their experiences and what they are getting out of it.</td>
<td>The most desired outcome is that we identified the talent and employ them. It is a workforce development issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose of program</strong>&lt;br&gt;The program is focused on a Certificate IV in Business (Front-line Management) which is a nationally recognised. It is not possible to measure competence by merely observing participation in an academic environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key competencies</strong>&lt;br&gt;It is really about core behaviours that front-line managers are able to demonstrate. That is in any organisation in any context. The competencies could include communication, work priorities working in a team, developing an operational plan etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concept of this MTP design</strong>&lt;br&gt;I think we need to work from the back to the front. You actually have to go out to the field, and look at it as it is, look at what it is that managers do. Competencies attempt to define the sorts of behaviours that managers are responsible for the workplace and the standards follow behaviours. But we need to look at how do we measure these behaviours, how would we assess how these behaviours have been attained-then you write the learning content and then you're learning experiences around that.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Desired outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Trainees come with limited experience. We hope that by the end of the program they will have experience in financial management and human resource management. This is what managers in health find particular challenging. Health service managers need to be able to work with a business plan and deal with spreadsheets and look at budgets.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose of program</strong>&lt;br&gt;So that people end up being able to apply their learning or so they hit the ground running. It is about being trained in the workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key competencies</strong>&lt;br&gt;Application, it's about application! The competencies would include developing priorities, effective workplace relationships, managing operational plans, managing information, customer service, continuous improvement, developing individuals and teams.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concept of this MTP design</strong>&lt;br&gt;A competency approach is more successful than the theoretical academic approach. We have got a lot of managers who do MBA’s and they don't practise their management well. Theoretical study would help managers reflect on their practice and improve on their practice. I think the baseline is the knowledge, the skills, competencies and then you build on that.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Desired outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;The beauty of working with people in the health system is that trainees get loads of experience to draw on and they can make sense of the learning and be able to apply it. In the short term they need to get a job. You actually want to see that the placements were viable and successful for the individual and the facility.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Purpose of program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key competencies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concept of this MTP design</strong></td>
<td><strong>Desired outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D5</strong></td>
<td>Becoming familiar with the health setting. Getting familiar with a whole new culture.</td>
<td>The biggest thing they should be exposed to is human relationships and interaction, and affecting team and managing people. That's what takes a large amount of time as a manager.</td>
<td>You need a program that takes into account the different individuals. You can't just march them through like a school class. We are preparing them for their work, for being part of a team. Each individual will be different. Some more academically inclined will go towards the policy side or the planning side.</td>
<td>They identify the limitation in the area within health they would like to work in. They develop an understanding of the complexity of the health system and the bureaucracy. Health professionals seek identity. They want to be known as the best nurse or the best doctor. So the manager is coming up against that different attitude. Those different attitudes and values can vary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D6</strong></td>
<td>It is not all theoretical. It is about picking up experience over the two years.</td>
<td>Communication skills. Being able to talk to the superiors. Keeping up with the IT. Other things like developing staff and setting objectives.</td>
<td>This program is work-based training and people get together once a month. They are able to communicate and go through the Uni stuff. The work experience that people gain makes the MTP a good design. They are getting to meet senior people and see the other side of the fence.</td>
<td>The most desired outcome is employment at the end of the program (particularly in the rural areas). Sometimes for trainees of indigenous backgrounds in the Aboriginal Management Trainee Program they are not familiar with the studies or getting a tertiary qualification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 7: Section 1 Questions: Designer Responses on Learning Outcomes matched to literature themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>Purpose of program</th>
<th>Key competencies</th>
<th>Concept of this MTP design</th>
<th>Desired outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is necessary to develop skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. What constitutes good generic management practice is the appropriate guide for the ‘content’ of the MTP.</td>
<td>Learning/process theme. Knowledge is constructed in practice. Experienced and that learning on-the-job is to aim pivotal. The actual doing of something and reflecting on that experience is critical.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is important to align manager’s capabilities with business objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is necessary to develop skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation.</td>
<td>The context/contingent theme. There is recognition of the social and institutional interactions that affect application of new knowledge.</td>
<td>The context/contingent theme. The MTP needs to be well integrated into the culture and systems of the organisation.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is important to align manager’s capabilities with business objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. Individual managerial learning will lead to application of that learning in the organisation.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. What constitutes good generic management practice is the appropriate guide for the ‘content’ of the MTP.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. What constitutes good generic management practice is the appropriate guide for the ‘content’ of the MTP.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is necessary to develop skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. Individual managerial learning will lead to application of that learning in the organisation.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. Individual managerial learning will lead to application of that learning in the organisation.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. What constitutes good generic management practice is the appropriate guide for the ‘content’ of the MTP. A strong commitment to industry-based competency standards as the core framework for good management development.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is necessary to develop skills that are consistent and congruent with the strategic goals of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Purpose of program</td>
<td>Key competencies</td>
<td>Concept of this MTP design</td>
<td>Desired outcomes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>The context/contingent theme. The MTP needs to be well integrated into the culture and systems of the organisation.</td>
<td>The learning/process theme. Learning is inseparable from the situation of management (which involves interaction with people).</td>
<td>The learning/process theme. People develop their understanding and learning from social interaction within a specific context. Each learns differently based on the individual attributes and in interaction with others.</td>
<td>The context/contingent theme. Organisational culture and values will affect the application of any theoretical knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>The learning/process theme. Learning is inseparable from the situation of management. Practice and experience helped build the identity of the trainee as a manager within a specific context.</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. What constitutes good generic management practice is the appropriate guide for the ‘content’ of the MTP.</td>
<td>The learning/process theme. Learning is inseparable from the situation of management (which involves interaction with people).</td>
<td>Functional/performance theme. It is important to align manager’s capabilities with business objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 8: Section 2: Questions on Learning Processes: Designers Responses (paraphrased)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>Sample Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning experiences in the MTP</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adjustments to the content or learning processes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D1</strong></td>
<td>Well the learning is mainly on-the-job learning. Apart from exposure in particular areas such as financial management or HR it is trying to get an understanding of how the health system operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D2</strong></td>
<td>There is a fairly good assessment component to the MTP that's about workplace assessment, collection of evidence etc. There are also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Sample Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Learning experiences in the MTP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning pathways identified in those sorts of things. Again some of that stuff comes back to how much the supervisor is with the trainee. As a supervisor I used to do a bit of nurturing and assistance with the trainees about how you actually work through some of the competencies and collect evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Adjustments to the content or learning processes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the graduate diploma etc. And that was really about upping the anti-and trying to make the program more attractive... that was about marketing to bring in a different calibre of applicant. I think the selection tool is probably better because of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>along the line, you know they were floating around, trying to make sense of all of this, these experiences and what they were seeing, and then all of a sudden, the penny drops. Some never got it, and others came in and they were sharp right from the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Harnessing of learning from the field in the study days</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gather that they are using work-based problems in the learning. Writing reports and sharing experiences, as educationalists I believe this stuff is valuable. I believe that reflection on action is a very successful way of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>I don't have anything to do with the study days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was a belief that undertaking the Masters would provide trainees with an embedded conceptual framework around the issues are working in the Public Health Care Sector. At the end of the day it's how you perform in the workplace that is of value in the industry, not a piece of paper that you have. You know there is certainly cynicism in the industry about people who have fairly high-level tertiary qualifications but can't sort out teen conflict in the service in which they are.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not absolutely sure that the supervisors actually understand how to provide the level of experience that the trainees required to meet the outcomes of the program. I mean what actually happens is that assuming a service has agreed to take a trainee, they think, you beaut, an extra pair of hands the 12 months. I think sometimes the structure of the program makes it difficult to the trainees to demonstrate their true capability or for that matter, for the supervisors to assess, whether or not trainees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I've been involved in the program outfit to use, and I honestly couldn't tell you from the students about how they are utilising the learning that they are doing in the organisation in terms of the tasks set to them in the study days, honestly couldn't tell you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Sample Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Learning experiences in the MTP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Initially I just came in to run half a day of the study days based on the competencies. So basically... a facilitated discussion and activity programme for the afternoon. It was facilitated discussion is drawing on experiences that the trainees have had. The trainee performance agreements and their appraisals are still linked to the competencies. The aim was to keep the framework of competency-based training so that the links are made to the competencies and it's applied, but they get the high qualification, they get theoretical component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Know I can't I can't answer that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Sample Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased).</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning experiences in the MTP</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adjustments to the content or learning processes</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>In the long run, they [Front-line Competencies] are all competencies the manager should have, you know to be a manager, competent manager level been identified by Australian Health Training Authorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 9: Section 2: Designers Responses on Learning Processes matched to literature themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>Sample Questions and Responses by Designers in semi-structured interviews (paraphrased).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td><strong>Context/contingent theme.</strong> The ability to be effective as a manager requires knowledge about the situation and what works in that situation. <strong>Adjustments to the content or learning processes</strong>. <strong>Functional/performance theme.</strong> The development of industry-standard knowledge about management is the prerequisite to effective functional performance in the workplace. <strong>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context</strong>. <strong>Functional/performance theme.</strong> The presumption is that individual managerial learning, and acquisition of appropriate theoretical knowledge (content) will lead to application in the organisation that will contribute to improved performance. <strong>Harnessing of learning from the field in the study days</strong>. <strong>Context/contingent theme.</strong> Recognition that an understanding of organisational conditions can impact on the effective development of capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td><strong>Functional/performance theme.</strong> The MTP will build certain competencies and knowledge that in time will enable individual managers to produce better results. <strong>Adjustments to the content or learning processes</strong>. <strong>Functional/performance theme.</strong> The development of industry-standard knowledge about management is the prerequisite to effective functional performance in the workplace. <strong>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context</strong>. <strong>Context/contingent theme.</strong> Individual learning styles and individual differences can be barriers or facilitators to learning in the actual context. <strong>Harnessing of learning from the field in the study days</strong>. <strong>Learning/process theme.</strong> Emphasises the importance of action and reflection. The individual’s cognitive frame can be changed through development. This changing of self can occur as an outcome of reflection on practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td><strong>No awareness</strong>. <strong>Context/contingent theme.</strong> Strong emphasis on the importance of appropriating any new knowledge in a productive way in the organisational setting. Knowledge is only relevant. <strong>Utilisation of learning from the study days in the work context</strong>. <strong>Context/contingent theme.</strong> Aspects of the program structure and implementation impact on its effectiveness within the context. Emphasis needs to be placed on opportunities for. <strong>Harnessing of learning from the field in the study days</strong>. <strong>No awareness. Difficulty answering.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D5</strong></td>
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