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## Theory and Practice: A Historical Examination of the Assumptions and Philosophy of Human Resource Development

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Theory and Practice: A Historical Examination of the Assumptions and Philosophy of Human  
Resource Development

Theory and Practice: A Historical Examination of the Assumptions and Philosophy of Human  
Resource Development

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Human Resource and Workforce Development Education

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## **ABSTRACT**

The history of Human Resource Development (HRD) is the history of human organizational growth and development. A review of the history of western civilization, with particular focus on the Industrial Revolution to the modern era, demonstrates a distinct interaction between the predominant philosophy of the time, theory, and practice. A better understanding of seminal events in HRD's history thus provides insight into informing philosophies of HRD and the assumptions upon which current HRD theory and practice rest. Research was conducted to explore this interplay between philosophy, theory, and practice. The research was thematic and historical in nature, including the evaluation of primary and secondary source material from the period of 3000 B. C. to the modern era. Results of the historical evaluation demonstrated that seminal events in history play a significant role in both the development of HRD as a discipline and its current practice. Key informing philosophies, as well as the underlying assumptions of those philosophies, were identified. Additionally, an evaluation of the historical record demonstrated the influence of psychology as a source of theory and practice as well as a discipline whose philosophical history closely mirrors HRD. Three key pillars of HRD philosophy were identified as holding most prominent influence: empiricism, humanism, and structuralism. The underlying assumptions of those philosophies were also explored. Recommendations were then made on the establishment of metatheoretical evaluation within HRD and the instillation of critical thinking as a key skill set and competency of the HRD theorist and practitioner.

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The author is also indebted to the academic contributions of Dr. Brent Slife of Brigham Young University. Much of the author's interest and paltry skill in critical thinking was born in the classroom of Dr. Slife. He is a giant in his field, his ideas reach far afield, and the author is forever grateful for having had the opportunity to study under one of the great thinkers of our time. That Dr. Slife is also a gentleman and genuinely good human being is almost too good to be true.

## DEDICATION

Whatever fleeting glimpses I happen to capture over the high walls of understanding are only achieved because I sit upon the broad shoulders of those who have come before me. I am the product of what is today a rare environment: a mother and father who loved me, inspired me to grow, and expected me to make the most of what I had been given (and I have been given much.) They instilled a love of education and set an example of seeking after that education regardless of circumstance or difficulty. I am forever proud to be their son.

While my parents may have planted the seeds of whatever good I become in this world, there is no question but that I have my wife to thank for cultivating and harvesting. She has been ever supportive of this seemingly-endless endeavor. She has given me permission to be frustrated, indulged some but not too much procrastination, and most importantly always believed that I was capable. Paramount, however, she seems committed to loving me despite my myriad faults and imperfections, and in giving me a son has shown me a window into a joy I never knew was possible. I cannot imagine my life without her or the family we have built together.

Finally, I am familiar with the words found in Proverbs; “With all thy getting, get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7, KJV). It is tempting to believe that such understanding is garnered through the means taught in the temples of academia. But as the Lord counseled Isaiah, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. (Isaiah 55:8, KJV). I am most grateful, then, for a loving Savior Jesus Christ whose outstretched arms remind me constantly of the knowledge that really matters: that I am a child of God, that He loves me, and that through Christ I can return to live with Him some day. For that I am eternally blessed.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Albert Einstein (1930, p. 72) once observed, “We now realize, with special clarity, how much in error are those theorists who believe that theory comes from experience.” In a similar vein, as noted philosopher Yogi Berra is attributed to have said: “There is no difference between theory and practice. But in practice, there is” (Taleb, 2012, p. 213). If Messrs. Einstein and Berra are correct then whence cometh theory? Is it solely the domain of the philosopher? Indeed, there is a chicken and egg conundrum at the heart of the theory and practice question.

The philosopher Jaspers (1951) notes the Greeks defined Philosophy as the love of wisdom. He expounds on the current purpose of philosophy by stating:

This meaning of the word still endures: the essence of philosophy is not the possession of truth but the search for truth, regardless of how many philosophers may believe it with their dogmatism, that is, with a body of didactic principles purporting to be definitive and complete. Philosophy means to be on the way. Its questions are more essential than its answers, and every answer becomes a new question. (p. 12)

Here Jaspers suggests that philosophy is a journey; in fact a journey to attempt to understand the world and the human organisms’ place in that world. It has been suggested that many of history’s greatest scientific achievements have occurred as the species has cobbled together, examined, re-examined, formulated, and reformulated their assumptions of the world and its workings (Gengerelli, 1937). Indeed this is the elegant intersection of theory and practice – where the examined life of Socrates yields both understanding and practicality (Plato, trans. 1966).

And yet, Socrates’ examined life, while noble in theory (or, as a Philosophy) appears rare in practice – particularly in the arena of Human Resource Development (HRD). In discussing the core beliefs and underlying principles of modern day HRD, Swanson and Holton (2001) specifically note the general lack of focus on underlying philosophy and assumption in the field.

While Swanson and Holton attribute this lack of attention to the “busy, action-oriented” (p. 9) nature of the HRD professional, one must wonder if this is reason enough to leave largely unexamined the philosophical underpinnings of a discipline.

Quoting again, Jaspers (1951) states that “[t]here is no escape from philosophy. The question is only whether a philosophy is conscious or not, whether it is good or bad, muddled or clear. Anyone who rejects philosophy is himself unconsciously practicing a philosophy” (p. 12). Implied in Jaspers’ comments is a challenge to shine light on unconsciously-practiced philosophies. Given Swanson and Holton’s acknowledgement of a lack of focus and attention to philosophy in HRD, it could be argued that HRD does *indeed* practice an unconscious philosophy (or philosophies.) Jaspers might contend that these unconscious philosophies could be good or bad. Undisclosed and unexamined, these unconscious philosophies wield influence without acknowledgement.

This notion of unconscious philosophy adds a dimension to the theory/practice debate that is clearly established in HRD. As Jacobs (1990) noted:

At some point, the continued development and vitality of a profession depend as much on advances in the theoretical aspects as on the social or organizational aspects. HRD seems to have arrived at this point. Continued refinements and advances in practice now more than ever depend on increased understanding of related theory and research. (p. 66)

The call for a firmer theoretical basis for HRD (Swanson, 1992), and an increased tension between theory and practice (Kuchinke, 2004), has only continued since Jacobs’ comments. In arguing that HRD is not, in and of itself, an academic discipline Kuchinke (2001; 2008) notes that HRD theory and practice draws from a wide swath of extant disciplines – a notion that is at this point widely-held and generally accepted (Ardichvili, 2008, 2012; Kessels, 2007; Lincoln & Lynham, 2001; Swanson, 1999a; Torraco, 2004).

Swanson (1999a) argues that a simple acquiescence to a multi-disciplinary approach is fool's gold. He warns that "in an attempt to be inclusive of so many theories – staking its claim so broadly – it has come up with no theory" (p. 2). Swanson suggests that HRD theory be built upon a three-tiered approach of economic, psychological, and systems theory (with a base, or solid foundation, in ethics.) He suggests that "these three theories more than any others make up the theory of P[erformance] I[mprovement] and respond to the realities of PI practice, and that each is unique, robust, and complementary to the others" (p. 11).

While Swanson's three-legged stool approach (Swanson, 1999a; McClean, 1998) is a well-adopted paradigm in current HRD (Iles & Yolles, 2003), there are many who would suggest other metaphors for HRD. Table 1.1 reviews a sample of Swanson's and others theoretical takes on the discipline of HRD. As can be seen from a review of the various entries, there remains a broad and diverse approach to the question of HRD theory. One can almost feel the existential angst of the discipline in reviewing the various, well-intentioned metaphors. It is also fair to ask, is all of this discussion regarding theory "sound and fury, signifying nothing" (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 5 Scene 5)? The utility of theory building itself has been called into question (Keefer & Yap, 2007).

**Table 1.1***Metaphors of HRD*

Authors	Metaphor	Rationale
Swanson (1995, 1999a)	Three-Legged Stool	Each leg represents a main foundation of HRD (economics, psychology, systems theory)
Willis (1997)	Downstream River	The 'HRD river' has evolved so completely as to be distinct from its contributing upstream tributaries (adult education, instructional design and performance technology, business and economics, sociology, cultural anthropology, organization theory, communications, philosophy, axiology, human relations)
Lee (1998)	Clover	HRD as the integration of theory, practice and being in a diverse, dynamic, eclectic and vibrant community
McLean (1998)	Octopus	HRD finds its roots in many varied disciplines and is a living, evolving construct, composed of, but not limited to systems theory, economics, psychology, organizational development, anthropology, sociology and speech communications
Grieves and Redman (1999)	Wagon train	HRD as a linear journey through time and space, yet experiencing periods of uncertainty, struggle and confusion
Lee (2001)	Heraclitus	HRD is an changeable, emergent construct
McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson (2001)	Hologram	HRD has a multi-layered context that is subject to constant flux
Walton (2003)	Theatre	Performance as part of a coherent drama-based gestalt for HRD

*Note.* Adapted from "The Disciplinary Development of HRD: A Delphi Study", by D. McGuire and M. Cseh, 2004, Presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> UFHRD/AHRD Conference, University of Limerick, May 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2004.

This robust discussion of HRD theory has also been accompanied in the literature with an exploration of how theory should be formed in the first place. A seminal discussion of the topic was provided by Lynham (2000) in which she outlined the need for sound theory in the discipline of HRD. In outlining next steps for HRD she wrote:

... we must commit to conversations to agree to and clarify inclusive, multiple theory-building research paradigms at a philosophical (ontological and epistemological) rather than just a methods level ... we must conduct rigorous and relevant research to develop, and make explicit and available, multiple methods and paradigms of theory building to the HRD researcher and practitioner. (p. 175)

Note in Lynham's comments a clear link between philosophy, theory, and practice – with an explicit expectation that such a link implies a multi-nodal, iterative causal loop. Theory informs practice. Practice informs theory. Philosophy informs both.

Lynham (2002) continues to reinforce this idea of theory-building in later writings by charging the theory-builder with basing theory in axiomatic terms. Axiology, the study of value or utility, is itself a construct of philosophy and further adds to this notion of linkage between theory, practice, and philosophy. Finally, Ruona and Lynham (2004) call for HRD to embrace a more robust examination of philosophy as informer of theory and practice. They articulate several benefits to the discipline for so doing; including “(1) practical ways of thinking about certain types of questions (questions of the nature of reality, truth and ethics) and (2) the use of logical argument, disciplined reflection and theoretical reasoning through the invoking of this process of continual questioning” (p. 158).

The research that follows in this manuscript suggests an additional benefit of bringing philosophical reasoning to bear in the examination of HRD theory and practice: the unveiling of hidden assumptions in theory. Psychology, an academic discipline from which HRD draws heavily, has experienced a similar angst in the closer philosophical examination of its underlying theories (Slife & Williams, 1997), a topic which engendered no small amount of debate within the discipline (Slife, 2000). Does HRD share a need to more closely examine the philosophical assumptions upon which its theory and practice are based?



An example of that need is as follows. A clearly-defined role of the HRD professional is employee, management, and executive development (Swanson & Holton, 2001). A common tool used by the HRD professional is the Myers-Briggs Typology Inventory, or MBTI (Moutafi, Furnham, & Crump 2007; Sieff, 2009; Wilde, 2010). The MBTI was originally developed and validated as a means by which to empirically identify Jungian archetypes in individuals (Richek & Bown, 1968). Jungian personality theory carries with it an implicit endorsement of concepts such as *a priori* innateness of trait and thus an inferred determinism (Goodwyn, 2010). Should practitioners utilizing the MBTI be aware of the fundamental assumptions upon which the tool rests? Is an eclectic approach to HRD acceptable and encouraged? Do the assumptions of the tools and models that HRD professionals utilize violate the – albeit – spare, yet firmly-held core values of the profession? If so, what other tools and models are available to the practitioner?

Returning again to Jaspers (1951) quote, there is “no escape from philosophy” (p. 12). The only question is if the philosophy practiced is explicit or hidden – are the assumptions known or unknown? At this point in the development of HRD, it could be argued that most of the philosophical assumptions upon which its theory is based (and practiced) are hidden. This exploration of the historical interplay of philosophy, theory, and practice – particularly as it relates to HRD’s alignment with psychology as a foundational well-spring of theory, informed this paper’s research.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The topic of this research is the history of HRD in Western Civilization from the period of 3000 B. C. to 2014, with a particular focus on the historical interplay of philosophy, theory, and practice. This study is a necessary addition to the existing literature in HRD, as little if any

research exists evaluating the impact of historical context and predominant philosophy on the theory and practice of HRD.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the interplay between philosophy, theory, and practice of HRD for HRD practitioners, scholars, and clients from the discipline's genesis to 2014. The study consists of a review of the seminal events in the history of HRD. Events will be considered in the historical context in which they occurred. The guiding philosophy of the time will also be explored, as well as the link between the specific event and the current practice of HRD.

### **Research Questions**

Specifically, the following questions are addressed:

1. What role has the evolving understanding of psychology had on the development of HRD theory and practice?
2. How does the current understanding of HRD as a discipline reflect the history of its development?
3. What are the informing philosophies of HRD as demonstrated by its historical development, and what are the essential assumptions of those philosophies?
4. What model best represents the current means by which theory and practice in HRD are generated?

### **Justification/Need for the Study**

HRD is a field experiencing significant adolescent growing pains as it works through the challenges of its own definition and practice (Fenwick, 2004). There continues to be major debate in the literature and in the field as to what constitutes HRD, how best to practice HRD,

and what are the ultimate aims of HRD. A noted tension exists between theoreticians and practitioners (Graham & Kormanik, 2004; Keefer & Yap, 2007) – practitioners don't see practical theory generated from the first camp and theoreticians see sloppy and undisciplined practice from the second.

Lynham (2000) has called for a more rigorous and purposeful theory-building in HRD with clearly-defined benefits: (1) to advance professionalism and maturity, (2) to dissolve the tension between theory and practice, and (3) to develop multiple research methods. Ruona and Lynham also make clear that such theory must be placed in a philosophical context (1999). Missing from the literature is a robust examination of said philosophical context, as well as a discussion of the implications of said context.

A better understanding of the philosophical context of historically-significant HRD theory will help shed light on the assumptions upon which the practice is based. Theoreticians should understand and clearly disclose such philosophical foundations so that practitioners can make fully-informed decisions about the implications of the theories they practice. Practitioners should enter their practice with clear understanding of the philosophical implications and assumptions of their models as well the ability to articulate those assumptions to their clients. The institution of HRD (much like the discipline of Psychology) benefits from an increased meta-evaluation of the “formal theories, models, techniques and methods inherent in the discipline” (Slife & Williams, 1997, p. 18).

That this discussion begins with an historical review of past HRD theory and practice, with a particular investigation of the predominant philosophical influences of the time, seems appropriate. Vygotsky (1997) noted a similar challenge in his day and described it thusly:

It can be said of any important discovery in any area, when it transcends the boundaries of that particular realm[;] that it has the tendency to turn into an explanatory principle for

all psychological phenomena and lead psychology beyond its proper boundaries into broader realms of knowledge. In the last several decades this tendency has manifested itself with such amazing strictness and consistency, with such regular uniformity in the most diverse areas, that it becomes absolutely possible to predict the course of development of this or that concept, discovery, or idea. At the same time this regular repetition in the development of widely varying ideas evidently – and with a clarity that is seldom observed by the historian of science and methodologist – points to an objective necessity underlying the development of the science, to a necessity which we may observe when we approach the facts of science from an equally scientific point of view. It points to the possibility of a scientific methodology built on a historical foundation. (p. 237)

Vygotsky proposes three criteria for historical analysis of theory and practice by evaluating (a) the general sociocultural context of the time period, (b) the theorems and laws guiding scientific knowledge at the time, and (c) the objective demands placed upon the scientific knowledge after its introduction into the general body of knowledge as a whole. A similar approach was undertaken with this research. To best understand the theory and practice of HRD, and the underlying philosophies of said theory and practice, Vygotsky's model of an historical evaluation is proposed.

This research provided an opportunity to cast light on basic assumptions of HRD theory and practice. In better understanding the informing philosophy of historical HRD, the discipline is better-equipped to engage in an on-going evaluation of current theory and practice with explicitly stated philosophical assumptions. As Whitehead (1926) stated, "Every philosophy is tinged with the colouring of some secret imaginative background, which never emerges explicitly into its trains of reasoning" (p. 9). It is hoped that this closer historical evaluation will make explicit the underlying assumptions of the philosophy of HRD, and in turn aid the discipline in providing more cogent, actionable theory and grounded practice.

## Chapter 2

### HISTORICAL REVIEW

This chapter summarizes select relevant literature on the subject of HRD. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first will first cover the history of HRD with an overview of historical influences on HRD, focusing upon the seminal events leading to the formal development of HRD during the time-period of the Industrial Revolution to 2014. Specific emphasis will be placed on the philosophical influences of HRD practice, where applicable, as well as the influence of said key events in current HRD practice. This historical review will focus on the interplay between predominant philosophy of a given time, emergent theory, and the developing practice of HRD. This review is best categorized as thematic in nature.

Following this overview of HRD history will be an historical examination of the influence of psychology in HRD practice. This review focuses on four major schools of psychological thought; psychodynamic theory, behaviorism and cognitive theory, humanism, and structuralism. Each theory is examined primarily upon two criteria: its underlying philosophical assumptions and its relation to HRD practice. Once again, the review conducted in the second section is thematic in nature.

The chapter concludes with the proposal of a model by which to evaluate and consider the research presented herein. In considering research question four, an introductory model suggests a means by which the data can be interpreted that illuminates the central thesis and is consistent with the data. Further evaluation of the proposed model, in conjunction with evaluation of all research questions, is contained in Chapter Four.

Research for this review was conducted primarily through the University of Arkansas Library system database as well as Google Scholar. Additional sources were located via the

author's personal library. Search terms included but were not limited to: Human Resource Development, HRD, History, Plato's Academy, Middle Ages, Industrial Revolution, Vocational Education, Factory Schools, Scientific Management, World War II, Human Relations Movement, Elton Mayo, Mary Parker Follett, Chester Barnard, Hawthorne Experiments, Training Within Industry, Organization Development, Laboratory Testing, Survey Research, Likert, Lewin, Action Research, Systems Theory, Change Management, HRD Models, and American Society of Training and Development (ASTD). Terms were chosen due to their self-evident relation to the review. However, it should be noted that the review was iterative in nature. As emerging trends and key concepts were surfaced more in-depth research was conducted.

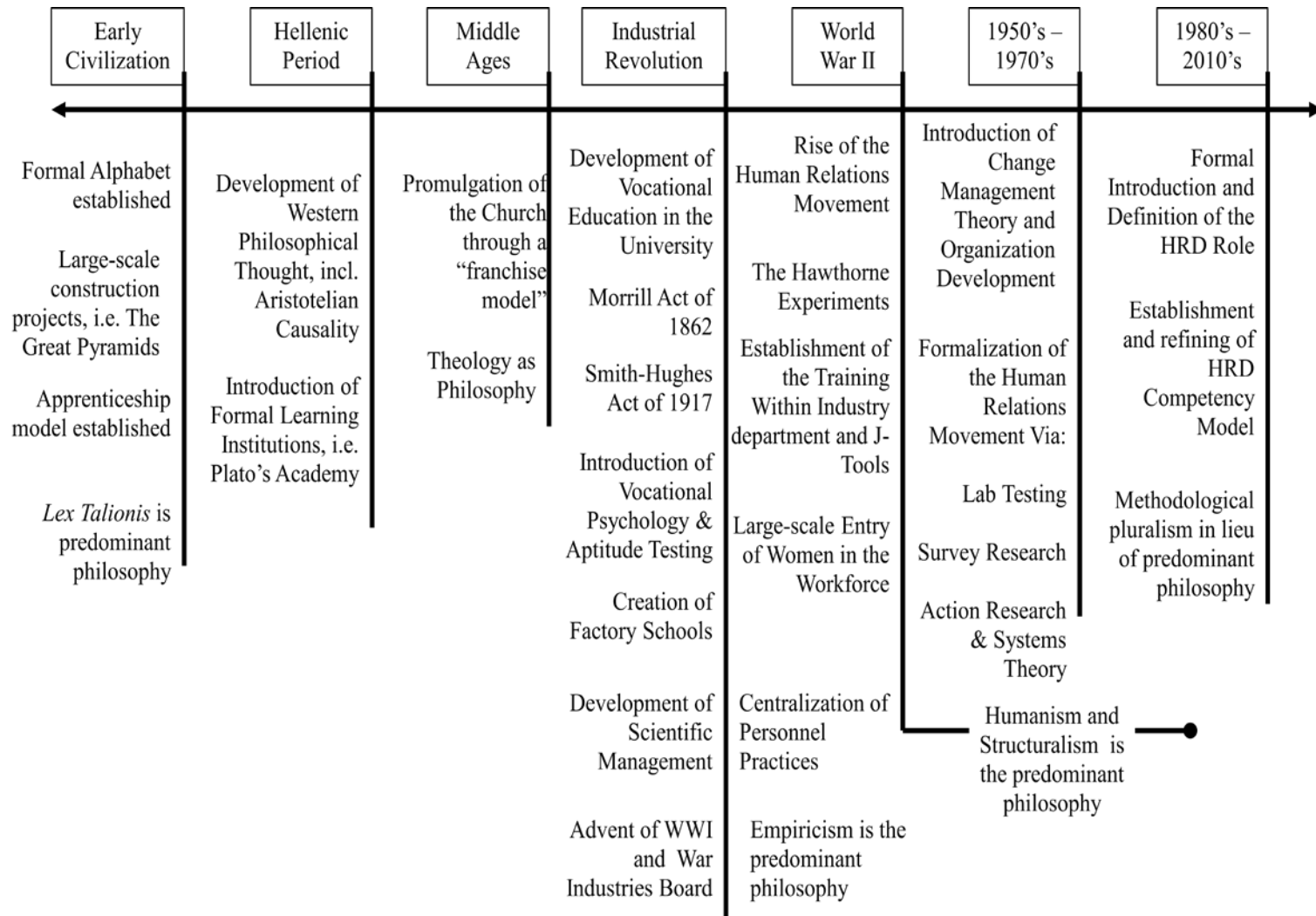
Secondary sources make up a significant portion of the historical review until the Industrial Revolution, at which time sufficient record exists from which to draw upon. Key psychological theorists were also sourced directly where possible. Even then, primary sources are supplemented with secondary interpretation in instances in which the topic discussed benefits from additional perspective or context. In the interest of clarity and to ensure adequate representation of the original author, quotations from primary sources are included as appropriate. In summary, the chapter presented seeks to adhere to Boote and Beile's (2005) objectives for a substantive review; namely that it (a) provide sufficient coverage for the topic; (b) that an appropriate synthesis of the information adds perspective to the literature; (c) that the review methodology be expressly stated; (d) that the practical and scholarly significance of the research problem be manifest; and (e) that the rhetorical quality be clear and well structured.

## **History of Human Resource Development**

The history of HRD is the history of humankind (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Or, at the very least, HRD history can trace its roots to the earliest Greek and Roman civilizations (Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003). As long as humans have been teaching one another, working for one another, mastering a trade, or collectively building a society the threads of HRD can be seen. In fact, Durant and Durant (1968) defined human development as the social evolution of mankind. Figure 2.1 illustrates several of the seminal events in the history of HRD. The review will begin with a brief discussion of the early civilization in which the echoes of HRD can be seen. The Hellenic period and the rise of western philosophy will next be considered. The Middle Ages and the rise of the Catholic Church (the Church) will give way to the Industrial Revolution and then World War II. The section concludes with an overview of the 1950's through 1970's, and 1980's to the 2010's.

**Figure 2.1**

*Timeline of Seminal Events in HRD*





**Early human history – Syrian, Chinese and Egyptian civilization.**

Alagaraja and Dooley (2003) reviewed the history of human civilization and its impact on HRD with a particular emphasis on the global nature of the discipline. Human civilization can be traced as distantly as 5 Million B.C. as the earliest toolmakers begat the era of agriculture and animal domestication. Implicit in this development was the establishment of metallurgy and the skill building, development, and instruction such tasks required.

Around 3000 B.C., human civilization began a productive and hugely significant phase globally as the Syrians and Chinese both instituted the development of a formalized alphabet, as well as the refinement of metallurgy to encompass more complex tools, weapons, and religious artifacts. Significant advances in HRD can also be seen as the Egyptians commenced building the Great Pyramid and other wonders of ancient and modern architecture. The construction of the Great Pyramid was particularly notable and representative. Never before in human history had such large groups of individuals been organized, taught, supervised, and managed – by one estimate a total labor expenditure of 131,200 man-years (Smith, 1999). A project of such immensity and with such a large workforce would, by default, require a greater level of human resource organization and management. However, the most notable development comes by way of advancements in instruction and training.

Alagaraja and Dooley (2003) note the development of apprenticeship as a primary method of instruction, a significant shift from paternal/maternal to peer education. Smith (1999) describes the division of labor, including payment conditions, for the construction of the Great Pyramid thusly:

We learned that workers were paid in grain--to make bread and beer--as well as in oil, other foods, and cloth. Payments differed, of course, depending on the level of skill and rank. Ancient records indicate that a superintendent earned 8 jugs of beer and 16 loaves of bread daily ... There was a barter economy in place then, so a worker with one set of

skills might perform work for another, who would return the favor by making something for him. There was also some moonlighting going on as workers used their free time to work for third parties. Thus the total labor costs for construction of the pyramid were approximately 111 million jugs of beer and 126 million loaves of bread over the 10-year span of the project. (p. 42)

As civilization matured into a more formal economy, where the individual laborer's skill was valued and rewarded, the first need for formal development of the laborer's skill was noted. While compensation and benefits is viewed today as a more traditional Human Resource Management discipline, evaluation of an individual's knowledge, skill, and ability (implied in the notion of valuation) is more firmly planted in the HRD arena (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004; Hughes, 2012).

The means by which these laborers were rewarded and recognized did not occur in a vacuum. The predominant philosophy of the time, codified by Hammurabi, was that of an eye for an eye or *lex talionis* – essentially a philosophy of proportionality (Fish, 2008). Or, in the case of the pyramid laborer, beer and bread commensurate with the skill possessed. In fact, Hammurabi's Code dealt in depth with the laws and regulations of commerce and fair business dealings (Cook, 1903). The fundamental assumption of *lex talionis* is that individuals have inherent, substantive, calculable worth – and that remuneration or punishment is meted out in conjunction with that worth (Held, 2010). The growth of civilization, influenced by the predominant philosophy of the time, spurred the first echoes of HRD.

### **The Hellenic period.**

The next phase of human development also marks the dawn of Western civilization and thought – the Hellenic period. The Greeks were a fascinating seed bed of HRD for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the development of a more clearly defined apprenticeship

system (Swanson & Holton, 2001) – a system of education whose thread continues unbroken to our modern era.

The Greeks held a specific view of the role of human beings; their learning, education, and contribution to the society as a whole. The Greek purpose of society was to develop the individual – the well-examined life as previously stated by Plato. Speaking on the subject of Platonic philosophy and education, Mackenzie (1907) wrote:

All the studies that he [Plato] describes, whether literary, scientific, artistic or physical, are regarded from the double standpoint of furnishing a preparation for the practical life of the good citizen, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of leading up to a true philosophical insight. So long as he can show that they subserve these purposes, Plato does not care in the least what the subject-matter is of which he avails himself, whether it be science, poetry, music, diet, gymnastic exercise, military drill, or whatever else it may be ... What he sought to do was to show how the material that he thus found at hand could be made subservient to his special purpose. (p. 135)

Mackenzie makes clear the point that, for Plato, vocation and training was a means to a philosophical end. In as much as training helped achieve the realization of individual potential, it was deemed consistent with the Greek ideal.

This Greek ideal was actualized in what could be described as the first university – Plato's Academy. Plato held that all knowledge is innate – the goal of education being to provide growth and experience that teases out this innate knowledge (Floridi, 2011). For Plato, education's purpose was to transmit knowledge for the benefit of the individual. He considered science, what one could observe, as a more effective means of transmitting such knowledge than art and poetry, thus establishing Realism (and eventually Empiricism) as a philosophy of learning, education, and practice (Truitt, 1978). This philosophy of learning was put to practical use in Plato's Socratic (or Dialectic) method of teaching. The Socratic Method is a question and answer means of building knowledge, in which an expert's positions are called into question by a

searcher of knowledge – thus exposing logical gaps in the theory being discussed (Brownhill, 2002).

The development of Plato's Academy was also a significant event in the development of HRD. That Greek society deemed it worthwhile to invest the society's resources in the growth and development of the individual, and in fact saw the growth of the individual as elemental to the purpose of society. This idea of the centrality of the individual in education, later to be termed "humanistic education," found its beginning in Plato's Academy (Moss, 2001) and continues to impact the practice of HRD today (Barrie & Pace, 1998). While the impact of humanism (particularly humanistic psychology) on HRD will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter it is critical to note its first formal incarnation in Plato's Academy.

The informing philosophy of the Hellenic period is, in large part, the foundational philosophy for all of Western civilization. While less an event than an unfolding, the impact on today's theory and practice of HRD is significant. Aristotelian metaphysics wield significant influence in current HRD practice. Aristotle proposed three key principles that continue to influence the way in which we conceptualize learning (Mazur, 1994). First is the idea of empiricism, "the notion that knowledge is derived ... from our experience of world events as they are organized separately from us" (Slife, 1993 p. 111). Second is the notion of contiguity, that "events vary in their contiguity to one another in time ... [and that] ... events that are more contiguous or near to one another in time and space are more likely to be associated" (p. 111). Finally is the idea of repetition – that "events which occur frequently across time are those likely to be learned" (p. 111).

This foundational epistemology – empiricism, contiguity, and repetition – continues to inform our understanding of how learning occurs (and thus how to increase the likelihood of

learning and/or behavior change). For example, Mazur (1994) defines learning as a “process of change that occurs as a result of an individual’s experience” (p. 2). Marquardt (2002) likewise defines individual learning as “the change of skills, insights, knowledge, attitudes, and values acquired by a person through self-study, technology-based instruction, and observation” (p. 246). Note in both definitions the influence of Aristotelian epistemology. In both, the experience of the learner is at the root of learning. Contiguity and repetition are more implicit than explicit in both definitions; however, a reading of either Mazur or Marquardt finds ample evidence for both concepts.

Somewhat ironically, the roots of the counter-philosophy for empiricism also lead back to the Hellenic period and the philosophy of Aristotle. Aristotle posed a simple but profound question, “what is it that changes during events in the world and what is it that endures during such changes” (Silverman, 1990, p. 23)? From this query came Aristotle’s view of causality. He proposed four complementary points-of-view (or causalities) from which change was to be understood. Silverman (1990) describes them thusly:

1. Material – The physical composition of a thing ...
2. Formal – The essential nature of a thing ...
3. Efficient – The source or agent of change ...
4. Final – The predictably normal way a substance functions after a change of a particular sort has occurred. (p. 23-24)

One can divine the roots of empiricism through Aristotle’s material cause, the operationalization of which occurred in psychology through the behavioral and cognitive schools of thought. Material causation implies reductionism, the notion that phenomena can be best explained by zooming in to the most basic, atomic element (Slife & Williams, 1995). More detail on the reductionist philosophy as applied to psychology is given later in this chapter. However the notion of final causality, or teleology, was the philosophical bedrock for what would

eventually become systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972). The idea was succinctly expressed by Aristotle in stating that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Aristotle, trans. 1930). Otherwise stated, some phenomena (or perhaps all) are to be only fully understood when considered in context. A more detailed examination of systems theory and its ubiquity in HRD theory and practice is detailed later in this chapter. Suffice it for now to say that Aristotle’s development of teleological causality would later play a major impact in the theory and practice of HRD.

The Greeks contributed much to our conceptualization of human behavior and the philosophies which informed such conceptualizations. The basis of empiricism can be traced to the Greeks. The notion of society’s purpose as incubator for the growth and development of the individual is also a notable philosophical pillar. Additionally, the development of formal institutions of learning, such as Plato’s Academy, and methods of learning, such as the Socratic Method, also give foundation to the eventual domain of HRD.

### **The Middle Ages.**

The Hellenic period gave way to the Middle Ages and the rise of the Christian Church as dominant force in virtually all aspects of life (Swanson & Holton, 2001). The church as an institution was, in and of itself, a model of organizational design. The Catholic Church in the time of the Middle Ages was the central component of the community; dictating commerce, social status, politics, and military action (Cheveden, 2013). The church’s influence extended into how society managed economy, science, and even the ways and means of reckoning time and date (Feldhay, 2006). Indeed, the Catholic Church is the oldest continuous institution of Western Civilization (Ekelund & Hebert, 2010).

The promulgation of the Catholic Church (the Church) in the Middle Ages is perhaps the greatest example of replicable organization design and human resource development in the history of Western Civilization, with its reach and scope, dwarfing even the Roman Empire it replaced. Its means of replication most closely resembled the franchise model of today, wherein two interested parties (in this case the Church in Rome and regional political leaders) sought mutual economic benefit (Terkun, 2010). Ekelund, Hébert, and Tollison (1989) propose a model for the growth for the medieval church in which industrial organization is a key component. Building upon the Ekelund, Hébert, and Tollison model, Davidson (1995) confirms the notion via historical review of church as franchise.

A key component of successful franchise growth is the training and development of the franchisee at all levels (Justice & Chan, 1991). Consistency in execution and delivery becomes a key strategy in both geographic expansion and vertical integration (Castrogiovanni & Kidwell, 2010). Rothenberg (1967) identifies several key elements to a successful franchise, with the training of technical and commercial knowledge being paramount.

Training and development became a key component in the Catholic Church as franchisor to “standardize and replicate a successful model in a different location” (Castrogiovanni & Kidwell, 2010, p. 229) – the stated purpose of training and development in the franchise model. This focus on training as a means of growing the Church as an organization could be seen in its selection of pastors (Caspers, 2003) as well as in their continued education and development (Weiler, 2003). The means whereby this training and education occurred is also consistent with today’s HRD practice. For example, Gonzalez (2006) notes the use of mentorship as a key component of clerical training – a methodology that continues to be leveraged in today’s HRD (Ghosh, 2013; Hegstad, 1999; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005). Scientific management training

methodology has also been designated as key to successful knowledge management and dissemination in the franchise business model (Cappelli & Hamori, 2008). While a more detailed analysis of scientific management is given later in this chapter, it is worth noting its first tentative expression as a modality during this period in history.

The predominant philosophy of the time, perhaps best articulated by St. Thomas Aquinas, was one of fealty to the sponsoring religion (Davies, 2004). In fact, philosophy itself was seen as subservient to theology (Gracia & Noone, 2003). This philosophy of theology-as-philosophy clearly influenced the attitudes and actions of the time and the means by which the Church's growth was realized. While embracing some of the Greek's methodology for reasoning, and even vocabulary, the philosophy of the Middle Ages was stark in its contrast to that of the Hellenic Period (Moody, 1958). Philosophy, as a concept, was anathema to the leading thinkers of the time. Instead, the tools of philosophy were used to defend and grow the faith. Perhaps the most significant example of this difference is in the Hellenic view of the role of the citizen when compared to the medieval view. Puhalo (2010) states that "[t]he Greek *polis* [city] and *paideia* [culture or education] were the antithesis of the Christian *polis* (Church) and *paideia* (Scriptures)" (p. 4). While the Greeks held that the city served the individual, with education as vehicle for that individual's enlightenment, the thinkers of the Middle Ages held that the individual served the Church and that salvation (instead of enlightenment) was the role of the *paideia*.

The promulgation of the Church during the period of the Middle Ages, and the means by which it was grown, continued to provide pillars of learning and development practice upon which the discipline of HRD would eventually be footed. This philosophy of theology-as-



philosophy clearly influenced the attitudes and actions of the time and the means by which the Church's growth was realized.

### **The Industrial Revolution.**

The end of the Middle Ages also brought an end to the craft economy in which farmers, artisans, and miners were the predominant workforce (Bass, 1994). The Industrial Revolution of the late 1800's ushered in the mass production economy and with it bureaucratic procedure and the notion of worker as part of a larger organization (Carnevale, 1991). Two significant developments in HRD sprung from the Industrial Revolution and its need for a more specifically-skilled worker. First was the birth of vocational education, originated in 1809 by DeWitt Clinton as a means of providing "occupational training to unskilled young people who were unemployed or had criminal records" (DeSimone & Werner, 2012, p. 5). Second was the development of factory or corporation schools as a means of training industrial workers in the specific skills of the factory (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

### ***The Industrial Revolution – vocational education.***

Preparation for a vocation was not the purpose of the university or higher education at the onset of the 1800's. Instead, the university education fell more in line with the purposes of Plato's Academy – to prepare individuals socially, academically, and morally to advance society. This notion changed with the passing of the Morrill Act of 1862 (also known as the Land Grant Act) (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). The Morrill Act "established programs of training at the college level in agricultural education, industrial and trade education, and home economics education" (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 43) thus bringing higher education to a much broader audience than had ever previously been offered. That these subjects were taught at a university also legitimized the notion of vocational training in the minds of the people.

Vocational education's next boon was the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, which earmarked congressional funds for the development of training programs in agriculture, home economics, industry, and teacher training (DeSimone & Werner, 2012). Its passage required the cooperation of vast and varied groups including the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, American Federation of Labor, National Education Association, National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Democratic Party, the Progressive (or Bullmoose) Party, American Home Economics Association, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Wallace's Farmer & Hoard's Dairyman (influential publications of the time), Farmer's Union, National Grange, and the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Hillison, 1995). A cursory glance of such a list of disparate interests emphasizes the notion that vocational education was viewed as a critical aim for the successful growth of the nation.

The growth of vocational education mirrored the ever-increasing need for individuals trained in an ever-increasing number of skills. Matching individuals to the vocation in which they were best suited suddenly became of keen interest to the academic (and indeed commercial) community (Baker, 2009). Assessments were developed by individuals such as Münsterberg to assist individuals in finding a suitable vocation (Freeman, 1912). Vocational psychology became an established field with clear ambitions. As described by Parsons (1909):

The wise selection of the business, profession, trade, or occupation to which one's life is to be devoted and the development of full efficiency in the chosen field are matters of the deepest moment to young men and to the public. These vital problems should be solved in a careful, scientific way, with due regard to each person's aptitudes, abilities, ambitions, resources, and limitations, and the relations of these elements to the conditions of success than if he drifts into an industry for which he is not fitted. An occupation out of harmony with the worker's aptitudes and capacities means inefficiency, unenthusiastic and perhaps distasteful labor, and low pay; while an occupation in harmony with the nature of the man means enthusiasm, love of work, and high economic values, superior product, efficient service, and good pay. (p. 3)

The practicality of vocational guidance was clear from its outset (Bennett, 1937). Parsons' articulation of the ideal union of skilled, invested laborer and meaningful, well-suited occupation is a perfect example of the ethic and aim of vocational education at its commencement during the Industrial Revolution.

*The Industrial Revolution – factory schools.*

One of the unintended consequences of the Industrial Revolution was a significant upheaval of the previously-established educational system, particularly the elimination of full-time education for youth. Time spent in school was now spent in the factory. Interestingly, the cause of the deficiency in education also provided the solution with the advent of the factory (or corporation) school (Sanderson, 1967). The first factory school was located at Hoe and Company in 1872. They were joined by Westinghouse in 1888, General Electric and Baldwin Locomotive in 1901, International Harvester in 1907, and Ford, Western Electric, Goodyear, and National Cash Register shortly thereafter (DeSimone & Werner, 2012).

Early factory schools adopted a modified apprenticeship model in which young men would learn increasingly complex aspects of factory work as well as classroom learning and instruction (Nelson-Rowe, 1991). Beatty (1918) outlined the five purposes of the factory school: (a) The development of trained workers; (b) The development of managerial talent; (c) Improvement in quality of output; (d) Decrease in the turn-over of labor; and (e) Reduction in waste and in number of accidents. A less explicitly-stated purpose of the corporation school was to lessen the influence of worker's unions – an influence that was monumental in vocational education as a means of swelling the union ranks (Jacoby, 1996). This concern for worker unrest and union activity can be seen both in the dialogue of corporation school leaders, as well as in

the means (such as shareholder programs) by which such actions were combated (The National Association of Corporation Schools, 1920).

Collectively, factory schools were keenly interested in applying the best thinking and research of the time to meeting the five aims outlined previously. Henderschott (1918), a founder of The National Association of Corporation Schools, made an appeal to psychology for assistance in addressing the challenges of effectively managing the workforce, viz:

1. A lack of understanding, almost universal in extent upon the part of the individual, as to the law of rewards.
2. The absence of standards sufficiently understood at least, by which the individual can measure his comparative value as a worker and thereby determine his position among his fellow men.
3. A lack of the element of leadership—or a lack of knowledge of methods through which latent talent for leadership may be aroused and developed.
4. A lack of information about or understanding of the earlier periods in the history of the world and of how civilization has developed.
5. A lack of civic vision on the part of both executives and workers of industrial institutions.
6. The lack of an equitable system to insure a just distribution of rewards earned. (p. 214-215)

The 1919 Bulletin of the National Association of Corporation Schools (The National Association of Corporation Schools, 1919) addressed topics such as What to Teach and How to Teach It; Recognizing Loyal and Faithful Service; How the Westinghouse Air Brake Company Solved the Problem of Feeding 2,500 Employees; and Reducing Marketing to a Scientific Basis among a host of others. In Henderschott's plea and the Bulletin's topical choices one can very clearly see the first echoes of a more formal HRD in the problems addressed and stratagems developed by these early corporate leaders.

***The Industrial Revolution – scientific management.***

Scientific management, a natural outcropping of the Industrial Revolution, arose from the factory's need to run ever-more efficiently and effectively – in effect to do more with less effort

(Gilbreath, 1912). Applying scientific method to manufacturing and, particularly, human resource management led to core principles that could be replicated in virtually every environment. Frederick W. Taylor, a Philadelphia engineer, pioneered the concepts of scientific management and outlined its purposes and aims. The application to HRD, and particularly training, was readily apparent. In describing the conditions of the day Taylor (1911) wrote:

The search for better, for more competent men, from the presidents of our great companies down to our household servants, was never more vigorous than it is now. And more than ever before is the demand for competent men in excess of the supply. What we are looking for, however, is the ready-made competent man; the man whom some one else has trained. It is only when we fully realize that our duty, as well as our opportunity, lies in systematically cooperating to train and to make this competent man, instead of hunting for a man whom some one else has trained, that we shall be on the road to national efficiency. (p. 6)

From Taylor's words one can clearly see the critical nature of more effective employee management and training, as well as the explicit goal to manage and train that employee in a way that was systematic, empirical, and replicable (Thompson, 1917). It is worth noting that concurrent with the private sector's reach for an empirical approach to management, John Watson was advocating an empirical approach to psychology, stating that the "... businessman could use our data in a practical way" (Watson, 1994 p. 251). A more explicit description of behavioral and cognitive psychology appears later in this chapter. That the rise of scientific management, with its underlying empirical, reductionist philosophy, occurred concurrently with the establishment of a theory of psychology that shared the same philosophical assumptions was surely no accident.

Two significant events caused the acceleration of scientific management as a practice. The first was the creation and implementation of Henry Ford's assembly-line and second was the advent of World War I (DeSimone & Werner, 2012). As Ford's assembly-line drove down automobile prices, demand increased – thus requiring more assembly-lines and more individuals

trained to operate them. In fact, the assembly-line with its emphasis on efficiency and replicability is a sterling example of scientific management at work (Drucker, 1999). Automobile manufacturers, and soon others, were forced to meet the new standards of cost and speed, with scientific management providing the how-to blueprint.

World War I's influence in the spread of scientific management can be significantly attributed to one man – Bernard Baruch (Smiddy & Naum, 1954). Baruch served as the first chair of the War Industries Board, an entity created to coordinate and manage the purchase of supplies needed for the U.S. war effort (The New York Times, 1917). Baruch opened up the manufacturing and supply channels to any and all sources, thus leveraging the power of the free market economy to reduce cost while increasing speed and quality. Manufacturers that could not run their operations efficiently would fail as governmental contracts went to the lowest cost operator. Companies operating via the principles of scientific management enjoyed a distinct advantage in such an environment.

The demand for rapidly-expanding production was particularly pronounced in the shipyards where demand, due to the war effort, increased ten-fold (Huntzinger, 2002). Charles Allen, a former vocational instructor who became director of training for the U.S. Shipping Board, utilized scientific management principles to increase the time-to-competency of previously unskilled laborers. His four-step method, later named job instruction training (JIT), was simple and effective. Allen (1917) described it as follows:

... each complete teaching lesson calls for four steps, or teaching operations known as step 1, Preparation, step 2, Presentation, step 3, Application and step 4, Testing (or Inspection). These steps are always carried out in the order given – The purpose of step 1 is to get the learner ready to be instructed, of step 2 to instruct him, of step 3 to check up errors, and of step 4 to give a final inspection of the instruction job. (p. 129)

These four steps of instruction are still used today as an effective means of teaching basic skills (DeSimone & Werner, 2012), as are common phrases coined by Allen such as telling is not training (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2011).

Continuing the work of Münsterberg (1913), the development of aptitude testing accelerated during the First World War (Ghiselli, 1973). Individual traits were seen as potential grist for the mill of efficiency (Munsterberg, 1913). Efficiency and efficacy in identifying those with capacity to learn a vocation was paramount and consistent with the ethos of scientific management (Seashore, 1917). The military leveraged the science of testing for a three-fold purpose, “(a) to aid in segregating the mentally incompetent, (b) to classify men according to their mental capacity, (c) to assist in selecting competent men for reasonable positions” (Yoakum & Yerkes, 1920, p. xi). For the military, aptitude testing became a key feature in an overall strategy to identify and train individuals to carry out the mission of the organization, a strategy that continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the development of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (Cronbach, 1979; Peterson, Park, & Castro, 2011).

The military’s leveraging of scientific management principles extended beyond vocational testing. In 1899 Elihu Root, a devotee of Fredrick Taylor and scientific management, was named the U.S. Secretary of War (Sibul, 2011). Scientific management principles were applied to military operations, as well as military education, as the fundamental tasks of war were identified and perfected. The military’s dedication to the perfection of technical skills training had two key downstream benefits as noted by Roberts (1976). First, the military became a key source of training innovation. Second, retired military personnel brought their technical skills to bear in the private sector to the boon of the nation. This latter suggestion was supported

by Fredland and Little (1980) who found a long-term economic benefit to veterans trained in vocational skills via the military.

Finally, the state extended the commitment of education and learning of the military with the passing of Public Laws 16 and 346 (also known as the G.I. Bill) (Brophy & Long, 1943). This legislation permitted veterans access to funds to be applied specifically to the pursuit of education. The combination of vocational assessment, scientific management as applied to training, and legislative commitment funding veteran education cemented the military's role as a key innovator in technical skills training and career development – both core practices of HRD (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004).

The implementation of scientific management practices in industry was joined by other significant changes that would impact HRD. Baron, Dobbin, and Jennings (1986) detail three major changes in employment management during this time period. First was the introduction of what was at the time called welfare work practices – the precursor to modern benefits packages. The second, as has been detailed in this chapter, was the implementation of scientific management practices. The third shift in management approach centered around adopting personnel practices that would reduce turn-over and better leverage the existing workforce. Baron, Dobbin, and Jennings (1986) describe this third change thusly, “hiring, promotion, and firing were centralized and regulated; exiting employees were interviewed; systematic turnover records were kept; salary classification, rating systems, and job ladders were introduced or extended; and centralized personnel units flourished” (p. 359). The implementation of scientific management, coupled with the introduction of centralized personnel management, constituted the beginnings of technical and bureaucratic control systems that aided in dictating business practice for decades to come (Edwards, 1979).



The events of the Industrial Revolution were consistent with its philosophy. As the prevailing philosophy of the time shifted away from Neo-Platonism, there came to bear a “new notion of virtue, one that dramatically rejects the assumptions of civic humanism. Citizenship and the public quest for the common good were replaced by economic productivity and hard work as the criteria of virtue” (Kramnick, 1982, p. 662). Musson and Robinson (1969) describe the philosophical shift of the time by stating that “the essence of the Scientific Revolution was the change from metaphysical to experimental science, and that this change was stimulated by technological, economic, and social factors ...” (p. 29). This increased focus on the empirical versus metaphysical, spurred by the industrial advances of the time, provided a philosophical grounding from which many of the behavioral sciences have never uprooted (Slife & Williams, 1995).

The impact of the Industrial Revolution on HRD as it is practiced today is immense. Scientific management is the progenitor of evidence-based practice (Rousseau, 2006) an ontology that is still clearly embraced in HRD today (Hamlin, 2002; Holton, 2004; Terpstra & Limpaphayom, 2012). The application of psychological testing also continues to play a key role in HRD practice as organizations seek to leverage empirical methods to match the individual to the work environment (Berr, Church, & Waclawski, 2000), or to identify skill-sets critical to the changing work environment (Lohman, 2004; Messmann & Mulder, 2012).

Perhaps most significant is the impact of the development of the factory school on current HRD practice. Noe’s (2005) definition of training exemplifies this impact. He defines training as follows:

Training refers to a planned effort by a company to facilitate employees’ learning of job-related competencies. These competencies include knowledge, skills, or behaviors that are critical for successful job performance. The goal of training is for employees to

master the knowledge, skill and behaviors emphasized in training programs and to apply them to their day-to-day activities. (p. 3-4)

Explicit in Noe's definition is the role of private organization to manage the process of skill development. Abel and Li (2012) note the expansion of corporate involvement in employee skill-building through the establishment of corporate universities with the clear purpose of "achiev[ing] competitive advantage through improved workforce performance and productivity" (p. 104). With their focus on performance and productivity, clearly the aims of the early factory schools and today's corporate universities are in close alignment.

In summary, the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the eventual discipline of HRD was significant. First was the establishment of vocational education as a viable educational alternative – a clear movement away from education as ennobling force for the individual and towards education as a primarily societal benefit. Scientifically-developed assessments to assist in determining job fit were also introduced and leveraged in both the public and private sector. Factory schools were also introduced as education was, in part, removed from the public arena and brought to private enterprise. Finally, with the advent of World War I and Ford's assembly-line came the introduction of scientific management as a methodology for consistently delivering operational results. Scientific management, with its emphasis on testable, replicable findings, clearly aligns with an empiricist philosophy that was prevalent at the time.

### **World War II.**

An unfortunate and unacceptable consequence of the industrial revolution (and, it must be said, of the scientific method of management) was the over-emphasis on the collective at the expense (and oftentimes abuse) of the individual (DeSimone & Werner, 2012; Hughes, 2012). This condition underscored the general tension between autonomic and group benefits that

continues to be at the crux of the HRD challenge (Elliott & Turnbull, 2003). Turner (1976)

described the challenge thusly:

... institutional motivations are external, artificial constraints and superimpositions that bridle manifestations of the real self. One plays the institutional game when he must, but only at the expense of the true self. The true self consists of deep, unsocialized, inner impulses. Mad desire and errant fancy are exquisite expressions of self. (p. 992)

That the pendulum had swung too far in one direction was apparent to many, including Chester Bernard, Mary Parker Follett, and Elton Mayo. As the United States prepared for war yet again, these and others gave rise to the Human Relations movement (Swanson & Holton, 2001). The Human Relations movement differentiated itself from Scientific Management in its concern for the individual worker, arguing that “organizational effectiveness resulted from meeting the needs of employees for constructive social relationships, satisfaction, and self-actualization” (Ledford, 1999, p. 27).

### ***World War II – The Human Relations Movement.***

If the Human Relations movement had a genesis, it was the Hawthorne experiments conducted by the Western Electric Company in the mid 1920's. The Hawthorne experiments are so named because they took place at the Hawthorne manufacturing facility. Over the space of two years, factory workers' productivity was assessed against a variety of variables (fatigue, working conditions, etc.)

It is worth noting that the Hawthorne experiments also introduced the interviewing research methodology and theories of Jean Piaget to the United States (Hseuh, 2002). It is somewhat surprising that a psychological theorist best known for his structuralist theory of child development first came to light in the U.S. via the avenue of industrial psychology. Nevertheless, Piaget's clinical interviewing techniques (Piaget & Kamii, 1978) in which the interviewer

listened attentively and without guidance to the interviewee provided the foundational approach to the Hawthorne experiments (interestingly enough, without the knowledge of Piaget himself.)

The results of the Hawthorne experiments were unexpected. The most predominant factor in the productivity of the employee was found to be attitude towards immediate supervisor (Pennock, 1930). It should be noted that later research of the original Hawthorne findings cast doubt on this hypothesis (Pitcher, 1981). Nevertheless, once the results of the Hawthorne experiments were popularized they became the *de facto* means of understanding employer/employee relations.

The Hawthorne experiments gave legitimacy to the notion that the worker's thoughts, feelings, wishes, desires, and opinions were of concern and utmost importance to organizations. This nascent notion was provided a platform with the publication of Chester Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive* (1938). Barnard's career spanned 40 years with American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), culminating in the presidency of New Jersey Bell – the post he occupied at the publication of his work. Underscoring this growing schism between the needs of the individual and the organization Barnard wrote:

The significance of these observations may be made clearer by noting the extreme differences of conception regarding the “individual” – to take one word – in discussions of cooperation and of organizations and their functions. On the one hand, the discrete, particular, unique, singular individual person with a name, an address, a history, a reputation, has the attention. On the other hand, when the attention transfers to the organization as a whole, or to remote parts of it, or to the integration of efforts accomplished by coordination, or to persons regarded in groups, then the individual loses his preeminence in the situation and something else, non-personal in character, is treated as dominant. (p. 8-9)

Barnard's solution for this challenge was the proposal of a systems theory of organizations. In his text, Barnard (1938) suggested that humans all strive for “fullness of personal development” (p. 296) primarily through their association with explicit and implicit

systems. The challenge of leadership, given this model of human behavior, is to encourage and manage individual cooperation to the benefit of the individual and the organization. Barnard suggested the executive serve three functions: (a) The maintenance of organization communication, (b) The securing of essential services from individuals (sub-divided into recruiting into the system and then inspiring to greater fealty and effort once affiliated), and (c) The formulation of purpose and objectives.

Barnard's text (1938), coupled with the results of the Hawthorne experiments, further drove the Human Relations movement. The movement was additionally encouraged and emboldened by the writings and works of Mary Parker Follett. Follett did not fashion herself a business woman. In fact, her initial interests lay more specifically in political science. Nevertheless, she found great interest and passion in the human factor of management (Sethi, 1962).

Her enduring contribution to HRD is, as she described it, the Law of the Situation (Fox, 1968). Follett (1919) explained the Law of the Situation as "the discovery and formulation of modes of unifying" (p. 586). This concept of unifying was central to her thesis of management. Follett saw humans as constantly striving for freedom, and the primary vehicle for that fulfillment is the associations they form with others. Follett (1970) defined this freedom as the "free range of activity and thought and power and control" (p. 137). This fundamental aspect of human behavior, striving for freedom through communal association, had clear impact upon management:

... if the industrial manager is to get the fruits of scientific management, he must understand the intricate workings of a group ... It is impossible to work out sound schemes of compulsory compensation or compulsory insurance without understanding the group relations and group responsibility upon which these are based. And so on and so on. The study of community as process is absolutely necessary for the sound development of industry. (Follett, 1919, p. 585)

Follett did not suggest the elimination of scientific management, far from it. Instead, she suggested a broadening of the approach to take into consideration the fundamental elements of human behavior outlined above. In so doing, she proposed the creation of what could be considered the first HRD professional. Follett (1927) describes the role thusly:

There should be, I think, in every plant, an official, one of whose duties should be to classify and interpret managerial experience with the aid of the carefully kept records which should be required of every executive. For such classification and interpretation of experience – this experience which in essentials repeats itself so often from time to time, from department to department, from plant to plant – it would be possible to draw useful conclusions. The importance of this procedure becomes more obvious when we remember that having experience and profiting by experience are two different matters. (p. 77)

Compare Follett's idea of the role of the HRD professional with McLagan's (1989) later definition of HRD:

On a simple level, HRD is the process of increasing the capacity of the human resource through development ... So HRD is something that everyone does. Individuals do it as they work to develop themselves, managers do it as they work to support others' development, and the HRD staff does it as it creates the overall development strategy and provides formal development tools to the organization. (p. 52)

McLagan's role for the HRD staff, to provide the formal tools and strategy of human resource capacity, is a natural progression of Follett's charge to classify and interpret managerial experience for future benefit. Indeed, for McLagan's modern HRD to provide formal tools and strategy a body of knowledge provided by Follett's proposed organizational role is required. Follett was a clear thought leader in the development of the Human Relations movement.

Another who provided much of the theoretical and philosophical backbone to the Human Relations movement was Elton Mayo. Elton Mayo was an Australian philosopher, writer, clinical psychologist, and political scientist who sat on the faculty of Harvard Business School (Hseuh, 2002). Mid-way through the Hawthorne experiments Mayo was called in to assist in the

research and help interpret the results (Gomberg, 1957). Mayo's methodology (1945), based upon the interviewing theories and practices of Jean Piaget, was fundamentally comparative in nature. In other words, hypotheses were developed based upon a conceptual framework and tested, compared against a like group, measured against the objectives of the organization, and validated through repetition (Dale, 1959).

While Mayo's (1945) methodology was influential, his philosophy was doubly-so. Mayo's philosophies were much in line with both Barnard (1938) and Follett (1919) in that he identified personal growth and development as the fundamental goal of humans, the role of (formal and informal) social groups as the primary means of that growth and development, and the leader's task to leverage those concepts for the growth of the organization. Mayo's key contribution to the Human Resource movement, as seen in the results of the Hawthorne experiments, was the establishment of employee engagement as a key predictor of productivity in the workplace (Melé, 2003). Mayo (1945) described the notion by stating:

It is far easier for an industrialist to assume the overwhelming importance of material and technical factors and to neglect, or shrug off, the need for active and spontaneous participation in the effort by the workers. Yet[,] it is true that the larger the organization the more dependent is it, not only upon technical advance, but also upon the spontaneous human cooperation of every last member of the group. (p. 117)

Mayo's influence on HRD cannot be overstated. Mayo's two fundamental assumptions of human relations, that individuals seek social alliance and cooperation and that an engaged employee is a more productive employee, became the *de facto* bulwarks of the discipline (Sarachek, 1968) and continued to influence the theory and practice of HRD into its modern era (Ledford, 1999).

While given the name of Human Relations movement, the informing philosophy of the time was humanism (Melè, 2003). The humanistic view is well-defined by Pirson and Lawrence, (2010) who describe the view of the individual as follows:

... a zoon politician, a relational man. Someone who materializes his freedom through value-based social interactions. People he or she engages with are a means but also an end to themselves. Human beings in the humanistic view are guided by universally applicable principles and long-term relationships. They are intrinsically motivated to self-actualize and serve humanity through what they do. (p. 560)

Note the description of the individual as a social creature, yet one striving for individual actualization. This point-of-view and philosophy is completely in keeping with the human relations movement as defined during this time by Mayo (1945), Follett (1919), and Barnard (1938).

Before leaving the discussion of the Human Relations movement, it is worth discussing the fact that dissenting opinions did in fact exist. The fundamental assumption of the Human Relations movement was that the development of employee-centered programs and management style would result in a more productive employee. An alternative school of thought, proposed by the Chicago School of Sociology, suggested that “[r]estriction of output was a rational response to managers failing to provide appropriate conditions” (Burawoy, 2008, p. 375). In other words, the root of the problem of worker productivity was not necessarily the irrationality of the worker but of the manager in failing to provide the appropriate material support given expectations.

This alternative school of thought was supported legislatively and judicially as the Wagner Act of 1935 provided workers the right to unionize and, two years later, the Supreme Court ruled that the state could set a minimum wage (Van Wezel Stone, 1981). From this vantage point the interests of the worker and that of private industry were opposed, and the state was required to intervene. Similar to the human relations movement, the labor movement was spurred by a rejection of scientific management as a methodology (Hogler, 1989). The approach of the labor movement in rejecting scientific management was far different. It should be noted



that the growth of the labor movement at this time provided a critical counter-point to the human relations movement.

***World War II – Training within Industry.***

The onset of World War II spurred into action, once again, the industrial arm of the United States to support the manufacturing needs of the war effort. In response to this need for increased efficiency and quality in the manufacturing sector, the federal government established the Training Within Industry Service (or TWI) (DeSimone & Werner, 2012). TWI, with Channing R. Dooley as its head, focused on three main areas: job performance (efficiency), job quality, and human relations (Swanson & Holton, 2001). This effort and focus is seen by many as the starting point of contemporary HRD (Swanson, 2001).

Dooley established multiple programs to address the topics of performance, quality and human relations (Jacobs, 2002). Specifically, Job Instruction Training (JIT) addressed the need to systematically improve and consistently replicate job training. Job Methods Training (JMT) met the challenge of improving job quality. Job Relations Training (JRT) gave specific means and methods for improving relations between employee and supervisor (a need identified by the Human Relations movement as detailed previously.) Each method was presented with accompanying training and J-cards (job aides to assist in recalling and utilizing the methods on the job) to supervisors across the country in war-impacted industries. A brief examination of each illustrates the continued impact on the field of HRD.

Due to the urgency of the need, Job Instruction Training was the first training system rolled out by TWI (Huntzinger, 2006). JIT, initially developed by Charles Allen (1917) is a four-step method of instruction that is essentially a train-the-trainer approach to teaching job skills (Dooley, 1945). Prior to instruction, the trainer is to determine the following:

1. Decide what the learner must be taught in order to do the job efficiently, safely, economically and intelligently.
  2. Have the right tools, equipment, supplies and material ready.
  3. Have the workplace properly arranged, just as the worker will be expected to keep it.
- (p. 193)

Once the instructor has thus prepared, the four steps originally outlined by Allen are followed, viz: (1) Preparation, (2) Presentation (demonstration of the skill), (3) Performance (the learner attempts the skill) and (4) Follow-up. The JIT methodology proved to be highly repeatable, thus leveraging a multiplier effect in which large numbers of individuals could be trained in a variety of circumstances with available personnel (Robinson & Schroder, 1993).

Not only was the JIT methodology repeatable, but it was also impactful. Dooley (1945) noted improvements at Northrop Aircraft in Hawthorne, CA. Specific improvements included an increase in productivity of 17 percent, reduction in break-time of 22 percent, and a 45 percent reduction in injuries. Indeed, as innovative and impactful as JIT proved to be, Dooley's fastidiousness in testing and proving his methodologies were equally so.

Job Methods Training (JMT) introduced and formalized the concepts of Continuous Improvement in the United States (Bhuiyah & Baghel, 2005) and eventually became the impetus for industry-standard process and quality improvement methodologies such as Deming's Management Model (Deming, 1986), Kazien/Lean (Huntzinger, 2006), and Six Sigma (Soltero, 2004). Continuous Improvement also found expression in HRD through the work of Kirkpatrick and his Organizational Elements Model (Watkins, Leigh, Foshay, & Kaufman, 1998). Dooley (1945) outlined the four steps of JMT as first, breaking down the job into its individual steps as it is currently being accomplished; second, a careful analysis of each detail of each step with an eye towards questioning the utility and effectiveness of each step; third, developing a new method based upon opportunities uncovered by the analysis conducted in step two; and fourth,

applying the new method. Special emphasis was made to ensure employers understood their employees were not to become quality engineers. Instead, much like his train-the-trainer/multiplier JIT model, all employees would be empowered to find opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of their work.

Dooley's attention to downstream results held true with his evaluation of the JMT model (1945). As an example, Dooley described the need for maximum efficiency of war-related industry in the Hawaiian Islands. Due to the fixed number of available workers, plantations and other such organizations on the islands were pressed to find ever more efficient and effective ways of working. He summarized the success of one such facility, writing "new methods saved 7,460 man-days a year – the equivalent of adding 25 men to the payroll. Installing the improvements cost \$11,000; the yearly savings were \$40,000" (p. 99). Such well-detailed results were typical of Dooley's reporting.

The final methodology developed by Dooley was the Job Relations Training method. Unlike the previous methods, in which some existing research or specific methodology could be used as a baseline, no proven method of improving human relations had been established (Dooley, 1945). The need to develop such training, however, was clear. Upon surveying supervisors and their managers, it was found that "one of the most apparent weaknesses was in handling relationships with other people" (p. 205).

A two year development process with ten iterations of vetted methodologies spawned the final JRT method, released in 1943 (Dooley, 1945). The first version was simple, with three key points of instruction for supervisors: "1. Employees are human beings. 2. They are all individuals. 3. It is important to find out how they feel" (p. 210). While not explicitly stated by Dooley, the influence of Human Relations theorists such as Mayo (1945) and Follett (1919) is

evident in Dooley's initial JRT model. Eventually, the model was modified to first state fundamentals of good supervision, viz:

Everyday recognition of people as individuals. Letting people know how they are getting along. Giving people a chance to talk over in advance the things that affect them. Giving credit when due. [and] Making the best use of people's ability. (p. 215)

These principles were put into action with a four-step action plan to be used when supervisors encountered a relations issue: "1. Get the facts. 2. Weigh and decide. 3. Take action. [and] 4. Check results" (p. 215).

Results of JRT were positive, and consistent with the other J-programs. Particular improvement in absenteeism was seen by organizations that implemented the JRT program (Dooley, 1945). In all, the importance of the work done by Dooley and the Training Within Industry group cannot be overstated. The models Dooley established continue to resonate within HRD and have been called upon as standards to which industry should return (Sirny, 1975). Perhaps underrated at the time but critical in today's HRD was Dooley's diligence in testing and proving his models. His identification of training Return on Investment (ROI) is evidenced in the Hawaiian islands example – a concept that in today's HRD practice is of immense focus and import (Phillips, 1996).

A discussion of the World War II workforce is incomplete without an acknowledgement of the significant demographic change that occurred to that workforce during the War years, specifically the notable increase of married women into the workforce (Goldin, 1991). Mulligan (1998) conducted research evaluating the average work hours and work productivity during World War II when compared with pre- and post-war levels. General economic theory holds that an increase in hours worked and production is a factor of changes in budget sets (tax and spending policy.) Uniquely, with the advent of women in the workforce, the standard economic

theory did not hold. Increases in work productivity could not be accounted for through pecuniary means. While Goldin (1991) contends that World War II was not the watershed event for female participation in the workforce, there is no question that during this time period the increase in female participation had a unique impact on the workforce environment. As such, it is a powerful variable that must be considered when evaluating the context of events from this period.

In summary, the period surrounding WWII was critical for the development of a formal HRD discipline. The Human Relations Movement, spurred by the Hawthorne experiments and the work of Barnard (1938), Follett (1919), and Mayo (1945), provided a philosophical counterpoint to scientific management and introduced a humanistic philosophy to HRD practice. Likewise, the advent of the War establishment of the Training Within Industry department set the groundwork for many of the practices of HRD that extend to the present. The large-scale entry of women into the workplace forever impacted how work was done.

### **1950's – 1970's: Rise of Organization Development.**

With the introduction of Dooley's advances in quality, training and employee relations to the private sector, and with momentum from practitioners and thinkers such as Barnard (1938), Follett (1919), and Mayo (1945), the pieces were in place for the formal development of HRD as a discipline. As the post-war era dawned Tannenbaum (1954) wrote:

I see a new discipline of human relations emerging – a discipline which will ultimately integrate the social or behavioral sciences. It will bring to bear the theories, methods, and techniques of all the social sciences upon the study of interpersonal phenomena, including relations between persons and between groups, wherever these relations occur. This discipline will be a field of study focusing upon definable phenomena and yielding a body of knowledge relevant to human behavior. It will have its applied branch which will use knowledge emerging from basic research in the solution of particular problems for specified purposes. Associated with the later branch will be researchers, who will use existing knowledge to provide a systematic basis for later implementation, and practitioners, who will diagnose situations and take action which they deem appropriate in terms of objectives achieved.

I would not hazard a guess as to how long it might take for this discipline to emerge full-blown, but the current trend in this direction is apparent and the ultimate outcome, in my judgment, inevitable. (p. 6)

A key element in the formation of HRD as a discipline was the growth of Organization Development (OD) as a component of HRD. Swanson and Holton (2001) note six significant developments during this time: (a) Continued development of the human relations movement, (b) The establishment and growth of laboratory training, (c) The development and validation of survey research, (d) The development of action research, (e) The advancement of sociotechnical systems theory and its application in organizations, and (f) The increased emphasis on strategic change management.

It should be noted that there is some debate as to whether Organization Development (OD) is a field unto itself or simply a sub discipline of HRD. McLean (1996) weighed in on the issue by stating “it depends” (p. 10)! Per McLean, most professional organizations deem OD to be a subset of HRD. This notion is supported by Anderson’s (2011) definition of Organization Development, stating, “Organization development is the process of increasing organizational effectiveness and facilitating personal and organizational change through the use of interventions driven by social and behavioral science knowledge” (p. 3). Given this definition, there is clear alignment of purpose and method between Organization Development and McLagan’s (1989) aim of HRD to drive increased performance from individuals and organizations. While OD’s emphasis on change management sets it apart from other HRD sub-disciplines, its mission remains very much the same as HRD as a whole. Therefore, for purposes of this study, the development of OD is viewed as a critical element in the development of the overall discipline of HRD.

*1950's – 1970's: The Human Relations Movement Continued.*

The Human Relations movement during this period continued to crystallize what would become the key assumptions of human behavior that guides Organization Development to this day (Swanson & Holton, 2001). These assumptions included the notion that self-direction and self-controlled work, with the supervisor as coach and mentor, maximizes employee satisfaction. While building off of the traditions of Mayo (1945), Follett (1919) and Barnard (1945), the Human Relations movement modified their beliefs in the intervening decades to include the following points (Knowles, 1958):

- an absolute set of behavioral laws with predictive value was unreasonable (and indeed that a mystical, subconscious, non-rational understanding of human behavior was a more reasonable position);
- the acceptance of economic incentives bearing significant weight in motivating human behavior;
- a re-evaluation of organization theory (with a more balanced emphasis on informal and formal organization) as a means of understanding and mitigating personnel and production issues;
- the embrace of a more open systems approach to understanding the work environment, with political, social and economic elements playing a role in the work environment;
- personality traits and values of individuals have significant impact on overall group behavior;
- a preference for democratic, versus autocratic, leadership style;
- a rejection of manipulative tactics to modify behavior, replaced by an emphasis on leader personality; and

- the acknowledgement that not all employee issues can be boiled down to issues of communication, misunderstanding, or lack of information.

The concepts put forth in the human relations movement, with its emphasis on manager relationship as a key factor in employee engagement and productivity, continue to significantly inform HRD theory and practice (Cardus, 2013; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Schuck & Wollard, 2008). As HRD is currently theorized and practiced, the human relations movement is a core foundation.

***1950's – 1970's: Laboratory Testing.***

Laboratory training emerged post-World War II as another key means of conducting the work of HRD. Laboratory training, also known as the T-group, was essentially group therapy sessions in which the following elements were to be found (Highhouse, 2002):

- groups were unstructured and typically were conducted off-site for a period of up to three to four weeks;
- the topic of conversation for these groups was not explicitly stated, nor was any context or content provided the group for discussion; and,
- the group was accompanied by a passive facilitator whose role was to encourage but not guide discussion.

Originally developed by noted thought leaders such as Kurt Lewin, Kenneth Benne, Leland Bradford, and Ronald Lippit as an individual development tool, the T-group method was quickly adopted by corporate entities as a means of organizational problem solving (Swanson & Holton, 2001) and is considered to be a cornerstone for the development of OD as a practice (Burke, 2006). The development of communities of practice as a means of driving employee



engagement, as documented by Chang and Jacobs (2012), is a current manifestation of the T-group methodology in today's HRD practice.

***1950's – 1970's: Survey Research.***

Rensis Likert was and remains the foremost pioneer in attitudinal research (Edmondson, 2005). Likert noted the changing course of managerial theory from one based in scientific management to a theory more fully-rooted in the human resource movement (namely the significant impact of attitudinal and motivational variables on behavior and performance) (Likert, 1958). Likert thus developed the well-known Likert Scale to appropriately quantify and better understand these attitudinal and motivational variables. The idea was genius in its simplicity. For any given attitudinal construct, the subject was asked to rate their agreement on a given statement from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Numerical values were given to each possible choice, thus providing researchers the quantification necessary to statistically evaluate said variables (Likert, Roslow, & Murphy, 1932).

Likert's attitudinal research was based upon his overall theory of management, which was grounded in a systems orientation (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Likert held the firm belief that successful managers were both production-centered *and* employee-centered – what he termed participative group and eventually System 4 leadership (Likert, 1979). With his systems approach and focus on effective leadership as partnership, it is little surprise that Likert cited Follett (1919) and Mayo (1945), among others, as key influencers of his own leadership philosophy. The impact of Likert's approach to survey research on HRD is almost too large to quantify. Suffice it to say, as a research methodology Likert's modality is ubiquitous in HRD (Chiaburu, Huang, & Hutchins, 2014; Gill, Duggar III & Norton, 2014; Singh, 2014).

*1950's – 1970's: Action Research & Systems Theory.*

The next two developments in Organization Development during the 1950's – 1970's was the growth of Action Research (or Action Learning) and Sociotechnical Systems theory. The two share much of the same root, and thus it is appropriate to review both together. Action Research was developed by social scientists such as John Collier, Kurt Lewin, and William White soon after World War II (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Lewin described the Action Research process in four steps. First, an organizational problem to solve was identified and a plan developed to address that plan. The plan was then executed, and immediately followed by reconnaissance to determine the effectiveness of the plan and potential improvements that could be made. There proceeds, “a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the results of the action” (Lewin, 1946, p. 38).

Two elements make Action Research particularly unique. First, “[t]he results generated by the research are used to influence the situation which is being researched, [and second,] [t]he action-researcher monitors the change brought about by his intervention in the research situation” (Burgoyne, 1973, p. 8). The embedded nature of the researcher in relation to the problem is at the heart of action research and provides much of the inherent benefit. The researcher, as Burgoyne (1973) notes, is “essentially carrying out two studies ... one ... in which he observes, and uses his observations to influence the situation, and ... a second ... to assess the consequences of the change brought about in this way” (p. 9). Put another way, in Action Research “the scientist and trainer ... are part of the field to be examined, the problem, and the experimental solution” (Gardner, 1974, p. 107).

Action Research was, in fact, the methodological extension of sociotechnical systems theory established at the Tavistock Institute and elsewhere (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, &

Macguire, 2003). Sociotechnical systems theory was an approach to understanding organizations as closed systems in which the individual was seen as inextricably linked to the technological arena in which he or she operated. Like other branches of systems theory, sociotechnical systems theory traced its philosophical roots to the final causality of Aristotle (Ropohl, 1999). A landmark application of this theory in the business sector was the work done by Trist and Bamforth (1951) in the coal industry.

Trist and Bamforth (1951) closely examined both the technological system that existed for the worker, as well as the social structure supporting that technological system. Their findings revealed that both factors, the social and the technical, synergistically impacted the individual. What's more, change could be impacted (and productivity improved) by effecting the *system* and not simply the individual. Enacting organizational change, first through the application of sociotechnical systems theory and eventually through other theoretical approaches, became a key component of HRD as a discipline (Bennis, 1963).

### ***1950's – 1970's: Change Management & Organization Development.***

Bennis' call for HRD's entry into change management (Bennis, 1963), echoed by others in management science (Churchman, 1964), coincided with the development and implementation of Kurt Lewin's change theory. Lewin (1947) proposed that change was fundamentally a process of overcoming a group's inherent inertia, a condition he called quasi-stationary equilibrium. He suggested that change was a function of increasing or decreasing events that were already occurring in a system. Therefore, to enact change he proposed a three-phase process of un-freezing the existing state, moving to the new state, and re-freezing the new state. Moving was achieved by either reducing the forces that inhibited change or increasing the forces that encouraged change (Lewin, 1952).

A hallmark validation of Lewin's change theory (1947) occurred via the work of Zand and Sorensen (1975). As management scientists, Zand and Sorensen were keenly interested in quantitative evaluation of management technique, and thus submitted Lewin's theory to validation through empirical research. In examining numerous change efforts Zand and Sorensen found that "[l]evels of success ... was positively correlated with favorable forces and negatively correlated with unfavorable forces in each phase of change" (p. 541). Lewin's theory of change, thus validated and accepted, became the springboard for other change theories eventually postulated by theorists such as Kotter (1995) and Senge (1990) (Buchanan, Ketley, Gollop, Jones, Lamont, Neath, & Whitby, 2003).

As mentioned previously, systems theory has its roots in Aristotelian teleology and in fact the 1950's and 1960's marked the reintroduction of teleology as a viable alternative to positivistic modalities (Howard, 1990). It rose to prominence during the period of the 1950's largely through the efforts of Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1969), a Canadian biologist and philosopher who noted that "the mechanistic scheme of isolable causal trains and meristic treatment had proved insufficient to deal with theoretical problems, especially in the biosocial sciences, and with the practical problems posed by modern technology" (p. 11-12). In 1954 von Bertalanffy assisted in founding the Society for General Systems Research. Its charter, given the content thus far presented in this chapter, is enlightening:

The Society for General Systems Research was organized in 1954 to further the development of theoretical systems which are applicable to more than one of the traditional departments of knowledge. Major functions are to: (1) investigate the isomorphy of concepts, laws, and models in various fields, and to help in useful transfers from one field to another; (2) encourage the development of adequate theoretical models in the fields which lack them; (3) minimize the duplication of theoretical effort in different fields; (4) promote the unity of science through improving communication among specialists. (von Bertalanffy, 1969, p. 15)

General Systems Theory, true to the Society's original mission, would become a key component of HRD theory and practice (Swanson, 2001). Further insight into Systems Theory as a philosophy, as well as its application in the arena of psychology (and thus HRD) is presented later in this chapter.

In summary, the period spanning the 1950's through 1970's was a fruitful time for the nascent field of HRD, and particularly the sub discipline of OD. The development of Lab Testing during and post-WWII provided an organizational intervention model that became a key construct in the practice of OD. Likert's (1947) development of survey research also brought empirical legitimacy to the discipline while still maintaining values rooted in the Human Relations movement. Action Research as a methodology and sociotechnical systems theory as a model were introduced and validated. Lewin's (1952) change theory answered the call of the private sector for behavioral science to engage in a fundamental and profound manner – thus proving Tannenbaum's (1954) prediction of the creation of HRD as a discipline truly prophetic. The predominant philosophy of the time, a blend of humanism and structuralism via systems theory, was clearly evident.

### **1980's – 2010's: HRD's Modern Era.**

As a new millennium approached, effective change management became the defining aspect of, and primary purpose for, HRD. Nadler's (1970) definition of HRD clearly asserted this focus on change when he stated that "HRD means (1) a series of organized activities, (2) conducted within a specified time and (3) designed to produce behavioral change" (p. 3). While all change doesn't fall under the purview of HRD, certain organizational change was deemed largely dependent upon that organization's human resources and their ability to execute strategy and learn as that strategy was implemented (Beer & Nohira, 2001). As HRD progressed as a

discipline, greater focus on this fundamental effort to support behavioral change, and organizational change, became apparent. This was accomplished through the formal establishment of the HRD professional; guided primarily through the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) (DeSimone & Werner, 2012). While ASTD was first established in the 1940's, by the 1980's it had established itself as a key supporter of HRD from a primarily practitioner perspective (Miller, 2008).

The first challenge for HRD as a profession was to define who were, in fact, HRD practitioners. Hansen (1980) defined the HRD practitioner as falling into one of seven categories:

1. Members of professional training associations (such as ASTD),
2. Members of organizations with historical interest in HRD (such as the American Society of Public Administration),
3. Members of "Human Resource Environment" (or Organizational Development) associations such as the OD Network,
4. Adult education professionals,
5. Public remedial employment training professionals,
6. Vocational and Technical education professionals,
7. Members of Educational Technology professional organizations. (p. 6-7)

Hansen (1984) later reinforced these same seven categories and included a definition of the HRD practitioner as follows:

... those persons who are primarily engaged in attracting to the workplace and fostering human resources, providing for their training, education and development in the workplace or within organizations ancillary thereto, and facilitating the management and utilization of these resources in such a way that both their goals and the goals of the organization are achieved to the maximum extent possible. (p. 72)

Along with defining what an HRD practitioner was, the discipline also was in search of defining the scope of the HRD professional's responsibility. Seated within the larger discipline of Human Resource Management, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities was necessary. In 1989, ASTD sponsored a ground-breaking study to clearly, empirically identify HRD roles and competencies (DeSimone & Werner, 2012). Conducted by Pat McLagan, the results of that

research – *Models for HRD Practice* (1989), identified three key HRD functions: training and development, organization development, and career development. The Human Resource Wheel, a graphical representation of the separation of HR roles, can be seen in Figure 2.2.

The training and development role of HRD continued to receive significant attention. Carkhuff's (2000) HRD model focused on giving learning professionals the skills they required to positively enact change through the classroom environment, thus maximizing output while minimizing resources (Aspy, 1986). Carkhuff's (2000) *The Art of Helping* focuses on many such skills; for example attending, responding, and personalizing are identified as key skills of the adept facilitator.

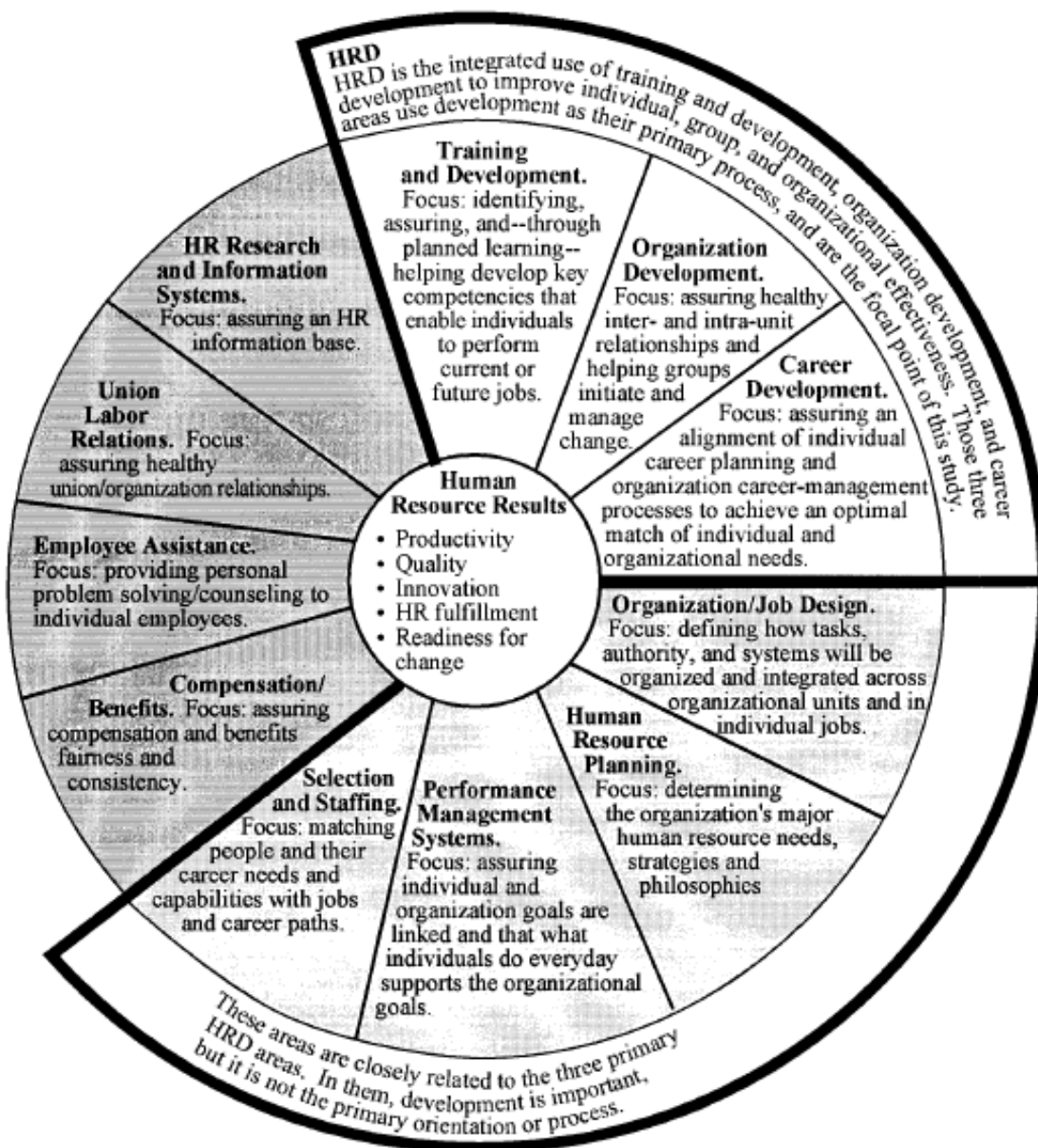
ASTD once again sponsored research, this time in 2004, to re-examine the function and competency of the HRD professional. A revised Learning and Performance Wheel was thus produced (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004) and can be seen in Figure 2.3. A comparison of these two figures illustrates the growth and development of the discipline during this time. While HRD's focus shouldn't be considered narrow as represented by McLagan's (1989) research, one quickly notes greater striation in the discipline as specialties such as instructional design and facilitation become more clearly delineated in Davis, Naughton & Rothwell's revised approach.

Also inferred in the new wheel was the need for HRD's alignment with business strategy and full capacity to leverage technology. Implied in the placement of strategy at the core of the Learning and Performance Wheel is the seating of HRD as a corporate, business function. The primary aim of the discipline is to achieve the primary aims of the organization and is indeed seen as an imperative for such strategic aims (Torraco & Swanson, 1995; Kochan & Dyer, 1993). Finally, the explicit mention of areas of expertise such as managing organizational knowledge

and facilitating organizational change underscore the continued and indeed more pronounced influence of systems theory in HRD at this time (Senge, 1993).

**Figure 2.2**

*Human Resource Wheel*

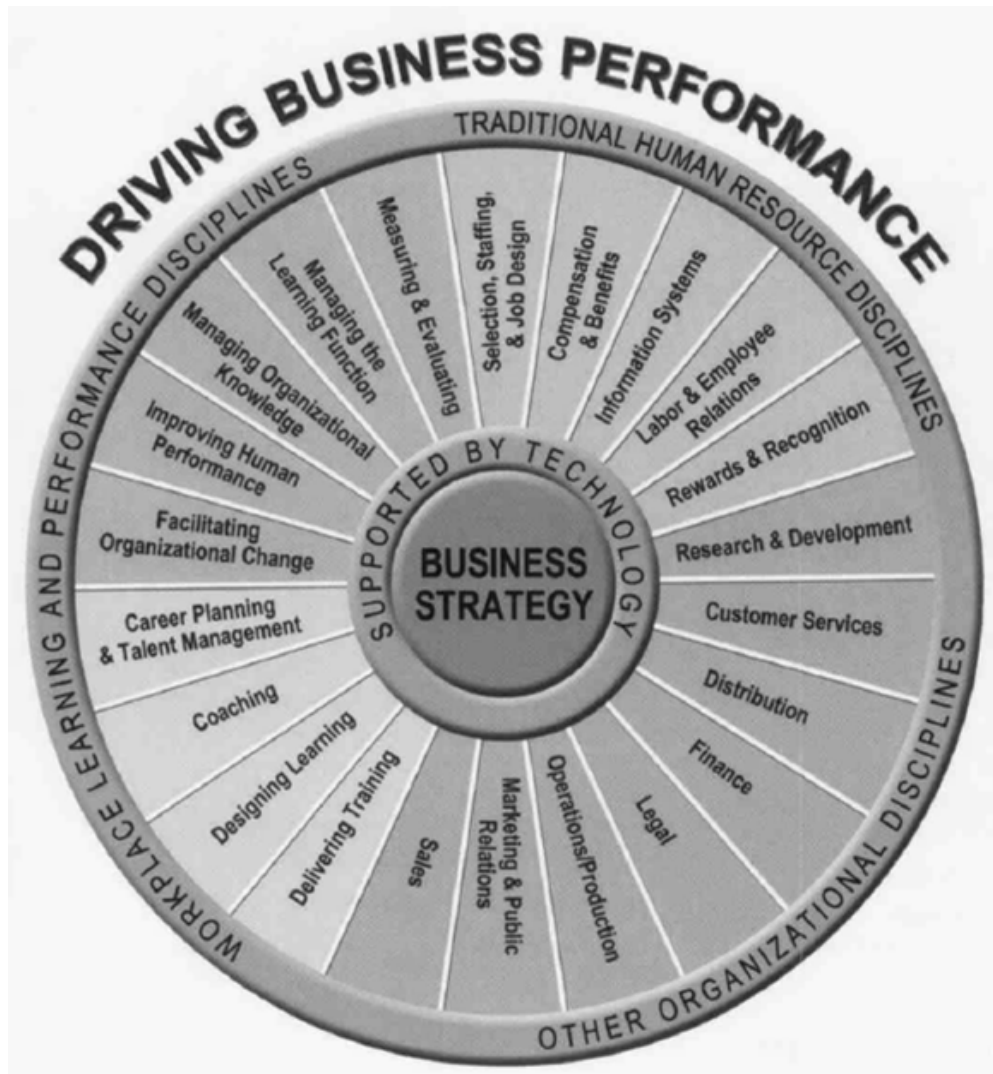


*Note.* Adapted from "Models for HRD Practice," by M. A. McLagan, 1989, *Training and Development Journal*, 43, p. 53. Copyright 1989 by the American Society of Training and Development. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 2.3

*The New Learning and Performance Wheel*



*Note.* Adapted from “New Roles and New Competencies for the Profession,” by P. Davis, J. Naughton & W. Rothwell, 2004, *Training and Development Journal*, 58, p. 35. Copyright 2004 by the American Society of Training and Development. Reprinted with permission.

Additional evidence of the influence of systems theory during this time can be seen in a review of the competencies identified for HRD practitioners. In Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell’s (2004) research, HRD competency could be categorized into one of three categories;

Interpersonal, Business/Management, and Personal. In 2013 ASTD revised the competency model yet again, and the changes are informative (Arneson, Rothwell, & Naughton, 2013). Foundational competencies for the HRD professional still include Business, Personal, and Interpersonal skills. These skills have been joined by competency in Technology Literacy, Global Mindset, and Industry Knowledge. Echoes of the sociotechnical systems theory espoused by Lewin (1952) and others can be seen as the HRD profession moved to embrace a broader skill set on the part of its practitioners.

While ASTD operated primarily from a practitioner perspective, the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) was founded in 1993 to promote a research agenda (Russ-Eft, Short, & Jacobs, 2014). Made up almost exclusively of members of the academic community, Russ-Eft, Short, & Jacobs (2014) note the mission of the Academy: “encouraging systematic study of HRD theories, processes, and practices; disseminating information about HRD; encouraging the application of HRD findings, and providing opportunities for social interaction for scholars and scholar practitioners” (p. 68). Even from the academic arena, the importance of application of theory is apparent. During this time, there existed a steady call for HRD to frame itself as an applied discipline, and that theory ought to be judged largely by its practical utility (Keefer & Yap, 2007; Swanson, 1995; Torraco, 2004).

Pinning down the philosophy of the modern era is challenging. From its roots in ancient Greece, through the Industrial Revolution and establishment of scientific management, to the dawn of the Human Relations movement and the emergence of Systems Theory two distinct methodologies had now come to the forefront: quantitative (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) and qualitative (Creswell, 2007; Shank, 2006) methodology. Both methodologies carry with them significant assumptions. In the case of quantitative methodology, Slife and Gantt (1999) note the

assumptions of empiricism, quantification (phenomena can be measured), universalism (if a phenomena occurs once, it will occur again given the same conditions) and naturalism (the purpose of research is the identification of natural law). In the case of qualitative methodology, there is an assumption of lived experience (versus observed experience) as the source of knowledge (Slife & Gantt, 1999), ordinary language and a hermeneutic approach to evaluation (Ezzy, 2013), contextualism (versus universality) (Slife & Gantt, 1999) and meaning (Slife & Gantt, 1999).

The tension between these two points of view was eased through the embrace of what was termed a mixed methods approach to research (Howard, 1983). Researchers determined that certain research questions were best suited to differing methodologies, or that a more complete picture of phenomena was achieved by the convergence of results from differing methodologies (Davis, 2009; Slife & Gant, 1999). The aim became holism – a fuller understanding of a phenomenon achieved through multiple research perspectives (Morse & Chung, 2003). Midgley (1992) argued that pluralism was a necessary condition for the continued legitimization of systems theory. Slife and Williams (1995) embraced such methodological pluralism but warned of its inherent danger in stating that “[t]his position makes it all the more important that behavioral scientists are aware of their theoretical assumptions, for their assumptions influence their view of the world and their decisions about what method of study seems most appropriate” (p. 201).

Slife and Gantt (1999) express the larger goal of methodological pluralism in stating that it encompasses “the diversity of methodological *philosophies* as well” (p. 1453). Implicit in such a description, and consistent with the warning given by Slife and Williams (1995), is that such philosophies be clearly stated and their assumptions revealed. Peters (2012) suggests that, instead

of continuing the evaluation of said assumptions, the sciences embraced pluralism as a means of avoiding the difficult discussion all-together. He states,

We could argue that such is a sign of healthy diversity or even of Lyotard's "postmodern condition," in which the old legitimizations no longer hold. It could also be a sign of relaxed disciplinary maturity. Whitehead quipped that the last thing to be fixed in a science is its foundations. Many academic fields today, in fact, seem happy to defer indefinitely all efforts at fixing – in any sense of this punful term. No one takes the soul seriously in psychology, nor is biology paralyzed by failure to have reached a satisfactory definition of "life." Nor do all the philosophers seek "wisdom." Perhaps *kenosis* of its central term is the sign of a mature field. (p. 505)

During this time HRD embraced methodological plurality as it sought to understand the phenomena of its domain. As HRD theoreticians did so, however, there appeared an evident lack of consideration for the theoretical assumptions upon which the various methodologies rested. Kissling and Harvey (2005) advocated for a mixed method approach as critical response to globalization, with no accompanying discussion of the assumptions of those mixed methods. Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher, and Pèrez-Prado (2003) do note that philosophical differences exist between methods; however, no discussion of what those differences are or how they might impact method selection is given. Finally, Reio (2009) calls on all of HRD to embrace methodological plurality without discussion of the philosophical implications of various methodologies. From the 1980's to the present, HRD fell into the trap that Slife and Williams (1995) warned of and Peters (2012) lamented.

This latest period of review, from the 1980's to the modern era of HRD, has brought about the formalization of the discipline – including a more clearly defined scope of work and objectives. The role of the HRD professional was defined and the various roles identified. Competencies for these HRD professionals were developed and revised, and the influence of Systems Theory in understanding the role and method of the HRD professional came into clearer

focus. Finally, an embrace of methodological pluralism, perhaps at the cost of more dutiful attention to informing philosophy, became the assumed philosophy of the time.

### **Psychological Theory and HRD**

It is clearly recognized that a distinct link exists between HRD and psychology (Carkhuff, 1972). From Piaget's (Piaget & Kamii, 1978) influence in the Hawthorne experiments (Hseuh, 2002) to the recent emergence of executive coaching as a type of therapy (Berglas, 2002), Psychology has played a key role in helping to define and inform HRD practice. HRD has looked to psychology for grounded approaches to solve problems similar to those faced in the clinical arena. For example, Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1980) turned to family therapy as a way to positively impact organizations. Others have pushed back on certain psychological schools of thought; for example some consider Rogerian Humanism (Rogers, 1951) as untenable in the HRD domain (McGuire, Cross, & O'Donnell, 2005).

As referenced previously, Swanson (1999b) argues for a three-legged approach to examination of HRD theory – with those three legs being psychological, systems, and economic theory. The following section of this chapter outlines the key psychological theories that most significantly inform (or informed) HRD as well as the philosophical assumptions upon which those theories rest. The review will include a discussion of psychodynamic theory, behavioral/cognitive theory, humanistic theory, and structuralist theory. It also includes an examination of the link between specific psychological theories and the practice of HRD today.

#### **Psychodynamic theory.**

Made popular by Sigmund Freud (1957), psychodynamic theory is one of the bedrock and most influential theories in all of psychology (Arlow, 2000) and Freud the first great personality theorist (Slife, 1993). As the name implies, psychodynamic theory suggests that

individuals experience the world through the interplay of competing mental forces. At times these forces act in unison, at times in conflict, and always at a level below the awareness of the individual (Slife & Williams, 1995). The ideal human state, then, is a sort of homeostasis in which these competing forces are satisfied and internal conflict is avoided.

Arlow (2000) cites several key concepts that are critical in understanding psychodynamic theory. The first is that of determinism. In relation to psychoanalysis, determinism suggests that “all psychological events are causally related to each other and to the individual’s past. In short, the elements that occur in consciousness are not random and unrelated” (Arlow, 2000, p. 16). In the psychodynamic tradition, then, past events are key to understanding current behavior. Per psychodynamic theory, key stages of development occur from birth to age six. Events during this developmental period influence and shape psychodynamic forces that then determine later personality and behavior.

It is worth noting that this concept of determinism is not wholly in keeping with Freud’s own view of psychodynamic theory. Freud (1957) himself stated:

Just as Kant warned us not to overlook the fact that our perceptions are subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with what is perceived though unknowable so psychoanalysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to be. (p. 171)

Freud’s reference to Kant’s philosophy of reality separate and apart from perceived reality is a stark contrast from pure determinism. However, as practiced today, a key assumption of psychodynamic theory is the unassailable influence of past events on current behavior (Arlow, 2000).

The next key tenet of psychodynamic theory is the notion of topography. Psychodynamic theory contends that the mind can be divided into three regions: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious (Freud, 1958). Describing this concept of topography, Bornstein (2003) stated:

Whereas the conscious part of the mind was thought to hold only information that demanded attention and action at the moment, the preconscious contained material that was capable of becoming conscious but was not because attention (in the form of psychic energy) was not invested in it at that time. The unconscious contained anxiety-producing material (e.g., sexual impulses, aggressive wishes) that were deliberately repressed (i.e., held outside of awareness as a form of self-protection). Because of the affect-laden nature of unconscious material, the unconscious was (and is) thought to play a more central role in personality than are the other two elements of Freud's topographic model. (p. 119)

The third key tenet of psychodynamic theory is the fundamental idea of a dynamic relationship between competing elements of the individual's psyche (Arlow, 2000), and suggests a structural approach to understanding personality. Psychodynamic theory contends that all individuals possess libidinal and aggressive drives (or instincts/impulses) which generate from the unconscious mind. Most students of psychology are familiar with the Id label Freud (1958) assigned to such impulses. These impulses exist from birth and are hardwired into each individual. By age 2 the Ego develops as a means of coping with imperfect parenting strategies. The Ego becomes the conscious self, governing what is and is not acceptable behavior. Finally, the Superego develops by age five. This structure, also part of the individual's unconscious, is developed when the individual can internalize abstract rules placed upon them by society and parents. It becomes the moral voice of the individual (Bornstein, 2003).

The final component of psychodynamic theory is what is termed the genetic viewpoint (Arlow, 2000). In the psychodynamic sense, the genetic (or psychosexual) point of view suggests that the basis of conflicts, character traits and neurotic symptoms all share a common genesis in the events and fantasies of early childhood. Freud (1958) hypothesized of numerous psychosexual stages (Oral, Anal, Oedipal, Latency and Puberty) with key developmental

milestones in each. Should developmental milestones be hindered in some way, an individual would then become fixated at that stage and display consistent abnormal behavior patterns in adulthood (Bornstein, 2003).

While Freud (1957, 1958) contributed much of the founding thought to psychodynamic theory, others have added to or modified the theory over time. Jung (1959) hypothesized that personality is crafted through the influence of spiritual forces, universal human archetypes, while also giving primacy to past events. Adler (1927) contended that the primary dynamic force on personality was birth order, thus providing a different structural approach to psychodynamic theory. Fromm (1944) suggested the importance of prevailing social and political forces on the individual and authoritarianism as a significant concept in the development of personality (Bornstein, 2003). While all diverge in some form or fashion from Freud's (1957, 1958) original theory, each maintain many of the same core assumptions of determinism and structuralism.

Finally, psychodynamic theory's influence on HRD is plainly evident; perhaps most notably in the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator (MBTI.) Designed as a means of identifying Jung's (1959) typologies (Introvert/Extrovert, Sensing/Intuition, etc.) in individuals (Carlyn, 1977; Richek & Bown, 1968), the MBTI has been embraced by HRD practitioners as a means of building more effective team/manager relationships (Berr, Church & Waclawski, 2000). It has also been erroneously used as a selection, assessment and job-fit tool (Coe, 1992).

The MBTI is an example of the psychodynamic theory of personality influencing HRD practice; however, other such examples exist. Some executive coaching models are couched in the techniques of psychoanalytic therapy (Arnaud, 2003; Watts, 2012). Others have undertaken leadership theory building from the foundation of psychodynamic concepts such as Fromm's



authoritarianism (Schrujjer & Vansina, 2002). Models of organizational learning are based upon psychodynamic principles (Vince, 2001). Psychodynamic theory has also been the basis for the development of selection assessments; for example Martin & Boye (1998) developed an assessment rooted in psychodynamic theory to ascertain a candidate's intent to stay at an organization. The threads of psychodynamic theory and practice are distinct in the theory and practice of today's HRD.

### **Behaviorism and cognitive theory.**

Behaviorism and, particularly, cognitive theory are perhaps the most influential psychological theories in modern academia (Slife & Williams, 1995). Behaviorism can best be described by the simple idea that "behavior is a function of its consequences" (Wilson, 2000, p. 206). In other words, behavior is the result of previous experiences we have had in exhibiting said behavior. We repeat behavior for which we are reinforced, and avoid behavior for which we are punished (Skinner, 1948). This is the major crux of behaviorism; that all behavior can be boiled down to a concrete set of perfectly predictable laws that govern all action. Wilson (2000) makes this point abundantly clear when describing the differences between psychoanalytic and behavioral therapy, viz:

Behavior therapy involves a commitment to the scientific approach. This includes an explicit, testable, conceptual framework; treatment derived from or at least consistent with the content and method of experimental-clinical psychology; therapeutic techniques that have measurable outcomes and can be replicated; the experimental evaluation of treatment methods and concepts; and the emphasis on innovative research strategies that allow rigorous evaluation of specific methods applied to particular problems instead of global assessment of ill-defined procedures applied to heterogeneous problems. (p. 207)

In aligning itself wholly and unwaveringly with the scientific method, behaviorism and cognitive theory both place themselves fully in the camp (along with scientific management) of empirical, positivist, deterministic philosophy (Slife & Williams, 1995). Behaviorism embraces

the biologizing of human behavior; where all behavior can be traced to a biological process. As Slife, Burchfield & Hedges (2010) note, the reductive nature of understanding human behavior in this manner views biology as both sufficient and necessary.

Radical behaviorism and cognitive theory are, in reality, two ends of a behavioral spectrum (Wilson, 2000). The challenge of behaviorism as presented by Skinner is that it leaves no room for understanding of mental process; not just that something occurred but why. Second generation behaviorists such as Tolman (1938) and Hull (1945) suggested that some mental processing was indeed occurring between the application of the stimulus and the organism's response (Staats, 2003). While radical behaviorists rejected such a notion, the idea that cognitive processes existed or could be understood, the idea opened the door for cognitive theory and the idea that "covert processes follow the laws of learning that govern overt behaviors" (Wilson, 2000, p. 206).

Cognitive theory also borrows from the structuralist understanding of the mind first espoused in psychodynamic theory and illustrates the primary difference between behaviorism and cognitive theory. As Slife and Williams (1995) note:

For behaviorism, human beings are *black boxes* – that is, what happens inside the mind is of little importance in predicting and understanding human behavior ... Cognitive theorists ... attempt to open up the black box and examine what goes on within the mind, believing it is important in understanding how we behave. (p. 39)

This idea of the mind as a black box to be understood and explored is a fundamental difference and suggests the structuralist approach mentioned previously. The nature of the structures and how they generate are, of course, the foundation of various cognitive theories. For example, Bandura's (1974) Social Learning Theory is rooted in cognitive theory in that the mind is wired for social interaction. However, it is critical to note that cognitive theory and behaviorism share all of the same core assumptions of behaviorism; ie., positivism, empiricism,

and determinism (Slife & Williams, 1995) as well as the embrace of biological solutions to theoretical questions (Slife, Burchfield, & Hedges, 2010).

Behaviorism and cognitive theory have both played key roles in informing HRD practice. Recall previous discussion in this chapter of scientific management. This method of management can easily be seen as the natural business application of the radical behaviorism that was en vogue in academia at the time. Application of such principles during the hey-day of scientific management, and later of Management by Objectives, can be seen in the idea of goal setting and task/bonus methods of employee management (Locke, 1978). This production centered approach became a mainstay mode of operation in HRD. In this paradigm, workers understand their responsibility and, when properly conditioned, can be counted upon to act accordingly (Kuchinke, 1999).

Behaviorism, and particularly cognitive theory, perhaps have had the most impact in HRD is in the area of adult learning and instructional design (DeSimone & Werner, 2012; Hughes, 2012). For example, cognitive theory informed researchers looking to improve the effectiveness of self-directed learning in the organization (Kohns & Ponton, 2006). Robert Gagné, considered a pioneer of HRD in the arena of adult learning and instruction (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2013), developed an adult learning model firmly rooted in cognitive theory. Gagné and Dick (1983) describe the theoretical influences of the learning model as follows:

Prominent among these processes are attention, selective (feature) perception, short-term memory, rehearsal, long-term memory storage, and retrieval. Externally, reinforcement via informative feedback is also assumed ... From these processes are derived both the internal and external events which make possible effective learning and retention. (pp. 265-266)

It is this focus on the empirically-testable internal and external effectors of learning that tie Gagné's theory to cognitive theory. Much of what is taught in instructional design today rests upon Gagné's theory (Gagné and Dick 1983; Wilson, Jonassen, & Cole, 1993), and thus on cognitive theory and its inherent assumptions.

### **Humanism.**

When the concept of Humanism as a philosophy was initially introduced at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, its definition was clearly far afield from the concept and philosophy understood today (Schiller, 1903). Schiller (1903) described Humanism as a philosophical outreach of what he termed common sense. It consisted of a rejection of *a priori* philosophies that inferred a pre-wiring of human beings, instead focusing upon the experience of the human as genesis of their behavior and potential. That this philosophy sounds more akin to the radical empiricism outlined earlier is no surprise nor accident, as Schiller was a contemporary of William James and in fact dedicated his text on humanism to James. William James is considered the father of pragmatism and radical empiricism (Pancheri, 1971).

Schiller's (1903) definition of humanism did not prove enduring, and the term was re-purposed in the middle of the century, most notably by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow (Slife & Williams, 1995). Rogers (1951) was particularly influential in the development of a person-centered psychology and therapeutic methodology. Rogers outlines nineteen key components of humanism, which provide key insight into the fundamental assumptions of the philosophy as well as its differentiation with theories such as empiricism. Rogers outlines the propositions as follows:

1. Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he or she is the center.
2. The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual, "reality."

3. The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field.
4. The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism.
5. Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.
6. Emotional accompanies and in general facilitates such goal-directed behavior, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behavior, and the intensity of the emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behavior for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.
7. The best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual.
8. A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.
9. As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of self is formed – an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the “I” or the “me,” together with values attached to these concepts.
10. The values attached to experienced, and the values which are a part of the self structure, in some instances are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values introjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly.
11. As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either (a) symbolized, perceived, and organized into some relationship to the self, (b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self-structure, or (c) denied symbolization or given a distorted symbolization because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.
12. Most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self.
13. Behavior may, in some instances, be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolized. Such behavior may be inconsistent with the structure of the self, but in such instances the behavior is not “owned” by the individual.
14. Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies to awareness significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self-structure. When this situation exists, there is a basis for potential psychological tension.
15. Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.
16. Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization or structure of self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self-structure is organized to maintain itself.
17. Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of any threat to the self-structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences.

18. When the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals.
19. As the individual perceives and accepts into his self-structure more of his organic experiences, he finds that he is replacing his present value system- based so largely upon introjections which have been distortedly symbolized – with a continuing organismic valuing process. (p. 481-533)

Rogers (1951) summarizes the philosophy of humanism by stating:

This theory is basically phenomenological in character, and relies heavily upon the concept of the self as an explanatory construct. It pictures the end-point of personality development as being a basic congruence between the phenomenal field of experience and the conceptual structure of the self – a situation which, if achieved, would represent freedom from internal strain and anxiety, and freedom from potential strain; which would represent the maximum in realistically oriented adaption; which would mean the establishment of an individualized value system having considerable identity with the value system of any other equally well-adjusted member of the human race. (p. 532)

Considering Rogers' (1951) articulation of humanism creates a stark contrast between humanism and the psychological theories which preceded it. Humanism contends that individuals come pre-wired with needs, desires, and aspirations – a notion highly at odds with the *tabula rasa* assumption of empiricism. Humanism could also be said to be far more positive in its assumptions of human beings. Humanism assumes that individuals are good, and striving to be better. This, of course, is quite different from unfulfilled sexual desire which is the wellspring of behavior in Freud's psychodynamic theory.

Humanism is not without its own set of assumptions (Slife & Williams, 1995). Three assumptions are worth noting. First, a type of determinism is implicit in Rogers' (1951) description of humanism (consider, for example, his fourth point previous.) Acting for the sake of a hard-wired drive, or sense of purpose, is an inherently deterministic point of view. Maslow (1968) in fact bases these needs in biology. Slife and Williams (1995) detail the inherent determinism of such a position by stating that "If ... our potential and sense of our own needs are based in biology, they are not things we can do much about. Although we might be able to do

something in *response* to them, we cannot do much about *having* them and their attendant influences in the first place” (p. 35). In this way, humanism shares some of the same philosophical roots as behaviorism and cognitive theory.

The second fundamental assumption of humanism also infers determinism, this time best illustrated by point seven in Rogers’ (1951) list. Rogers states that the best frame of reference for understanding the individual is the individual. In other words, individuals are especially capable of understanding themselves and their needs, desires, etc. In short, only the individual can know for certainty what is required for their own self-actualization. This knowledge of one’s needs is, per the humanist, often hidden from the individual themselves – a type of hidden knowledge that is roughly akin to the deterministic philosophy of psychodynamic theory (Slife & Williams, 1995).

Finally, inherent in humanism is a moral relativism that many may not be willing to accept when more closely considered. Rogers (1951) refers to this as an individualized valuing system, the implications of which are not immediately evident. Slife and Williams (1995) articulate the challenges with such an assumption, stating:

Because every person’s needs are potential are different, and the right thing to do is to pursue these things individually, then everyone’s morality is unique and applicable only to individual persons ... What is right or wrong can only be judges in light of individual needs for fulfillment and actualization. (p. 37)

While most humanists would likely find such an association with their philosophy inaccurate at best and abhorrent at worst, this assumption of moral relativity evidently inherent in humanism is a sterling example of the importance of understanding such assumptions prior to fully embracing the philosophy.

While this chapter focuses primarily upon Rogers’ articulation of humanism, it should be noted that many other theories of psychology also align themselves with humanism, including

Adlerian psychology (Mosak, 2000), Ellis' (2000) Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, and Gestalt psychology (Yontef & Jacobs, 2000). While these theories differ on many fundamental aspects, all share the same basic philosophical assumptions. These assumptions, then, are critical in the adoption of the theory or in its application.

Humanism's influence on HRD is evident. Recall this text's earlier discussion of Mayo (1945), Follett (1919) and Barnard (1938). Among their most core assumptions was personal growth and development as the core and essential drive and purpose of human beings. In fact, this core assumption became the crux of the Human Relations movement. It is not a far stretch to state that the human relations movement is the real-world application of humanism as a philosophy. That the psychological theory and industrial practice arose in tandem is also likely not coincidental.

Specific elements of humanism have found specific application in HRD. A key example is Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs theory. Said theory has been used to inform employee training practice (Fox, 1990). It has been used extensively as the basis for understanding and impacting employee engagement (Benson & Dundis, 2003; Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011). Carkhoff's HRD model, designed to provide HRD professionals (and facilitators specifically) the skills they need to positively enact change, is explicitly built upon Rogers' (1951) humanism (Cash, 1984).

### **Structuralism.**

The final theory of psychology reviewed in this text is structuralism. At first blush, the term structuralism appears vague and potentially confusing. In this context, and as used by Slife and Williams (1995), structuralism is a family of theories with many of the same assumptions, including systems theory, family therapy, feminism, and Marxist theory. Goldenberg and



Goldenberg (2000) effectively describe the key elements of a structuralist understanding of behavior:

*Organization* and *wholeness* are especially important. Systems are composed of units that stand in some consistent relationship to one another, and thus we can infer that they are organized around those relationships. In a similar way, units or elements, once combined, produce an entity –a whole – that is greater than the sum of its parts. A change in one part causes a change in the other parts and thus in the entire system. If this is indeed the case, argue systems theorists, then adequate understanding of a system requires study of the whole, rather than separate examination of each part. No element within the system can ever be understood in isolation, since elements never function separately. (p. 376-377)

It is tempting to consider and evaluate the systems as described from a cybernetic, or mechanistic, perspective. Slife (1993) notes that “[s]elf-regulating systems govern themselves as a result of feedback mechanisms. These mechanisms permit the system to “know” what it is doing and correct itself appropriately” (p. 186). Recall the previous discussion of Aristotelian material causality (Silverman, 1990) and its implicit linearity of time (Slife, 1993). A mechanistic understanding of systems, while appropriate in technical domains is not the assumptive basis of the structuralist theories of human behavior.

Per the structuralist, human behavior is best understood through an organismic model of systems and a rejection of the temporal linearity of the mechanistic model. The nature and preeminence of the system, however, differs with the specific school of thought. Feminist theory places ultimate weight upon the potentially oppressive nature of societal gender roles (Wedding, 2000). Marxism claims that the “structure of economic relations is preeminent” (Slife & Williams, 1995, p. 52). In family therapy, the familial structure holds primary influence (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000). For Piaget (Piaget & Kamii, 1978) the physical, spatial, and logico-arithmetical structures are determinant.

The emphasis on that which is unique to each structuralist theory illuminates the assumptive commonality. In each case, the structure is deterministic (Slife & Williams, 1995).

Individuals cannot act but for the sake of the structure to which the particular theory holds primary. Slife & Williams (1995) articulate several key assumptions of the structuralist approach: the unassailability of the structure, the untestability of the structure, the deterministic nature of the structure, and the unknowability of the structure.

Various structuralist approaches have been utilized in development of HRD theory, practice, and research (Swanson, 2001; Wang, Dou, & Li, 2002). Feminist approaches to both research and theory have been postulated (Bierema, 2003; Metcalfe, 2008). Garrick (1998) evaluated workplace learning in the context of, among other theories, a Marxist (Marx & Engels, 1906) structure. Atkinson-Tovar (2002) framed a challenge for HRD to better understand the needs of crisis workers through Piaget's (Piaget & Kamii, 1978) cognitive structuralism while Chermack and Lynham (2002) used the same as a theoretical support for scenario planning as a tool in leadership development. Structuralism, and its attendant psychological theories, are ubiquitous in current HRD theory and practice.

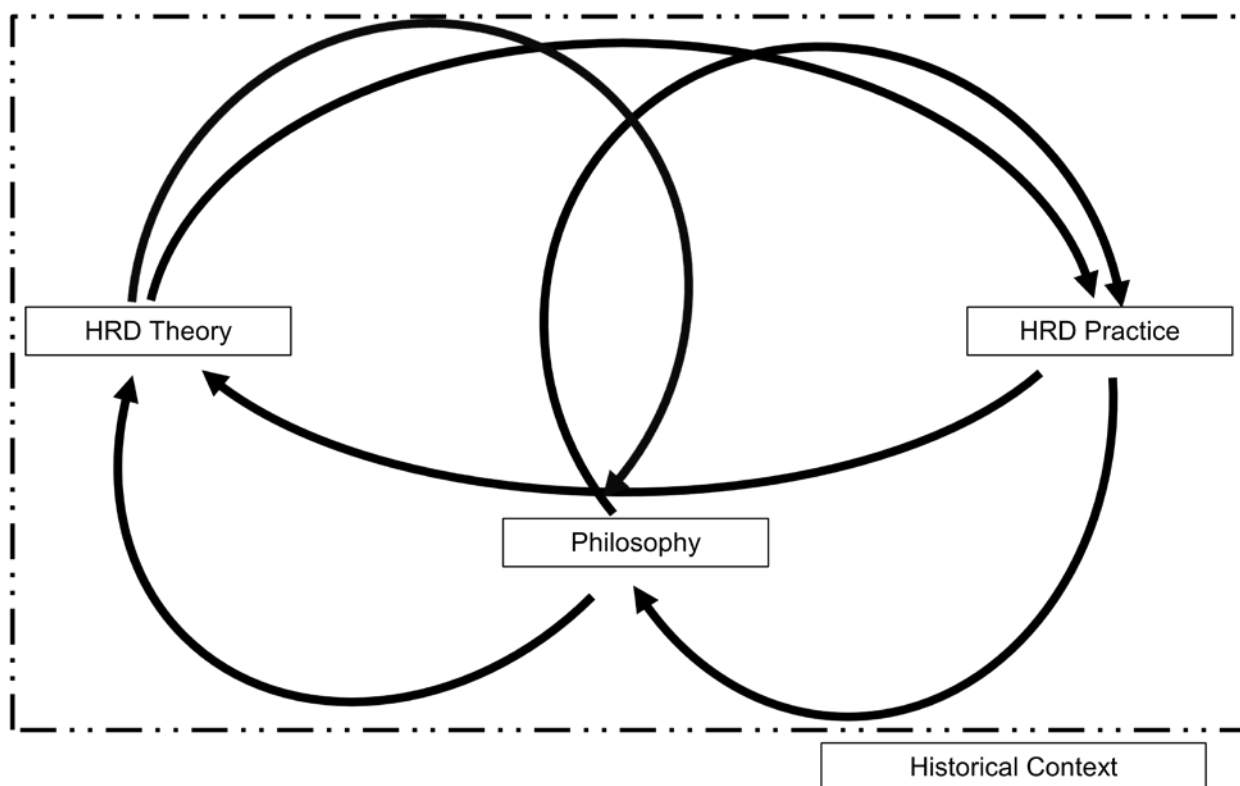
### **An Introductory Model**

Upon initial review of the data, an interpretive model begins to emerge. This research was initially conducted to explore the notion that the theory, practice, and philosophy of HRD form an iterative, causal loop that is situated in historical context. Theory is informed by the predominant philosophies of the time as well as by the feedback of current practitioners. Those theories inform new or revised ways of practicing the discipline, as well as influence the continued philosophical discussion. Likewise, philosophy impacts the practice of HRD as the practice of HRD contributes to the understanding of the philosophy of the time. All such interactions are best understood, and occur, within an historical context. The model comprising

Figure 2.4 illustrates the theoretical approach that formed the entry-point for the analysis contained in this text.

**Figure 2.4**

*Gosney's Multi-nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy in HRD*



Quoting again Jasper's (1951) earlier comments, "[t]here is no escape from philosophy. The question is only whether a philosophy is conscious or not, whether it is good or bad, muddled or clear. Anyone who rejects philosophy is himself unconsciously practicing a philosophy (p. 12)". While Chapter Four contains a more robust exploration of this introductory model, a review of the data contained in this historical review demonstrates the notion that

theory, philosophy, and practice are inextricably linked – and best understood through the historical context in which they were established.

### **In Summary**

The literature review contained herein underscores several key elements in the history of HRD. First and foremost, the list of seminal events leading the development of the formal discipline of HRD is significant and extends back to the dawn of Western Civilization. Perhaps most notable is the distinct philosophical fingerprints that each age left upon the surface of HRD (or, indeed, on its very core.) These philosophical fingerprints – assumptions of human behavior and motivation, as well as ontological, epistemological, and axiological considerations – continue to influence today's HRD. The distinct philosophies of the time wielded significant influence on how and why elements of today's HRD came to be. Finally, an introductory model that reflects the interplay between theory, practice, and philosophy was presented as a means of understanding and interpreting the data.

### **Chapter 3**

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the methodology and methodological theory utilized in researching the questions outlined in Chapter One. The research is historical in nature and, as such, its methodology is consistent with the epistemology of historical research. Johnson and Christensen (2007) define historical research as “the type of research that examines past events or combinations of events to arrive at an account of what has happened in the past” (p. 1). Isaac and Michael (1995) give clear cause for when historical research is appropriate. Its purpose is: “To reconstruct the past systematically and objectively by collecting, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing evidence to establish facts and reach defensible conclusions, often in relation to particular hypotheses” (p. 48).

Given the statement of purpose and definition above, the research contained in this text meets the criteria of historical research. As outlined in Chapter Two, the research contained herein is an evaluation of past events. As will be described later in this chapter, a systematic collection, review, and evaluation of the historical record was conducted for the purpose of evaluating specific research questions as stated in Chapter One. Also note Isaac and Michael (1995) used the term “defensible conclusions” (p. 48). The term denotes the unavoidable presence of bias, a known weakness of the historical methodology (Leming, 2014). Despite the fact that bias is inherent in the methodology, the end result should be defensible. The theories put forth must be cogent and defensible; however, they ascribe to nothing more than a representation of the perspective of the researcher. This chapter will outline the theoretical perspective from which the research is based and outline the research procedures for data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

## **Theoretical Basis**

As mentioned in Chapter One, this research is consistent with Vygotsky's (1997) historical context theory. Vygotsky lists three criteria for historical analysis of scientific theory. They are; (a) the general socio-cultural context of the time period; (b) the theorems and laws guiding scientific knowledge at the time; and, (c) the objective demands placed upon the scientific knowledge after its introduction into the general body of knowledge as a whole. Critical to this model is the idea of historical context. To understand the utility of any aspect of scientific knowledge, one must first understand the historical context in its full extent – socio-cultural as well as specific to the discipline. The third point is equally critical. Vygotsky implies a necessary historical utility for the scientific knowledge being evaluated.

While Vygotsky's (1997) original intent was to build a scientific methodology based upon historical evaluation, this research does not purport to the establishment of scientific knowledge per se. Instead, the spirit of Vygotsky's theory is espoused. This research is conducted with an understanding that the seminal events in the development of HRD are to be understood and evaluated through: (a) the socio-cultural context of the time period they occurred; (b) the predominant informing theories and philosophies of the time period they occurred; and (c) the utility of the output of those seminal events to the discipline. It is through approaching the history of HRD in such a manner that assumptions of psychology that were implicit in historical context become explicitly understood as the discipline is practiced today.

Vygotsky's theory not only supports the primary research topic as outlined, but also informs the research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. Research question one asks what role has the evolving understanding of psychology had on the development of HRD theory and practice? Given the influence of psychology on the discipline of HRD, and given psychology's

own informing philosophies and assumptive foundations, the model supports the notion of an historical evaluation of the interaction between the two disciplines.

Research question two states, how does the current understanding of HRD as a discipline reflect the history of its development? Vygotsky's (1997) theory suggests that utility of output is a key evaluative element when evaluating the historical significance of events. Gosney's Multi-Nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy (figure 2.4) was proposed in Chapter Two as an introductory model from which to respond to this question.

Research question three reads, what are the informing philosophies of HRD as demonstrated by its historical development, and what are the essential assumptions of those philosophies? This question is at the crux of Gosney's Multi-Nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy as well as of the research as a whole. The fundamental theoretical assertion in this research is that philosophy informs both the theory and practice of HRD as a discipline, and has done so through its history. A careful review of the history of HRD provides evidence for this theory both through the evaluation of the event as well as the informing philosophy of the time. As all philosophies have hidden assumptions, as Whitehead (1926) colorfully noted, Gosney's Multi-Nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy investigates the influence of those assumptions upon both the theory and practice of HRD.

Finally, research question four asks, what model best represents the current means by which theory and practice in HRD are generated? Gosney's Multi-nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy, presented at the conclusion of Chapter Two, is an introductory model that provides a launching point for investigation of this research question. As the data is evaluated in Chapter Four the Introductory model will be revisited with the intent to

determine if it does indeed best reflect the current means by which theory and practice in HRD are generated.

In summary, this research is historical in nature in that it was conducted via a systematic and thematic review of the historical record for the intended purpose of evaluating specific hypotheses. The research is consistent with Vygotsky's concept of historical evaluation in that socio-cultural context, predominant philosophies, and longitudinal utility are all evaluative points in reviewing the seminal events of HRD development. Finally, the research questions outlined in Chapter One are consistent with this theoretical approach.

### **Research Procedures**

The following section outlines the specific procedures followed in conducting the research indicated. A more detailed review of the historical epistemology is presented. Following is a discussion of the specific methodology utilized in obtaining the research data. Finally, the section ends with a review of the data analysis and interpretation methodology.

#### **Epistemology.**

Busha and Harter (1980) list six steps in conducting historical research:

1. Identification of the historical problem or uncovering the need for specific historical knowledge.
2. Gathering as much data as possible.
3. Development of a hypothesis to explain relationships between data.
4. Evaluation of the veracity and authenticity of source material.
5. Analysis of most pertinent data and drawing of conclusions; and
6. Placement of conclusions into narrative.



Isaac and Michael (1995) detail extremely similar steps that can be summarized as follows: (1) Define the problem; (2) State the research objective; (3) Collect the data; (4) Evaluate the data; and (5) Report the findings. Wiersma (2000) proposes four key steps: (1) Identify the problem; including formulation of a hypothesis and research questions; (2) Collection and evaluation of the data; (3) Synthesis of information; and (4) Interpreting and drawing conclusions.

This research is consistent with the perspectives listed, including Wiersma's (2000) guidance in formulation of a hypothesis as well as guiding research questions. The research questions, as stated in Chapter One, are exploratory in nature and guided the study. Chapter Two includes Gosney's Multi-nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy in HRD, a model that served as a means of evaluating the central hypothesis as well as in data synthesis. Evaluation of the data and the proposed model is contained in Chapter Four.

Leming (2014) notes several key disadvantages to the historical method including the time-consuming nature of historical research and challenge in uncovering appropriate source material. First and foremost among these disadvantages, however, is the introduction of researcher bias. There is no question that the research presented in this text has been conducted with the presence of the researchers' own biases. That these biases exist need not present an insurmountable challenge to the validity of the research's conclusions. Indeed, as will be detailed later in this chapter, the researcher's personal experience and training provide a unique and critical vantage-point from which to conduct said research. That these biases exist is considered self-evident. That they be clearly articulated is paramount.

Leming (2014) also indicates among the benefits of historical analysis its utility in conducting trend analysis. Such utility in trend analysis is well-leveraged in this text's research; as trend analysis across the history of HRD is the crux of the research problem considered. While

some historical analysis is more empirical by nature and makes use of content analysis software in the evaluation of data, the research contained herein still qualifies as historical given the alignment in methodology with that outlined above.

### **Data Collection.**

For this study, data collection consisted primarily of a review of the historical record, specifically documents from and about the various time periods evaluated. Data collected can be classified into one of three categories: (a) modern interpretation and extrapolation of ancient historical events as it relates to the research question, (b) primary source material from a specific era as it relates to the research question, and (c) modern interpretation and extrapolation of recent historical events as it relates to the research question. Prior to the formal establishment of HRD there was no explicit historical record of HRD. Therefore, review of related topics and interpretation was necessary.

The primary means of accessing the historical record was via the University Library academic search engine – the Ebsco Academic Search Complete. The most commonly-searched databases were Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Vocational and Career Collection, and World History Collection. In researching, primacy was given to refereed sources where applicable. This was particularly germane to more recent historical research as well as modern commentary. Although impossible to remove all chance of bias from the record, giving primacy to academic journal sources allowed the researcher to establish some level of confidence with the content.

Research was also conducted utilizing web-based search engine Google Scholar. This approach allowed for a wider range of source material that may not be available via a formal academic search engine. For example, it was common to find on-line public domain copies of

texts written at or shortly after the turn of the century in this manner. Additionally, Google Scholar's expanded search feature included informal sourcing opportunities such as electronic copies of book sections or journal articles made available through the larger community or original author and not accessible through more traditional means.

Finally, the author's own personal academic library served as a source for data. The author's own academic and professional background provided the author a library of previously researched source material, as well as academic texts, that served to round out the data and provide additional analysis and depth.

Data collection began with a review of existing academic texts on the subject of the history of HRD. From there, key historical elements were identified. Such historical elements were then explored for additional historical documentation. For example, Swanson and Holton (2001) include a general history of HRD in their academic text and mention Follett as elemental in establishing ideas and concepts that were critical to the eventual development of the discipline. This data point, the Swanson and Holton text, then served as a launching point for additional research to find original sources that substantiated Swanson and Holton as well as helped address the research questions.

This process of starting with the academically-established timeline and then delving into primary source material where available was repeated on virtually every topic researched. Exceptions were, as previously noted, when the primary historical record was not readily available. In such instances, additional historical commentary was sought to corroborate initial sources. Data collection on the topic of psychological theory was conducted in a similar manner.

### **Data Analysis & Interpretation.**

The analysis and interpretation of collected data was iterative and summative in nature. As seminal events in HRD history were identified, substantiated, and explored the historical record was re-evaluated based upon the model proposed. For example, the establishment and growth of the Catholic Church in the middle ages was re-evaluated from the perspective of its influence on the eventual establishment of HRD. The likening of the Catholic Church's growth strategy to today's franchise model was noted and academically substantiated. The researcher then turned to historical data that would provide additional facets of understanding by exploring the prevalent philosophical approach of the time. Approaching these seminal events in this manner provided a holistic view of the growth and development of HRD, and was also consistent with the entry model proposed in Chapter Two.

As the research progressed it was also deemed necessary to more fully explore psychology's influence on the practice of HRD. Swanson (1999b) notes the impact of psychology as a foundational discipline from which HRD draws to inform practice. Examination of the historical record in HRD found strong alignment with the growth of psychology as a discipline and the theoretical positioning and practice of HRD during similar periods of time. This deeper exploration of the influence of psychology (and indeed the philosophy of various psychological theories) became a key tenant of the research and data analysis and provided an additional facet from which to evaluate HRD's history.

Ultimately, however, and consistent with the nature of historical research analysis and interpretation of the data set was conducted from a personal vantage-point. Such a position is consistent with historical research, however as previously mentioned it is in the best interest of the research to fully disclose both the qualifications of the researcher in conducting the research,

as well as the potential biases of which the researcher is self-aware. In short, it behooves the historical researcher to demonstrate his or her qualifications in conducting said research and also clearly state known biases. Once so stated, it then behooves the reader to decide upon the validity of the findings based upon the cogency of the narrative as well as the stated perspective of the researcher.

The author's academic background is primarily in the discipline of Psychology, holding Bachelors and Masters degrees in the field. The Bachelors was obtained from Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah – a large, religiously-affiliated private university (Brigham Young University, 2011). BYU is a well-respected academic institution, currently rated #62 among national universities by US News and World Report (2014). While pursuing his undergraduate degree at BYU the author had opportunity to study under Dr. Brent Slife, a leading author in the arena of theoretical psychology (Slife, 2000; Slife & Williams, 1997) and critical thinking in the arena of psychology (Slife, 2012). Teo (2009) articulates the aim of theoretical psychology thusly:

Theoretical psychology ... refers to metatheoretical work. All psychologists rely on theories, either explicitly or implicitly in their empirical studies and practices. In that sense, all psychologists use and to a certain degree contribute to theoretical psychology; but not all psychologists reflect upon their own explicit and implicit theories and assumptions and contextualize them within philosophical domains. Such an activity – the *reflection* on theories, and on the history, status, connection, and development of psychological concepts, methods, ideas, and worldviews – is a metatheoretical task. (p. 1)

Training in the concepts and practice of theoretical psychology, of evaluating theory based upon its history, status, connection, and development, made up part of the author's undergraduate academic experience.

The author's Masters in Psychology was obtained from the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) in Edmond, OK. While matriculating at UCO the author studied under Dr.

Rob Doan, among others. Dr. Doan is a leading author in the methodology of narrative therapy; a post-modern, systems-based approach to family and individual therapeutic intervention (Parry & Doan, 1994). Such academic experience provided the author insight into alternative, post-positivist theory and practice paradigms and how such contrasted with the traditional, positivist methodologies and constructs. He was also afforded the opportunity to study under Dr. Michael Knight, an evolutionary psychologist who provided an additional perspective from which to consider both theory and practice (Knight, 1994).

The author's academic career has terminated with the pursuit of a Doctorate from the University of Arkansas (U of A) in Fayetteville, AR. While pursuing said degree the author has had opportunity to study with Dr. Claretha Hughes, a published author in the arena of the theory and practice of HRD (Hughes, 2012). Partnering with Dr. Hughes, the author undertook the task of more carefully considering the philosophical assumptions upon which the field of HRD were based, and what those assumptions might mean to its theory and practice (Hughes & Gosney, 2012). Such scholarship is the culmination of training and experience gleaned throughout the author's academic career.

The author also has had an extensive background as an HRD practitioner, specifically in the arena of training and development and branching into organization development. The author has led training and development initiatives for Fortune 500 and Fortune 10 organizations, including leading teams of instructional designers and project managers on large-scale learning initiatives impacting over 1.3 million learners. He has also had the opportunity to lead the training and organization development function for a large healthcare organization, overseeing leadership development, talent planning and evaluation, organization design, executive coaching, and a host of other topics directly tied to the practice of HRD.

In summary, the author brings a rare combination of academic and practitioner experience to bear in conducting the research contained herein. The author has received academic training under the guidance of leading thinkers in a variety of inter-related topics. He has had the opportunity to begin considering the concepts originally presented via the discipline of psychology now applied to HRD. He has also practiced many of the core functions of HRD in the private sector and in positions of significant authority, scope, and responsibility. He brings to this research a strong scholar-practitioner point-of-view. While he aligns himself most fully with a post-modernist perspective, he has an extremely high level of experience and comfort in the practical application of HRD in a results-oriented environment. As such, he is uniquely qualified to conduct the analysis outlined in this text and present a synthesis of said data in accordance with the research questions outlined.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

This chapter presents a summation of the historical evaluation as it relates to the research questions presented in Chapter One. The purpose of this study was to explore the interplay between philosophy, theory, and practice of HRD for HRD practitioners, scholars, and clients from the discipline's genesis to 2014. As an historical examination, the data source consisted of existing historical record as well as modern commentary and review. While the focus on Chapter Two was a broad presentation of the historical record, the focus of Chapter Four is narrower with an emphasis on presentation of the elements of the historical record that respond to the research questions.

#### Research Question One

Research question one states: what role has the evolving understanding of psychology had on the development of HRD theory and practice? Swanson (1999b) states that HRD has oftentimes turned to the discipline of psychology as a wellspring for both theory and practice. Psychology has its own history, a full recounting of which is not within the scope of this text. The result of a cursory review of the history of psychology's pillar theorists, placed upon a timeline and juxtaposed with seminal events in HRD, is presented in Figure 4.1.

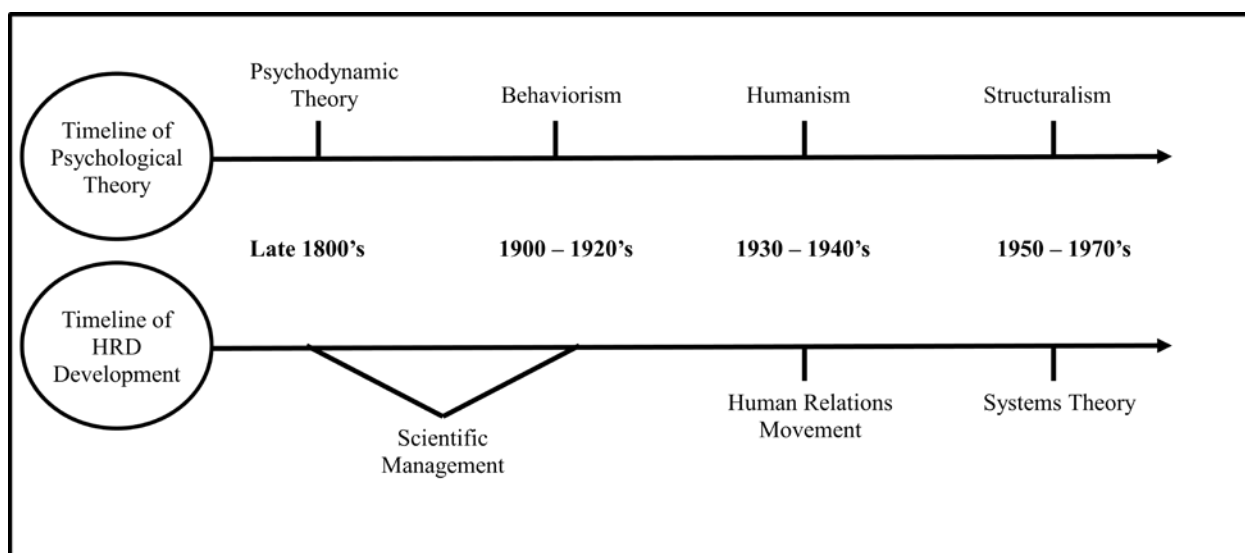
Note in the timeline below a distinct pattern of like-minded psychological theory and HRD theory and practice as both disciplines move across the timeline. Psychodynamic theory takes, at its core, a deterministic view of human behavior (Arlow, 2000). Rooted more in unobservable structure than the behaviorism that followed, it nevertheless held many of the same assumptions. Behaviorism, with its emphasis on phenomena that was repeatable and testable, established itself as the *de facto* schema of understanding behavior (Slife & Williams, 1995) at a



similar point upon the timeline as scientific management established itself as the *de facto* methodology for managing behavior (Baron, Dobbin, & Jennings, 1986). Thompson's (1917) description of scientific management as a systematic, empirical, replicable model dovetailed Watson's (1994) call to private industry to leverage the theories of radical behaviorism for business application.

**Figure 4.1**

*Timeline of Psychological Theory & HRD Development*



The rise of humanistic psychology and the Human Relations movement also occurred in parallel (Rogers, 1951; Sarachek, 1968), followed by structuralism in psychology (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000; von Bertalanffy, 1972) and the distinct influence of systems theory in HRD (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Macguire, 2003). Humanism's assumption of individual striving for self-actualization and of the self as a concept that emerges from evaluational comparison with others (Rogers, 1951) is similar to the assumptions of the Human Relations movement as described by both Barnard (1938) and Mayo (1945). Additionally, psychological structuralism

and the sociotechnical systems theory of HRD share a common philosophical core of Aristotelian teleology (Ropohl, 1999; von Bertalanffy, 1972).

In evaluating both timelines it is critical to note that one school of thought did not replace another completely or even partially. There are still practitioners and theoreticians in the psychodynamic school (Arlow, 2000) just as there are HRD theoreticians and practitioners who embrace a scientific management epistemology (Hamlin, 2002; Holton, 2004; Terpstra & Limpaphayom, 2012). The emergence of one group does not, inherently, mean the demise of another. What is notable, however, is the parallel emergence of each of these schools of thought that share similar philosophical assumptions.

Table 4.1 summarizes the influence of various psychological schools of thought on the practice of HRD. While the list below is far from exhaustive, it is representative of the notion that each of the major psychological schools of thought have had, and continue to have, significant influence in the practice of HRD. The impact of psychology on HRD becomes more evident when comparing the information in the table below with Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell's (2004) Learning and Performance Wheel. The means by which many of the identified HRD roles are realized depend heavily upon the contribution of multiple perspectives in psychology. In summary, the findings suggest a strong association between psychology and HRD. This association extends along the developmental timeline of both disciplines and impacts both current HRD theory and practice.

**Table 4.1***Psychological Theory and Its Influence on HRD Theory & Practice*

Psychological Theory	HRD Theory	HRD Role/Competency (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004)	HRD Practice Examples
Psychodynamic Theory (Arlow, 2000)	Personality Testing (Berr, Church & Waclawski, 2000)	Coaching	Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator (Carlyn, 1977; Richek & Bown, 1968)
	Leadership Modeling (Arnaud, 2003; Watts, 2012)	Career Planning & Talent Management	
	Selection Assessment (Coe, 1992)		
Behaviorism / Cognitive Theory (Wilson, 2000)	Management by Objectives (Locke, 1978)	Improving Human Performance	Instructional Design (Wilson, Jonassen, & Cole, 1993)
	Training & Development (Gagné & Dick, 1983)	Designing Learning	
Humanism (Rogers, 1951)	Employee Engagement Initiatives (Benson & Dundis, 2003; Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011)	Improving Human Performance	Facilitation Methodology (Cash, 1984)
		Delivering Training	
Structuralism (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000)	Survey Research (Likert, 1958)	Measuring & Evaluating	Change Management Models (Kotter, 1995; Senge, 1993)
	Communities of Practice (Chang & Jacobs, 2012)	Managing Organizational Knowledge	
	Organizational Learning (Senge, 1990)	Facilitating Organizational Change	

## Research Question Two

Research question two states: how does the current understanding of HRD as a discipline reflect the history of its development? The data presented in Chapter Two, *en toto*, illustrates the influence of HRD history on current HRD practice. Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 summarize these key events in HRD history, as well as their relation to current HRD practice and the prevalent philosophy of the time. In each of the evaluated eras, key events were identified that were either the precursor to, evidences of, or continued development of the HRD practice of today.

An early example of this phenomenon, as described in Table 4.2, was the promulgation of the Catholic Church through what would now be considered a franchise model (Davidson, 1995; Ekelund, Hébert, & Tollison, 1989). Effective training and development is today considered a critical component of successful execution of the franchise model (Cappelli & Hamori, 2008), and a similar emphasis on effective training was identified in the Church during this time period (Caspers, 2003; Weiler, 2003). Such an example is illustrative of the findings detailed in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

The data summarized in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 respond to the question posed in research question two. HRD as currently practiced draws from a long history of events with clear linkage between those events and current practice. The data summary provided in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 also illustrates the continued presence of an informing philosophy during each of the evaluated eras. For example, Table 4.3 notes the presence of empiricism as an informing philosophy during the period of the Industrial Revolution wherein scientific management came to become the defining methodology.

**Table 4.2***Seminal Events in HRD, Their Relation to Current Practice & Informing Philosophy: Early Civilization – Middle Ages*

Time Period	Events	Relation to Current HRD Practice	Informing Philosophy
Early Civilization	Establishment of formal Alphabet (Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003) Large-scale construction projects (Smith, 1999) Apprenticeship model established (Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003)	Talent evaluation tied to compensation model (Smith, 1999)	Lex Talionis – an eye for an eye (Fish, 2008; Held, 2010)
Hellenic Period	Development of Western Political Thought (Mackenzie, 1907) Introduction of Formal Learning Institutions (Floridi, 2011)	Models of Learning (Mazur, 1994) Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972)	Empiricism (Truitt, 1978) Humanism (Barrie & Pace, 1998)
Middle Ages	Promulgation of the Church (Ekelund & Hebert, 2010; Feldhay, 2006)	Training & Development as growth strategy (Caspers, 2003; Gonzalez, 2006; Weilder, 2003)	Aristotelian Causality (Silverman, 1990) Theology as Philosophy (Davies, 2004; Gracia & Noone, 2003)

**Table 4.3**

*Seminal Events in HRD, Their Relation to Current Practice & Informing Philosophy: Industrial Revolution – World War II*

Time Period	Events	Relation to Current HRD Practice	Informing Philosophy
Industrial Revolution	Development of Vocational Education (DeSimone & Wener, 2012) Introduction of Vocational Psychology & Aptitude Testing (Freeman, 1912; Parsons, 1909) Creation of Factory Schools (Beatty, 1918) Development of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) Creation of War Industries Board (Smiddy & Naum, 1954) Centralization of Personnel Practices (Baron, Dobbin, & Jennings, 1986)	Evidence-based practice (Rousseau, 2006) Psychological testing for job fit and development (Berr, Church, & Waclawski, 2000) Development as the purview of the private sector (Abel & Li, 2012)	Empiricism (Musson & Robinson, 1969) Productivity as Philosophy (Kramnick, 1982)
World War II	Rise of the Human Relations Movement (Barnard, 1938; Follett, 1919; Mayo, 1945) The Hawthorne Experiments (Pennock, 1930) Establishment of Training Within Industry (Dooley, 1945) Entry of Women in the Workforce (Goldin, 1991)	Employee engagement as key driver of productivity (Cardus, 2013; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Schuck & Wollard, 2008) Charter to develop and perfect best-practice methodologies in instruction, process improvement, and employee relations (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004; Watkins, Leigh, Foshay, & Kaufman, 1998)	Humanism (Melè, 2003) Structuralism (Barnard, 1938; Follett, 1919; Mayo, 1945)

**Table 4.4**

*Seminal Events in HRD, Their Relation to Current Practice & Informing Philosophy: 1950's – 1970's – 1980's – 2010's*

Time Period	Events	Relation to Current HRD Practice	Informing Philosophy
1950's – 1970's	Introduction of Change Management Theory and Organization Development (Lewin, 1947)	Change management as key tenant of practice (Buchanan, Ketley, Gollop, Jones, Lamont, Neath, & Whitby, 2003)	
	Introduction of Lab Testing (Highhouse, 2002)		
	Introduction of Survey Research (Likert, 1958)	Survey research as eminent modality	Humanism (Knowles, 1958)
	Introduction of Action Research & Systems Theory (Lewin, 1948; Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Macguire, 2003)	(Chiaburu, Huang, & Hutchins, 2014; Gill, Duggar III, & Norton, 2014; Singh, 2014)	Structuralism (von Bertalanffy, 1969)
1980's – 2010's	Formal definition of HRD role (Hansen, 1980)	Systems theory as basis of viewing and engaging organizations (Senge, 199)	
	Establishment and refining of HRD Competency Model (Arneson, Rothwell, & Naughton, 2013; Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004; McLagan, 1989)	HRD as a distinct feature of overall talent management strategy (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004)	Methodological pluralism in lieu of philosophy (Howard, 1983; Midgley, 1992)
	ASTD establishes itself as representative of HRD practitioners (Miller, 2008)	HRD as a largely results-driven discipline with focus on productivity (Keefer & Yap, 2007;	
	AHRD establishes itself as representative of HRD theoreticians (Russ-Eft, Short, & Jacobs, 2014)	Swanson, 1995; Torraco, 2004)	

### Research Question Three

The penultimate research question asks: what are the informing philosophies of HRD as demonstrated by its historical development, and what are the essential assumptions of those philosophies? As described in Chapter One, of primary concern when evaluating the philosophies of the discipline is the hidden nature of many of the underlying assumptions. More discussion of the impact of those hidden assumptions will be given in Chapter Five. It is appropriate at this point to simply state that philosophies carry with them powerful assumptions.

Table 4.5 provides a review of the three key informing philosophies of HRD, based upon the data collected and reviewed in Chapter Two. The three informing philosophies are: empiricism, humanism, and structuralism. While other philosophies, such as *lex talionis*, were impactful at certain times and may still carry some influence today, the philosophies outlined here could be considered most impactful in today's HRD. Table 4.5 gives a representation of some of the areas in which these philosophies influence HRD practice, as well as further detail on the assumptions of each philosophy.

Empiricism, like all three philosophies detailed, traces its roots back to the Hellenic Period. Plato's (Plato, 1966) assertion that what could be observed provided the best platform for learning (Truitt, 1978), as well as Aristotle's material causality and its inherent linearity (Silverman, 1990), form the basis of empiricism. Empiricism, and its attendant scientific method, would grow from this early beginning in ancient Greece to become the dominant philosophy of our time (Slife & Williams, 1995). As detailed in Chapter Two as well as in this chapter, empiricism as a philosophy is most evidently displayed through HRD's embrace of scientific management and its intellectual and methodological descendants.



**Table 4.5***Informing Philosophies of HRD and Their Underlying Assumptions*

Philosophy	HRD Practice	Underlying Assumptions (Slife, 1993; Slife & Williams, 1995; Slife, Burchfield & Hedges, 2010)
Empiricism	Personality Testing (Lohman, 2004; Messmann & Mulder, 2012)	Determinism
		Reductionism
	Selection Assessment (Berr, Church, & Waclawski, 2000)	Biologization
		Linear Causality
Humanism	Evidence-Based Practice (Locke, 1978; Rousseau, 2006)	
	Instructional Design (Gagné & Dick, 1983; Mazur, 1994; Wilson, Jonassen, & Cole, 1993)	
	Employee Engagement (Cardus, 2013; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Schuck & Wollard, 2008)	Determinism
		Moral Relativism
Structuralism	Facilitation (Cash, 1984)	
	Survey Research (Likert, 1958)	Determinism
		Final Causality
	Communities of Practice (Chang & Jacobs, 2012)	
	Organizational Learning (Senge, 1990)	

Empiricism carries with it several underlying assumptions (Slife & Williams, 1995). The first is determinism; the notion that individuals act because of, and for no other cause than, an external influencing factor. Empiricism also assumes a reductivistic perspective; that events and individuals can be best understood through evaluation at the smallest level. Such an assumption ties in neatly with the additional assumption of biologization. Empiricism assumes a biological genesis for individual behavior – for example that individuals act for the sake of their genetics (Slife, Burchfield, & Hedges, 2010). Finally, empiricism assumes that time is linear, an assumption that becomes readily apparent in considering most learning models (Slife, 1993).

Humanism carries with it inherent assumptions as well. Similar to empiricism, humanism assumes an inherent determinism, though the influencing source is different (Slife & Williams, 1995). Humanism assumes that individuals act for the sake of their own inner drive or potential (Rogers, 1951). That this information is only accessible by the individual also assumes a type of moral relativism – the individual is the only one who truly determines if their actions are consistent with their striving for self-actualization. Humanism's philosophy is consistent with Aristotle's formal causality. Individuals act because of their essential nature. As detailed in Chapters Two and Four, humanism as a philosophy is supremely influential via the continuing impact of the Human Relations movement in HRD.

Structuralism also holds inherent philosophical assumptions. As with empiricism and humanism, structuralism assumes determinism (Slife & Williams, 1995). Individuals act for the sake or because of the structure or system – whatever that structure or system may be. The structure is assumed to be unknowable and untestable, in other words it is impossible to get outside of the system to test the system (Slife, 1993). This is the very nature of the philosophy of structuralism – to understand an individual aspect of the system one must consider the whole

system. It is that holism that relates back to Aristotelian teleology or final causality. Objects and individuals act in accordance with the ultimate aim or end in relation to the system in which they are a part. Structuralism, then, is the informing philosophy of systems theory and as discussed previously a concept with wide influence in HRD theory and practice.

#### **Research Question Four**

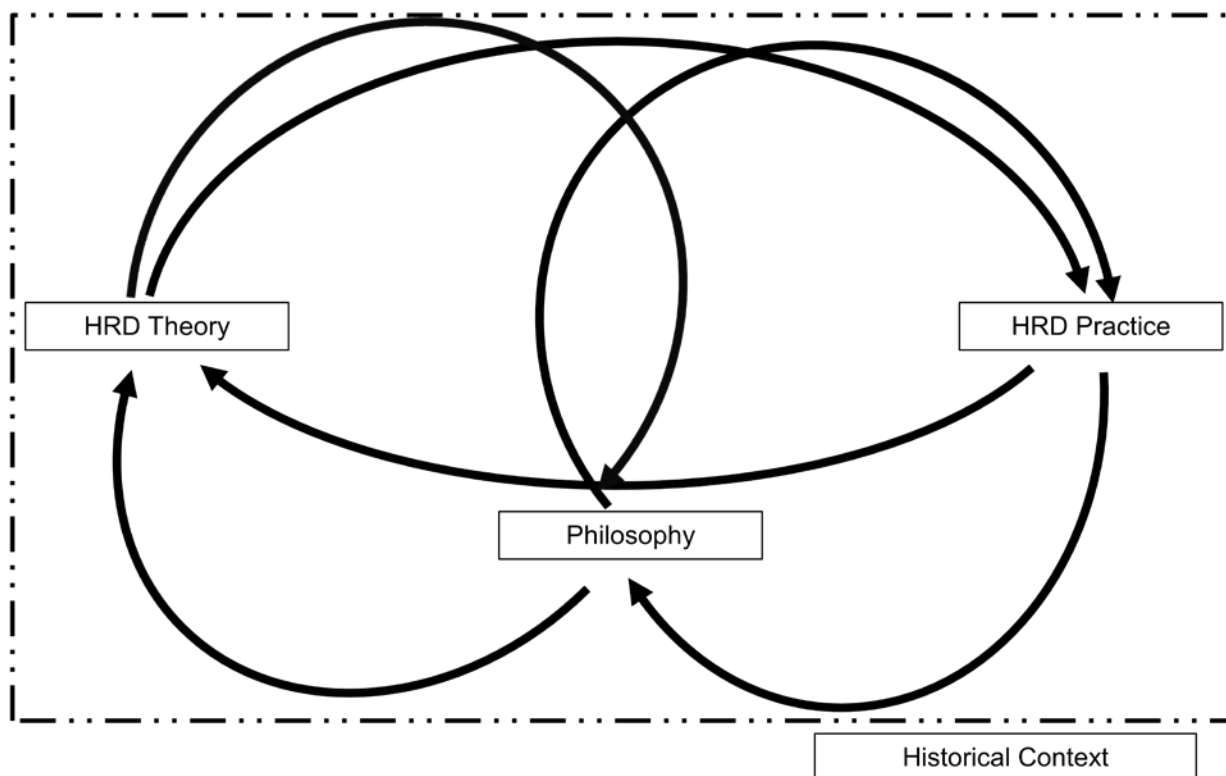
Research question four asks, what model best represents the current means by which theory and practice in HRD are generated? The initial research question centered upon the interplay and interaction of the theory, practice, and philosophy of HRD. The research proposed that, upon closer examination of the history of HRD, clear linkages would exist between the theory and practice of current HRD and specific seminal events that were shown to hold significant sway. Vygotsky's (1997) model of historical analysis in theory building was used as a tent-pole. As one surveys the history of Western Civilization, events occurred that introduced effective, productive HRD theory and practice. Per the theoretical model espoused in this research, this utility coupled with socio-cultural context and philosophical influence were the evaluative measures of said seminal events.

The introductory model utilized was graphically represented in Chapter Two and is recreated here as Figure 4.2. Evaluation of the data from the vantage-point of said model generated compelling results, as detailed in this chapter and expounded upon in Chapter Five. While the historical review conducted in Chapter Two would not qualify as exhaustive, it is certainly representative and supportive of this initial research thesis. It appears that, when considering the history of HRD, key seminal events held significant influence and continue to hold influence in the theory and practice of HRD today.

To reiterate a previously detailed example, the rise of Scientific Management during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is illustrative of the model proposed. The historical context of the time was that of a civilization embracing the industrial revolution and straining with its attendant challenges of workforce and productivity. Such challenges were exacerbated by the onset of World War I. In this context arose the theory of scientific management and HRD-specific practices such as vocational testing. The theory of scientific management, and the practices associated therein, were both clearly influenced by an empirical philosophy – not coincidentally simultaneously influencing the field of psychology through the rise of behaviorist and cognitive schools.

**Figure 4.2**

*Gosney's Multi-nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy in HRD*



As the research continued into the current era, the model became less tenable. While philosophy in previous eras enjoyed various levels of influence, there is but little question that it remained an active element of the theory-to-practice process. For example, Mayo was viewed as a philosopher as well as a theoretician and practitioner (Hseuh, 2002). In the current era, however, an awareness of the influence of philosophy appears more lacking. Without question there are some voices who remind of the critical need for philosophy to have her say in the theory and practice of HRD (Ruona & Lynham, 2004). However in its current state it appears HRD is almost singularly focused on the growth of the supporting business and ever-increasing productivity of the worker (Short, Bing, & Kerhahn, 2003).

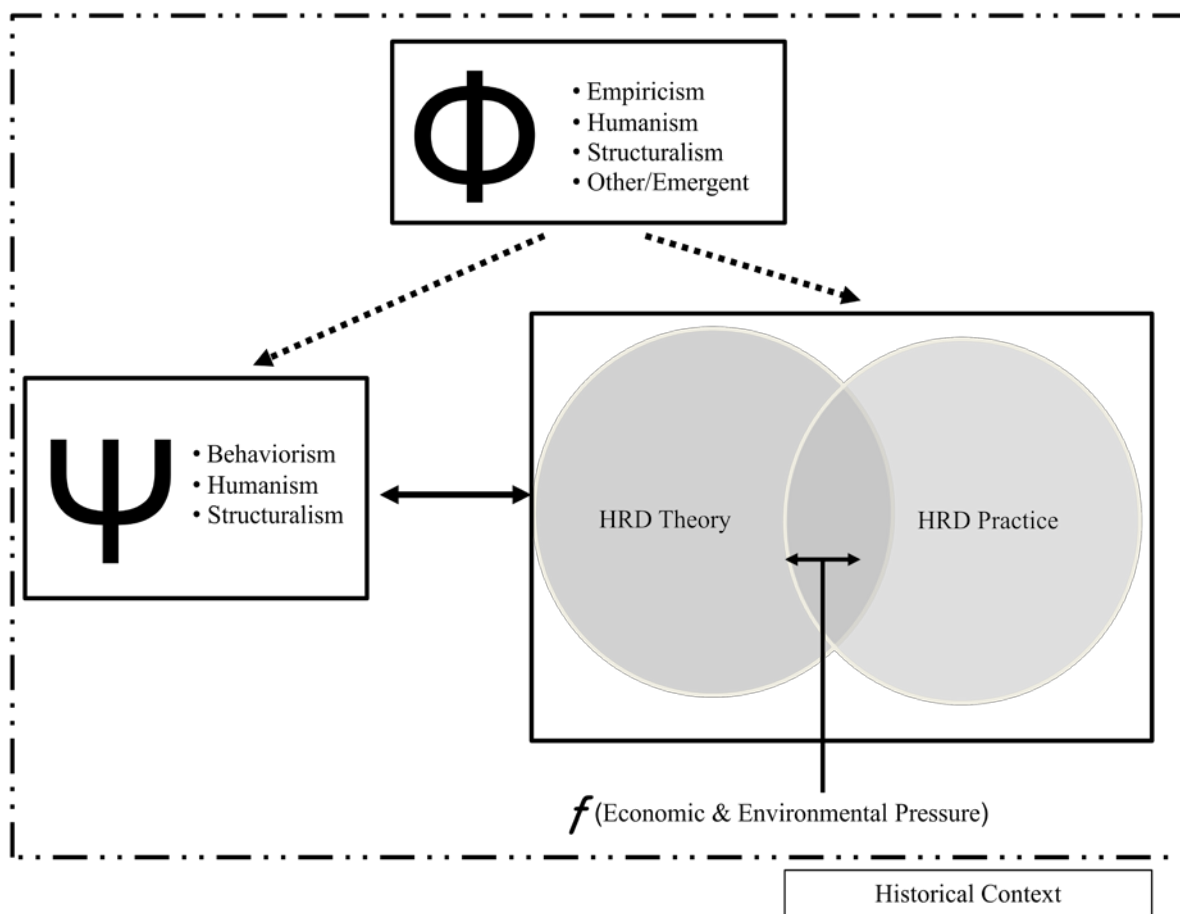
It is with acknowledgement of this current realization of HRD that a revised model is now proposed. As seen in Figure 4.3 a more appropriate way of representing the means of theory and practice generation is that of a Venn diagram representing theory and practice. In this model, the degree of overlap between theory and practice is contingent upon variables such as economic and environmental pressures (MacKenzie, Garavan, & Carbery, 2012). Note three additional key features of the newly-proposed model. First is the continued influence of philosophy; albeit far less explicitly. The model now reflects the significance of empiricist, humanist, and structuralist philosophy as key influencers in HRD. However, the model acknowledges the potential for additional or emergent philosophies that may be uncovered. The second is the continued seating of theory, practice, and philosophy into historical context. Finally is the acknowledgement of the role of specific psychological schools of thought as well-springs of HRD theory and practice. The model also recognizes that HRD possesses a symbiotic relationship with psychology; the disciplines are able to draw upon the theory and practice of the other. This idea is represented through the bi-directionality of the arrow between psychology and HRD theory and practice. It is

also worth noting covert influence of similar philosophies in psychology as in HRD, also represented in the model.

Gosney's Model of Modern era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD suggests that philosophy does not hold a position of explicit acknowledgement in HRD theory or practice. If we are to adopt the perspective of Jaspers (1951), however, philosophy is unavoidable whether we choose to attend to it or not. And as Whitehead (1926) proposed, those philosophies carry with them assumptions that are unavoidable. The model presented in figure 4.3 suggests that, whether explicit or not, philosophy wields influence in HRD theory and practice.

**Figure 4.3**

*Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD*



The revised model also emphasizes the continued influence of historical context. The data presented in Chapter Two strongly suggests that historical context plays a critical role in the understanding of HRD theory and practice in this or any historical era.

In summary, tracing the history of HRD via the seminal events in HRD demonstrates that, as a discipline, HRD is the sum of its key historical events. Indeed, HRD can perhaps be best understood through a careful analysis of seminal events in its history. These events were evaluated consistent with Vygotsky's (1997) model as described in Chapter Three; (a) through the socio-cultural context of the time in which they occurred, (b) through an evaluation of the informing philosophies of the time, and (c) by their utility at the time and throughout the balance of HRD's history. A detailed evaluation of the data via this model is presented in Chapter Five.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This fifth and concluding chapter covers several concluding elements in the presented research. First is an evaluation of representative, seminal events in HRD history. Then, a re-visitation of the model originally proposed in Chapter Three will include the suggestion of a revised model more appropriate for HRD as it currently exists. The chapter continues with a discussion of the hidden assumptions of HRD and implications for the discipline. Additionally, a theoretical model that considers the philosophical pillars of HRD theory and practice is proposed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a review of future areas of potential research.

#### **Seminal Events in HRD History**

In reviewing the data presented in Chapter Two of this text interesting themes and trends begin to emerge. As can be seen in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 distinct connections exist between key, seminal events in the history of western civilization as it relates to what we would today call HRD and how HRD is practiced today. The roots of HRD can be traced back through the ages as various societies undertook the task of better understanding humans as workers; for more effectively utilizing said individuals to their own benefit and to the benefit of their sponsoring organization. Indeed the data presented suggests that a key trend in the overall history of human interaction is that, once organized into formal groups, individual development for the sake of the group becomes a key component of the groups' tacit or explicit survival and growth strategy.

While it would be in error to suggest that the list of seminal events in HRD contained in this text is exhaustive, it is representative of the main research thesis. As stated previously, the central research question for this text is whether or not a link exists between the theory of HRD, the practice of HRD, the informing philosophy of the time, and the historical context in which



seminal events in HRD occurred. It would be assumed that, should the thesis prove valid, sufficient evidence would exist in the historical record of events in history that can be shown to influence the current practice of HRD as well as demonstrate the early adoption of practices and theory that would eventually become HRD. In addition, the central research question would suggest that an evaluation of the historical record would also yield clear examples of how the predominant philosophy of the time influenced the coming forth of these seminal events.

### **Early Civilization.**

The first historical period reviewed in this research, early civilization dating back to 3000 B.C., is demonstrative. The creation of an apprenticeship model is noteworthy. However, of real interest in this research is the evaluation and valuation of talent, skill, and ability – with compensation tied to that valuation as detailed by Smith (1999). Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell (2004) articulate the core behaviors and competencies of the HRD professional. Explicitly stated in their model, and falling under the responsibility of workplace learning and performance, is measuring and evaluating as well as improving human performance. The historical record as related by Smith (1999) would suggest that the construction of the Great Pyramids in 3000 B.C. and other construction projects was in fact an early example of systematic measuring and evaluating of individual performance.

As described by Fish (2008), the predominant philosophy of the time was an eye for an eye or *lex talionis*. Such a philosophy is essentially one of proportionality; an individual is meted out in reward or punishment in proportion to that which is fair, equal, and commensurate. The influence of such an informing philosophy is evident when considering the example articulated above. Measurement and evaluation of performance, and indeed even the ability to calculate the worth of an individual, is the core assumption of *lex talionis* (Held, 2010). Valuation is inherent

in the philosophy, as is the assumption of wholeness. What is right is what will make an individual whole, or fully valued. The principle works for punishment as well as compensation, though in this circumstance the latter is the focus. In the case of this early example of HRD practice, it is clear that the informing philosophy held direct sway on how the seminal event occurred – thus providing the first piece of evidence in the examination of the research question.

### **The Hellenic Period.**

The Hellenic period was the next historical period considered in the research. Evidence of early HRD practice exists during this time period in the establishment of Plato's Academy (Barrie & Pace, 1998). Plato's Academy was a formal institution of learning whose explicit purpose was the growth and development of the individual. While formal educational systems are able to trace their genealogy to the Academy, it is fair to suggest that private-interest learning may do the same. Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell (2004) note the design and delivery of learning as core to current HRD practice. Plato's Academy stands as an early example of such practice.

As notable as was the establishment of Plato's Academy, perhaps the most influential elements of the Hellenic period was the philosophy that sprung forth. These philosophical traditions can be separated into three distinct schools of thought; humanism, empiricism, and systems theory. Plato's Academy is an example of the influence of the humanistic school of thought. Mackenzie's (1907) description of Platonic education's purpose as the growth and development of the individual is an example of this humanistic philosophy.

For the Greeks, however, while humanism may have been the aim empiricism was the modality. Plato held that that the most effective means of teaching was via that which was observable (Truitt, 1978) – fundamental empiricism. Not only did empiricism eventually come to dictate how we approach knowledge, but also how we conceptualize learning (Mazur, 1994). The

informing philosophies of humanism and empiricism both wielded influence in the establishment of Plato's Academy, and continue to influence the practice of HRD today.

Finally, the Hellenic period provided an additional informing philosophy in the form of teleology or Aristotelian causality – the foundation of systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972). While a more detailed analysis of systems theory and its application in modern HRD will be given later in this chapter, there is no question that the concept of final causality has significant implication in both the theory and practice of modern HRD. It is also critical to note that Aristotelian causality was intended to be understood as a whole (Silverman, 1990). Final causality was the progenitor of systems theory, but so too was material causality to empiricism and formal causality to humanism. All such concepts informed the thinking that produced Plato's Academy, and also much of the theory and practice of Western civilization.

### **The Middle Ages.**

The Middle Ages provide an additional, fascinating era in which the early residue of eventual HRD practice is observed. Evaluation of the data provides a compelling example in the methodology of growth of the Catholic Church at this time. Modern evaluation of the growth of the church suggests a strong kinship to the current franchise model (Davidson, 1995; Ekelund, Hébert, & Tollison, 1989). Current franchise model theory places significant emphasis on training and development as critical to its successful implementation (Rothenberg, 1967).

Should the thesis of this research hold, one would expect to see a similar emphasis on training and development in the early promulgation of the Church. Such is the case as current scholarship notes the critical role of talent management and training in the selection and development of pastors during this time period (Caspers, 2003; Weiler, 2003). Methodological approaches, such as apprenticeship (Ghosh, 2012; Hegstad, 1999, Hezlett & Gibson, 2005) and

scientific management (Capelli & Hamori, 2008), also appear both in this era as well as throughout the rest of HRD's history. Such evidence provides further confirming validation of the initial thesis – seminal events in history inform the current expression of HRD as a discipline.

A more subtle analysis is required to connect the informing philosophy of the Middle Ages with the surfaced HRD practice. Nevertheless, such a link does in fact exist. As detailed in Chapter Two, the philosophy of the time was that of theology-as-philosophy. In short, everything and everyone existed for the growth and betterment of the church (Gracia & Noone, 2003). Recall, again, Castrogiovanni and Kidwell's (2010) definition of training and development in the franchise model, to “standardize and replicate a successful model in a different location” (p. 229). Inherent in the definition is the preeminence of replication of the founding organization. While one could claim simple synchronicity in the establishment of an early franchise model and inherent modalities and aims of training and development with the entrenchment of theology-as-philosophy. The more likely scenario is that the two are indeed linked – that theology-as-philosophy was in fact an influencing factor (or the influencing factor) in the means by which this early example of HRD practice finds genesis.

### **The Industrial Revolution.**

The next era evaluated in the research is the Industrial Revolution, an era in which the through-lines between the practices of the time and HRD as now realized become more distinct. The establishment of factory schools during this era continued the efforts first established during Plato's Academy – that formal institutions dedicated to the development of the individual were paramount for the growth and success of the society. Current HRD practice assumes it is largely the role of the private organization to provide individuals with the skills necessary to be productive in said organization (Abel & Li, 2012). It is evident that the establishment of factory

schools clearly influenced the means by which HRD is today practiced. The advent of scientific management was also of abundant significance.

Scientific management's aim, as detailed in Chapter Two, was the drive for efficiency while increasing productivity (Taylor, 1911). Davis, Naughton, and Rothwell (2004) list the improving of human performance as a key discipline of the HRD professional, in essence the identical aim of scientific management. What's more, during this time period the first human resource professionals were introduced and personnel management centralized (Baron, Dobbin & Jennings, 1986). The era's organizational focus on human performance improvement, coupled with the establishment of roles charged with driving said improvement, has clear impact on how HRD is now understood and practiced.

The introduction of vocational psychology during this time also holds significant sway with the manner in which HRD is currently theorized. More detail will be given later in this chapter on the confluence of HRD theory and psychology. Vocational assessment, used both in private industry and the military, became one of the first footholds of psychology into what would become the practice of HRD. Chapter Two details the extensive relationship history between HRD and psychology – the data contained therein strongly suggests that the two are inextricably linked. The central research thesis is further supported when considering the introduction of vocational psychology during the Industrial Revolution and the theory and practice of today's HRD.

As subtle as was the connection between Middle Age philosophy and the HRD-related events of the time, the philosophy and practice of the Industrial Revolution was overt. Scientific management clearly, and explicitly, embraced a philosophy of empiricism (Thompson, 1917). The psychology of the time, including vocational psychology, also aligned itself with empiricism

(Watson, 1994). The fundamental philosophy of the era was one where the observable, replicable, and testable was supreme. However, an additional influence is noted in the data. Recall Kramnick's (1982) description of the ethos of the time. He states that "citizenship and the public quest for the common good were replaced by economic productivity and hard work as the criteria of virtue" (p. 662). While empiricism no doubt held sway during this era, the focus on the productive organization (and not on the growth of the individual) hearkens as well to theology-as-philosophy as seen in the Middle Ages. Perhaps a more suitable term for the era is productivity-as-philosophy; nevertheless the singular emphasis is strikingly similar. Once again the thesis of this research is supported when considering the influence of these dual philosophies of empiricism and productivity-as-philosophy.

### **World War II.**

A review of the data from the World War II era brings to light several key events that impact the practice of HRD, with the development of the Human Relations movement among the most significant. The Human Relations movement was a direct response to the perceived disregard for the welfare of the individual (Ledford, 1999). Spurred by the results of the Hawthorne Experiments (Pennock, 1930) the aim of the organization was reconsidered as a means of individual growth, development, and self-actualization. Barnard's (1938) summation of the notion, supported by the writings of Follett (1919) made clear that this individual improvement was achieved through association with others. This is perhaps the critical concept of the Human Relations movement: not only was the organization responsible for the improvement of the individual, the organization was the best vehicle for individual improvement.

Taken in such a context, the shift in thinking from the Industrial Revolution to the World War II era becomes all the starker in contrast. In fact, the Human Relations movement was

perhaps most consistent in philosophy with the Hellenic view of civilization as detailed previously. Recall that the Greeks viewed the role of society similarly – that civilization existed as a field upon which the individual could seek to recognize their individual potential. Reaching said potential, then, benefitted the larger society. It is worth noting that the manifestation of that philosophy included the development of Plato’s Academy as a means of individual development and also as an early example of humanistic education. In Plato’s Academy knowledge was garnered from experience, which knowledge was then able to be leveraged for the benefit of the individual and society. Recall, then, Follett’s (1927) call for the designation of an individual whose role it is to manage and categorize managerial experience for future benefit. There appears in Follett’s request a link to the humanistic philosophy that informed the establishment of Plato’s Academy millennia previous, and also continues to guide the practice of HRD today.

Later portions of this chapter detail humanistic psychology and its relation to HRD. It is appropriate at this juncture, however, to note the clear link between the development of humanistic psychology during this time period and the rise of the Human Relations movement. Similar to the suggestion that scientific management and behavioral psychology did not arise simultaneously yet coincidentally, there appears some distinct link between the growth of the Human Relations movement, humanistic psychology, and a general emphasis on humanism as a guiding philosophy of the era.

The ways in which HRD was practiced during this era also hold significant sway when reviewing the charted course of the discipline. In reviewing the data, the event to which HRD is most evidently traceable is likely the establishment of the Training Within Industry department by the federal government. Consider that Dooley established, tested, and refined programs tackling human performance, quality management, and human relations (Jacobs, 2002). Human

performance and human relations, as has been mentioned already, are key job responsibilities and areas of expertise of the current HRD professional (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004). Quality management, while a discipline unto itself, has manifested itself in some of the most strongly-held methodologies of HRD (Watkins, Leigh, Foshay, & Kaufman, 1998).

Dooley (1945) does not go into any detail regarding an underlying philosophy of approach as he developed the various J-tools. However, the mere presence of both Job Instruction Training and Job Relations Training suggests he saw the need for efficiency in productivity and the need for a positive, fulfilling work environment for such efficiency in productivity to occur. Quoting again from Dooley, his first key points in early JRT drafts was that “Employees are human beings ... They are all individuals” (p. 210). It is a reasonable assumption, then, that as a starting point these statements revealed Dooley’s fundamental assumptions. Such fundamental beliefs are also consistent with the humanistic philosophy of the time.

It is beyond the purview of this research to evaluate the full impact of women entering the workforce en masse during the time of World War II, other than to note that it occurred and that it likely influenced the way early HRD was practiced. Insufficient information in this data set precludes any assumptions as to how such practice occurred, though it seems at least plausible that said entry was correlated in some form or fashion with the influence of humanistic philosophy. While the historic record does clearly demonstrate that women’s large-scale entry into the workforce was the result of pressing national need (Mulligan, 1998), unanswered in this research is what full impact this event held in how workforce practices changed as a result of said entry.



### **1950's – 1970's.**

The review of historical data from the period of the 1950's through the 1970's reveals a coalescing of the disparate work being done in the arena of HRD into one more firmly defined discipline. Tannenbaum's (1954) prediction of the formation of a discipline that draws upon the social and behavioral sciences, with branches focused upon practice as well as the theoretical, was prescient. Fueled by the continuing momentum of the Human Relations movement, the discipline of HRD began to take shape as theoreticians turned to the challenges of the organization and applied new ideas and techniques to those same challenges. Indeed the continuation of the Human Relations movement into this next era suggests that its core concept – employee engagement as a key predictor of productivity – was becoming immutable fact in both theory and practice (Cardus, 2013; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Schuck & Wollard, 2008).

Many of the foundational practices of HRD were developed during this time, including the establishment of intervention modalities such as the T-group (Highhouse, 2002) and Action Research (Lewin, 1947), the preeminence of survey research as a primary modality (Likert, Roslow, & Murphy, 1932), and the introduction of change management theory (Lewin, 1947). Each of these critical events directly impact the way in which HRD is currently understood and practiced. A cursory review of HRD research demonstrates the extensive utilization of survey research (Chiaburu, Huang, & Hutchins, 2014; Gill, Duggar III, & Norton, 2014; Singh, 2014). The fundamental principles and steps in action research and the T-group continue to impact the way in which HRD is practiced (Bennis, 1963; Chang & Jacobs, 2012). Change management is currently seen as a key function of the HRD professional (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004)

with entire industries dedicated to providing theory and tools to assist in the change management process.

The common theme between the seminal events listed during the time period of the 1950's through the 1970's is the influence of systems theory. Recall in the description of the Human Relations movement provided by Barnard, Follett, and Mayo all three emphasized the importance of understanding the individual as part of a larger social structure. Such a concept is core to the underlying structural philosophy that manifested as systems theory during this time period. Lewin's change theory, heavily influenced by the Human Relations movement, is also a distinct example of theorizing based upon the structuralist philosophy.

The modalities that came forth during this period were also strongly influenced by systems theory and its attendant philosophy. The T-Group and Action Research are both examples of interventions based upon systems theory, as was the leadership model proposed by Likert. In all, it is clearly evident that during this period the emergence of systems theory, and its underlying structuralist philosophy, held significant sway as key events in HRD occurred. That this occurred is not surprising given the similar patterns detailed in previous eras. The establishment of the Society for General Systems Research was established at the commencement of the era – 1954. It is, then, not unexpected to see the structuralist philosophy influence these key events in the history of HRD as had occurred previously. In this era, HRDs solution set was, and in large part continues to be, framed in terms of a structuralist philosophy and systems theory.

### **1980's – 2010's.**

The most recent era of HRD is also the era in which HRD became firmly established as a discipline with a more clearly-defined charter to assist organizations in productivity and change-

management efforts. The discipline's practitioner arm, ASTD, articulated in 1989 (McLagan, 1989) and again in 2004 (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004) and 2013 (Arneson, Rothwell, & Naughton, 2013) what constituted an HRD practitioner based upon areas of expertise and competency. The consistent element in each of the three conceptions of the HRD practitioner is a focus upon assisting the business in achieving results. Indeed in the most recent iteration of the ASTD competency model, the practitioner is charged with a better understanding of business skill and knowledge of the industry in which they operate (Arneson, Rothwell, & Naughton, 2013).

The theoretical arm of HRD, the Academy of Human Resource Development, also defined itself in largely utilitarian terms. Russ-Eft, Short, and Jacobs (2014) note the goal of studying processes and practices, as well as encouraging application of those practices. From such a definition one can distinctly hear the emphasis upon the practicality of theory. As the modern era of HRD dawned the key measuring stick for both HRD theory and practice became the utility of theory and the efficacy of practice (Keefer & Yap, 2007; Swanson, 1995; Torraco, 2004). In doing so, HRD began to distance itself from a larger philosophical discussion. From a historical perspective, one could argue that this era had most in common with the theology-as-philosophy era of the Middle Ages. Yet the dual schools of thought – empiricism and humanism – still held influence in theory-building and practice.

The historical record from this most current period in HRD history suggest that, instead of embracing an evaluation of HRD from a philosophical standpoint, such difficult questions were assuaged through the embrace of methodological pluralism. Indeed during this period methodological pluralism became *de rigueur* as a means of placating those who aligned with either a humanist or empiricist perspective. Review of the modern state of HRD suggests a

discipline that is largely inattentive to its grander philosophical questions despite calls from some to embrace such discussion for the ultimate benefit of both theory and practice (Lynham, 2002; Ruona & Lynham, 2004).

In summary, a closer examination of the data presented in Chapter Two provides significant support of the central thesis: events across history have clearly influenced the development and current practice of HRD. Consistent with the Vygotsky model (1997), such events can be evaluated both by their utility at the time as well as their evaluation from the perspective of current HRD theory and practice. Finally, these seminal events were clearly influenced by the predominant philosophies of the time – philosophies that carry with them inherent assumptions on the nature and role of the individual.

## **Conclusions**

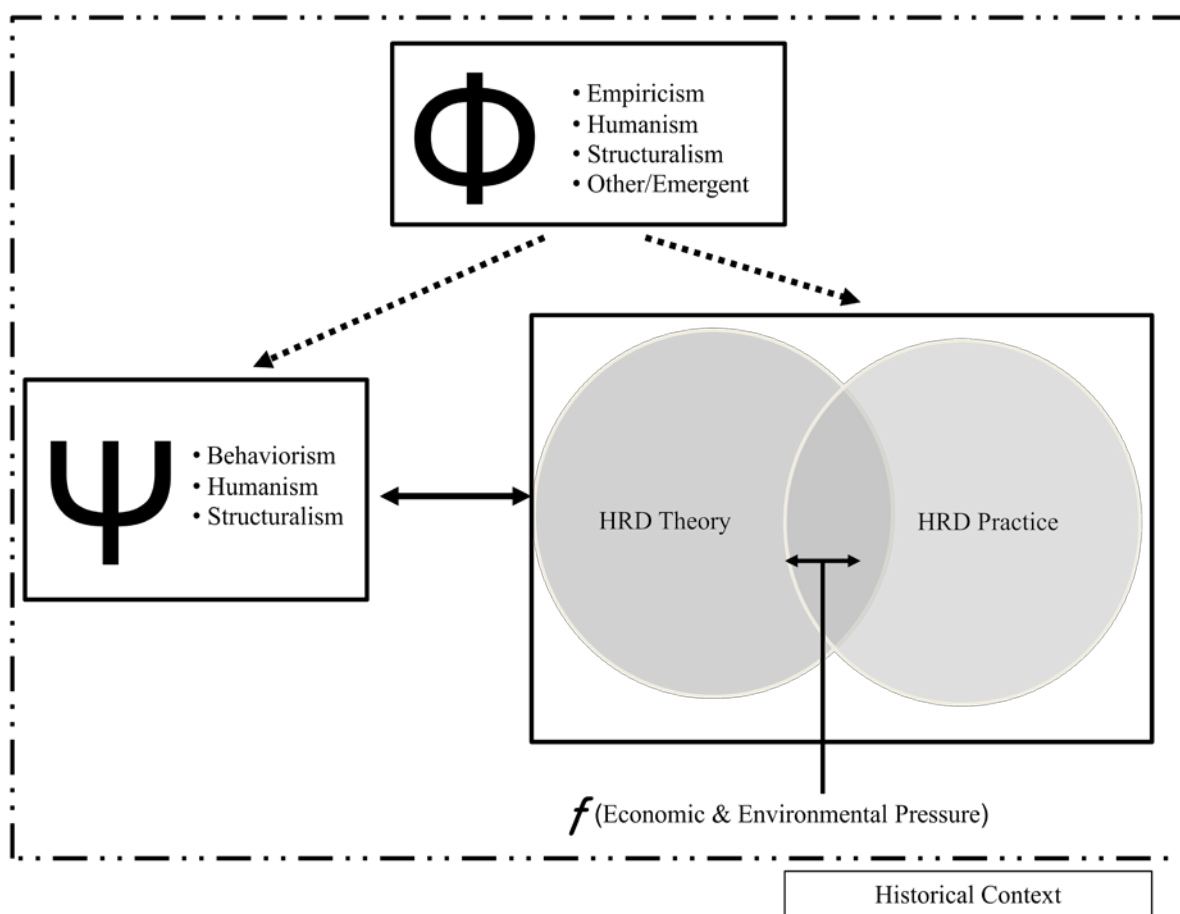
As the research progressed a revision of the introductory model, as detailed in Chapter Four, was necessary. It is important to note that the original model, Gosney's Multi-nodal, Iterative Causal Loop of Theory, Practice, and Philosophy in HRD, proved to be tenable when evaluating time periods leading up to the modern era. Its instability only appeared as the explicit influence of philosophy diminished and was replaced by the bottom-up pressure of economic and environmental concerns. Thus Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD (originally appearing in Chapter Four of this text as Figure 4.3, here recreated as Figure 5.1) was proposed as more representative of current-state HRD.

Despite this evolution of models, there would be no reason to suggest that historical context would cease to provide clearer understanding of both theory and practice in this modern era. It is just more difficult, or nigh unto impossible, to extricate oneself from the context in which one resides. In more closely analyzing the data several key themes begin to emerge that

could be considered pillars of current practice with strong ties to major historical events: (a) the influence of scientific management, (b) the influence of the Human Relations Movement, and (c) the influence of systems theory. Following is a brief review of the data supporting these three assertions.

**Figure 5.1**

*Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD*



As has already been detailed in this text, the introduction of scientific management principles had far reaching impact and effect both at the time of its introduction and continuing into the modern era of HRD. More impactful than the methodology of scientific management, however, was the ethos of scientific management. The practice of scientific management in early

HRD also introduced into the discipline a focus on testable, repeatable, impactful methodology that has become the hallmark of its research (Russ-Eft, Short, and Jacobs, 2014) as well as its practice (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2011).

Another review of Davis, Naughton, and Rothwell's (2004) model underlines this emphasis on performance. Indeed, driving performance is presented as the primary aim of the discipline. Leveraging modalities such as Evidence Based Practice in HRD demonstrates the discipline's close ties to the scientific management of the past (Hamlin, 2002; Holton, 2004; Terpstra & Limpaphayom, 2012). Particularly significant, however, is the continued influence of the personality and vocational testing that was closely associated with scientific management. Such practices continue to be leveraged extensively in the HRD community (Berr, Church, & Waclawski, 2000; Lohman, 2004; Messmann & Mulder, 2012). It is worth noting that vocational psychology, as described by Parsons in Chapter Two (1909), holds as assumptive that the individual factors to be leveraged by organizations are trait-based. While the full impact of such assumptions will be discussed later in this chapter, it further underscores the impact of scientific management in the current practice of HRD.

The impact of the Human Relations movement is another historical pillar to which the current practice of HRD appears closely tied. Stemming from the research of the Hawthorne experiments, the fundamental thrust of the movement is two-fold. First, productivity is largely a function of employee engagement and second, engagement is cultivated from social interaction. Ontologically, the Human Relations movement is a combination of humanism and systems theory, though likely with a greater emphasis on humanism and its embrace of the self-actualization concept.

As was detailed in Chapter Two, the core idea of employee engagement (as measured by supervisor/employee relationship) as key predictor of productivity is hugely influential in the theory and practice of today's HRD (Cardus, 2013; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Ledford, 1999; Sarachek, 1968; Schuck & Wollard, 2008). A closer look at McLagan's (1989) Human Resource Wheel further emphasizes the influence of the Human Relations Movement. McLagan emphasizes productivity as a central aim of HRD. The stated focus of Organization Development in McLagan's model includes emphasis on positive organizational relationships as a means of achieving organizational productivity. Indeed the two core concepts surrounding the Human Relations movement continue to hold significant sway on how HRD is understood as a discipline.

The final historical pillar upon which HRD is footed is the emergence of systems theory. Chapter Two details the influence of sociotechnical systems theory as espoused by the Tavistock Institute, particularly upon the practice of Organization Development (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Macguire, 2003; McLean, 2006; Trist & Bamforth, 1951). When systems theory is considered under the larger umbrella of a structuralist viewpoint, its influence becomes even more apparent (Atkinson-Tovar, 2002; Bierema, 2003; Chermack & Lynham, 2002; Garrick, 1998; Metcalfe, 2008; Swanson, 2001; Wang, Dou, & Li, 2002).

Reviewing, again, Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell's (2004) New Learning and Performance Wheel the influence of systems theory can be seen. First and foremost, the choice of a wheel as the metaphoric vehicle emphasizes the holistic thrust of systems theory. The inclusion of organizational knowledge management and organizational change management as HRD disciplines also underscores the influence of systems theory (Lewin, 1947; Senge, 1990). The interface of individuals and technology – explicit in Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell's model

and expanded beyond just the scope of HR technology in the 2013 revision (Arneson, Rothwell, & Naughton, 2013) – demonstrates the continued influence of sociotechnical systems theory.

HRD as a discipline today is truly defined through three events in its history: the establishment of scientific management, the embrace of the Human Relations movement, and the influence of systems theory. Based upon a review of the historical record the stature of these events in the history of HRD is evident. That each of these three constructs contains philosophical assumptions that influence HRD practice is less so.

In summary, Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD suggests that, in its current manifestation, HRD theory and practice are at times and in certain circumstances indistinguishable. As economic and environmental pressures mount the distance between theory and practice shortens and the focus of both become synonymous. And, as already discussed, the influence of previous historical context as well as the historical context of which HRD currently resides holds influence on current theory and practice. Three key historical pillars were identified through the historical research. Philosophy, however, with its attendant assumptions does not cease to wield influence on both theory and practice. Instead of explicitly informing theory and practice philosophy becomes a hidden partner with, as stated in Chapter One, influence but not acknowledgement. It is as if, as a discipline, in the rush to get things done we have collectively decided not to look up. Such a collective decision brings with it inherent consequences.

### **Hidden Assumptions in HRD and Recommendations to the Discipline**

Much of this text has either explicitly warned or hinted at the danger of hidden philosophical assumptions. It is fair, at this point, to ask why the theoretician or practitioner should overly concern themselves with philosophical assumptions, either overt or hidden. Might



all of this potentially overwrought concern for philosophy be unnecessary in an applied field such as HRD? Indeed, some might argue that HRD first ought to determine if it is indeed a discipline (Kuchinke, 2001; Swanson, 2001) and more appropriately determine the roles of scholar and practitioner (Holton, 1999) before undertaking anything so bold as to root out its underlying philosophical assumptions.

The author believes that such ontological discussions regarding HRD are worthwhile and enrich the discipline. However, it is the position of this research that philosophical discussions are critical and largely abandoned. Some may suggest that it is unnecessary to carry underlying philosophical assumptions into practice. If the theorist rejects the underlying assumption, then what power does it hold? And might the practitioner be best served to remain untied to any specific philosophy, instead free to embrace whatever practice has greatest utility at any given moment?

Slife & Williams (1995) note that such a position, eclecticism, is in fact a theory in and of itself; the theory that adopting multiple theories given a set of criteria is a preferable course of action. Such a position, like any other theory, has in it inherent strengths and weaknesses. For example, it may be tempting for the HRD practitioner to adopt portions of theories that are, of their very nature, completely contradictory. Far from being beneficial, in the end it is damaging.

Slife & Williams (1995) explain:

An eclectic theorist often attempts to stand apart from, or outside, all the various theories and remain uncommitted to any. However, in borrowing from the theories and accepting their explanations of some behaviors, the eclectic theorist is actually standing inside the theories – all at the same time. To be outside the theories, the eclectic would need to accept none of them, but in accepting parts of any or all of them, the eclectic behavioral scientist is drawn into them ... by accepting part of a theory, we also accept all of the assumptions and implications that a theory brings with it ... In trying to avoid some of the mistakes of any one theoretical perspective might bring with it, the eclectic opens him- or herself to the mistakes of all of them at the same time. (p. 47-48)

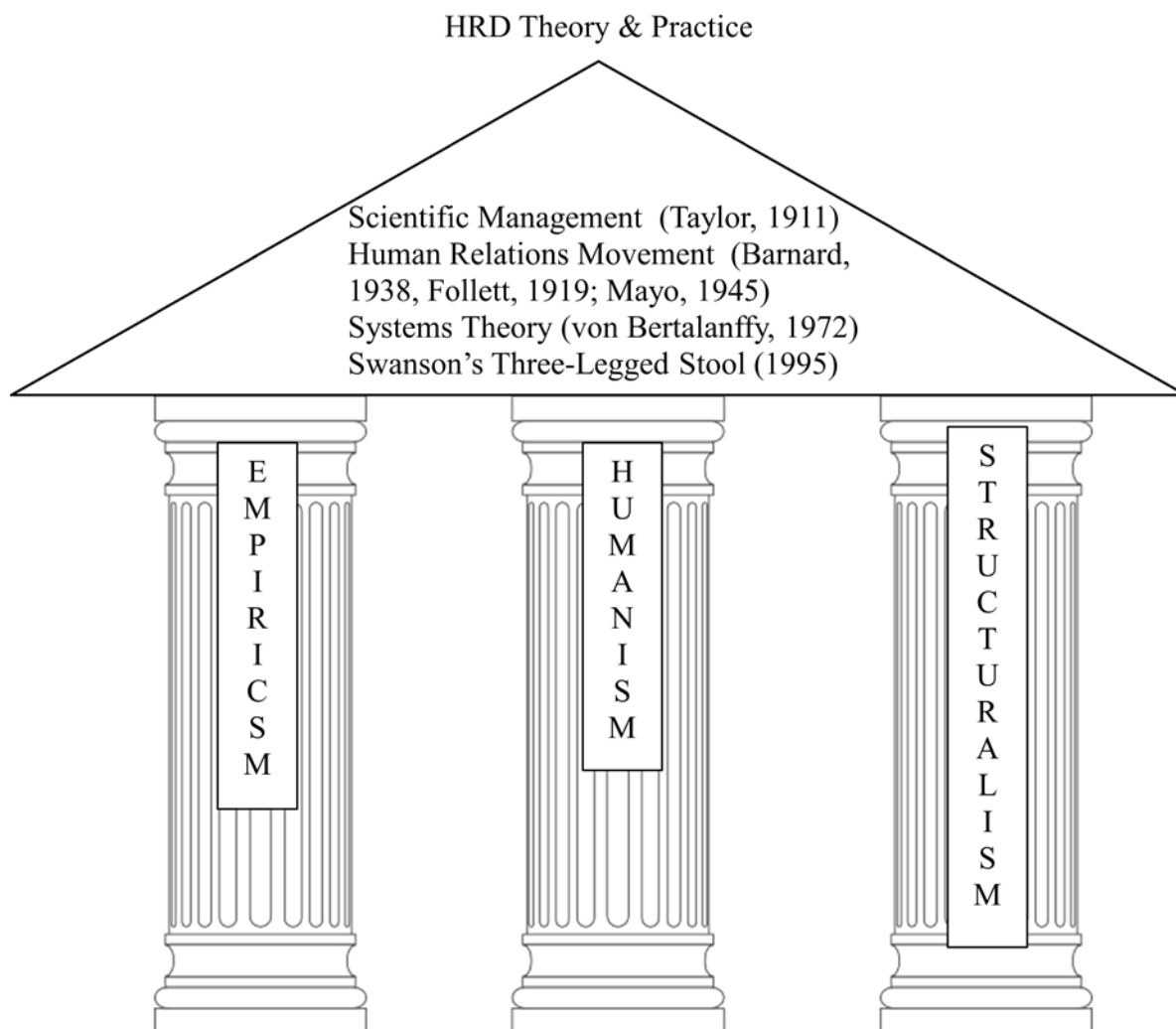
While the theorist or practitioner may believe they simultaneously embrace a theory or theory-based practice and reject an accompanying unsavory assumption, one key unheard voice may beg to differ: the individual to whom the theory or practice is being applied. It appears, to this author, that the group that benefits most from a greater transparency in philosophical assumption is the group about whom these assumptions are being made. It also appears to be an ethical imperative, then, that such transparency becomes part of the lexicon of both the practitioner and the theoretician. Put bluntly, an employee ought to know if an instrument being used under the guise of their own growth and development also carries with it an underlying assumption that that individual has no free will. One only need watch a few minutes of television before being bombarded with direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs, with their attendant list of possible side effects (Wilkes, Bell, & Kravitz, 2000). Does the HRD professional owe its consumer the same information with regards to the positive and/or negative career affecting side effects? The author would suggest that such is indeed the case. At the very least, such is notion raises ethical dilemmas that ought to be considered in the broader exploration of ethics within the discipline (Hatcher, 2002; Hatcher & Aragon, 2000; Mitchell, 2006).

The analysis contained in Chapter Four responding to research question three provides insight into the philosophical assumptions most inherent in current HRD. These philosophical pillars align with the three historical pillars of HRD: scientific management and empiricism, the Human Relations movement and humanism, and systems theory with structuralism. In that vein, a model of the philosophical pillars upon which HRD theory and practice rest is proposed. Swanson's (1999b) model suggests that HRD theory is made up of three main constructs: psychological theory, economic theory, and systems theory. The author believes that an antecedent to such a model is one that considers the prevailing philosophies upon which both

HRD theory and practice are built: Empiricism, Humanism, and Structuralism. Figure 5.2 illustrates this newly-proposed model.

**Figure 5.2**

*Gosney's Three Philosophical Pillars of Current HRD Theory & Practice*



It should be noted that the author does not, in proposing the above model, endorse the three pillars listed above as preferred or desired in HRD. Based upon the research conducted in this text they are the most influential philosophies in HRD theory and practice. When

considering HRD as it is currently theorized and practiced, it is appropriate to suggest that the discipline rests upon these three philosophical pillars. This is also not to suggest that Swanson's (1999b) model is inaccurate, or that other models may more accurately describe the means of theory- building in HRD. The model simply suggests that, prior to the evaluation of Swanson's or any other model, first a careful consideration of the philosophical pillars is necessary. And, as has been detailed, these pillars carry with them very specific assumptions of reality, the human condition, and ways of knowing (Slife & Williams, 1995). An aim of this research is to make more explicit this underlying philosophy and associated assumptions. It is the task of the discipline as a whole to determine if these pillars are an acceptable philosophical basis, and if we as members and our customers are comfortable with the assumptions these pillars propose. If not, it becomes incumbent upon the discipline to evaluate alternatives.

A primary recommendation of this text, therefore, is the establishment of Theoretical HRD as a clearly-defined sub discipline in HRD; following a similar blueprint to that followed by psychology. Undertaking the task of continuous evaluation of HRD philosophy in both theory and practice carves out a new domain within the discipline of HRD, as well as a new skill-set required of both the theoretician and practitioner. While already quoted in Chapter Three, it is worth reiterating the definition of theoretical psychology given by Teo (2009):

Theoretical psychology ... refers to metatheoretical work. All psychologists rely on theories, either explicitly or implicitly in their empirical studies and practices. In that sense, all psychologists use and to a certain degree contribute to theoretical psychology; but not all psychologists reflect upon their own explicit and implicit theories and assumptions and contextualize them within philosophical domains. Such an activity – the *reflection* on theories, and on the history, status, connection, and development of psychological concepts, methods, ideas, and worldviews – is a metatheoretical task. (p. 1)

Note that, in this definition, Teo suggests all psychologists – theoreticians and practitioners – contribute to the theory of psychology. It is no far reach to suggest the same in the field of HRD.

Teo suggests that, however, a higher level of metatheoretical work must be done in psychology to avoid the influence of implicit and explicit assumption. Might HRD do the same?

Given the work presented in this text, there appears a valid argument that HRD would benefit from this level of meta-analysis and welcome those scholars so inclined to such analysis. Indeed, given the nature of the discipline as one that draws from the theoretical work of multiple other disciplines, the risk of undisclosed philosophical assumption infiltrating theory and practice is significant. On a larger scale, however, it behooves HRD to give more careful consideration to the matters of philosophy. Recalling again Peters' (2012) lament:

No one takes the soul seriously in psychology, nor is biology paralyzed by failure to have reached a satisfactory definition of "life." Nor do all the philosophers seek "wisdom." Perhaps *kenosis* of its central term is the sign of a mature field. (p. 505)

HRD risks a similar *kenosis*, for the central term of the discipline is the word "Human" and all that the word implies. Understanding what it means to be human, particularly in the context in which HRD studies that humanity, deserves more scholarly effort than a passing glance or obligatory nod. Indeed it should be a central feature of the academic discipline if that is what HRD aspires to be. Hughes' (2012) work urging the discipline to consider the humanness of the worker is a positive step.

It is unlikely, and frankly non-productive, to assume that all theorists and practitioners will become fully and completely adept at the metatheoretical work proposed herein. What is more reasonable, however, is an increased focus on the critical thinking skills that aid both the theorist and practitioner in recognizing the influence of philosophy and recognize the philosophy's inherent assumptions. While rare, other voices have been raised to suggest that the need for critical HRD is beneficial and necessary for the continued growth of the field (Callahan, 2007; Fenwick, 2004; Fenwick, 2005; Storberg-Walker & Chermack, 2007; Valentin, 2006).

The second recommendation made to the discipline in this work, then, is the establishment of a critical thinking competency be established both academically and as part of the practitioner competency model. Once again following the example of psychology, a blueprint for instilling the skill of critical thinking in HRD's practitioners exists (Slife, 2012; Richardson & Slife, 2011; Yanchar & Slife, 2004; Yanchar, Slife, & Warne, 2008). And as has been shown with the research contained in this text, a purposeful study of the history of HRD would provide the appropriate platform from which the student of HRD could develop and grow a critical thinking skill set. Utilizing HRD history as a backdrop is consistent with Teo's (2009) description of theoretical psychology's aim. In psychology, and it is suggested that HRD follow, this skill of critical thinking is fundamentally inward-looking. It is the skill of evaluating the theories and assumptions of one's own discipline. With an evident need for such a skill set in HRD practitioners, the obligation rests with the discipline to chart a way forward for practitioners to be so educated.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

It is well understood by the author that the research contained in this text is simply a launching point for discussion and additional research. It is also understood that the ideas presented in this text could generate debate within the discipline, and that differing and competing perspectives will likely emerge from that debate. It is the view of the author that such debate and discussion is to the ultimate benefit of the discipline, and his ideas are presented as a catalyst for such a debate.

It is also understood that, as with any good research, the work contained herein is incomplete – in that more remains to be examined and evaluated. Far from being the final word on the topic of the history of HRD, philosophy, theory, and practice, it is understood that this text

is simply a launching point for discussion. In conducting the research the author became aware of other related topics that were not explored or explored fully. These topics, some directly related and some merely tangential, would benefit from a robust examination in their own right. The author intends to explore these and other avenues of research and thought, and encourages others to do likewise.

From a historical perspective, it is clear that significant gaps exist along the timeline of western civilization, and that those gaps likely contain events that would further bolster the central thesis of this work. As stated previously, it is understood that the seminal events thus examined are representative versus exhaustive. Nevertheless, a more exhaustive examination would be of significant benefit.

Three examples seem particularly germane; one of a topic not covered in this research and two topics notably underdeveloped. This current research does not fully explore the events of the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras, the development of philosophy during that time, and its impact on HRD-related activities of the time and today. Clear links exist between Enlightenment-era philosophy and that of ancient Greek and later empiricist philosophy (Loftson, 2012). A more full exploration of the history of empiricism, positivism, and the scientific method and its impact on HRD would prove no doubt prove fruitful.

Regarding topics that were left less than fully-explored, two are prominent. First is a more robust examination of the impact of women's entry into the workforce during the World War II era and the attendant changes in HRD philosophy and practice stemming from that event. Bierma and Cseh (2003) note a general dearth of research conducted in HRD from a feminist framework. Such research would further the aims of the central thesis presented here as well as provide a valuable alternative perspective in the discipline.

Finally, the data suggested the presence, particularly during the Industrial Revolution and again in the modern era, of a competing philosophy – referred to in this text as productivity-as-philosophy in a nod to the theology-as-philosophy of the Middle Ages. A more appropriate term is pragmatism (Brandom, 2004), a distinct (and somewhat distinctly American) philosophy whose influence in HRD theory and practice could most certainly be more fully explored. The author acknowledges that other gaps and under-represented ideas exist in the research. The noted topics serve as examples of such.

Additional research is suggested on the influence of postmodern philosophy and HRD, as well as an exploration of the alternative assumptions that postmodern philosophy provides HRD and its potential impact on both theory and practice. The research contained in this text presents philosophy from a strictly modernist perspective. It should be noted that some theory and practice from a postmodernist perspective does occur in HRD and related disciplines (Kang, 2007; Plakhotnik & Rocco, 2006); however, much deeper evaluation and analysis is possible. Postmodern philosophical traditions such as hermeneutics (Ericson, 2006), applied in methodologies such as those based on narrative therapy (Parry & Doan, 1994), provide new wellsprings of theory and practice in HRD – wellsprings untainted by the assumptions of modernist philosophy.

Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD, as seen in Figure 5.2, provides additional avenues of research. For example, a more robust examination of how HRD practice disseminates would be of particular interest, as well as a fuller evaluation of the impact of environmental and economic factors that contribute to the overlap of theory and practice. The sociological theory of diffusion would provide an interesting vantage-point from which to examine this phenomenon (Strang & Soule, 1998), as would Rogers (2010) diffusion of



innovation. The model also suggests the exploration of potential, additional informing philosophies. This work stands as a blueprint for how to explore additional informing philosophies, and the standard necessary in adopting said philosophies as an additional pillar.

Gosney's Model of Modern Era Theory & Practice Generation in HRD also suggests the need for a clearly-defined operational framework in HRD that considers the explicit consideration of informing philosophy. As a discipline of Theoretical HRD emerges the model could rightfully be modified to contain a feedback loop back to philosophy. In its current manifestation, philosophy is a tacit influencer of HRD theory and practice. With the formalization of Theoretical HRD, and the establishment of an operational framework that incorporates the findings of said sub discipline, a feedback loop back into philosophy can be justified. HRD will then be, as Jaspers (1951) suggests, on its way in search of wisdom.

The research contained in this text only just began to evaluate some of the theories and practice of HRD. With a discipline so rich in specialty and so far-reaching in scope, the range of methodology and theory is enormous. Further research could focus on one specific area of HRD theory and practice, for example Leadership Development, and more fully and robustly explore the potential impact of philosophical assumptions. With such a wide variety of avenues to explore, the potential for future research in this vein is nearly limitless.

Finally, additional research is needed to more fully understand how best to teach the critical thinking skills set forth in this document in HRD higher education. While it is proposed in this document that historical review, following the blueprint set forth in psychology, is a viable option it most certainly is not the sole option. Evaluation of current HRD programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate level, and investigation of current curriculum from the

perspective of critical thinking education would be significant in charting a path forward for the discipline in making critical thinking a core competency of both its theorists and practitioners.

In conclusion, the author hopes that the ideas presented in this text generates discussion, debate, disagreement, competing points-of-view, and heightened awareness of the power of philosophical assumptions. For HRD, the danger of *kenosis* of its central term is simply too great a risk to not consider. HRD is, among other things, the means by which individuals obtain some measure of joy and satisfaction in their professional lives. The burden of choosing and proposing theory and practice that aligns philosophically as well as practically is significant and important. A significant work lies ahead for the discipline should it choose to go down this path of meta-theory and critical self-evaluation. The level of discipline in considering philosophy in theory-building must increase. The quality of critical thinking on behalf of theoreticians and practitioners must increase. It is the author's hope that this work be one of many first steps along such a path.

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