

Evaluating and Improving the Delivery of Work-based Learning in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Industry

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor in Education, is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Abstract

This thesis extrapolates lessons on work-based learning from a learning programme delivered by an Institute of Technology in a hotel between November 2009 and April 2011. Delivery of work-based learning to line employees involved multiple interactions between the Institute and the hotel. By focussing on these interactions, this thesis exposes dialectical tensions which largely emanate from the hotels operational imperative, but are also provoked by the academic institutes approach to delivery of learning in the workplace.

Design/Methodology/Approach

In order to gain a better understanding of delivery of work-based learning in a medium-sized hotel, this empirical research employs an inductive case study evaluation (Yin, 2009). Qualitative data are gathered through document review and semi-structured interviews. Stewart and Rigg's (2011) theoretical model for design of learning solutions is used to scaffold emergent findings. These interpretative findings are then considered by experts from tertiary education and the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry, using a Delphi study. This refractive exercise with subject matter experts informed analysis of the findings, and facilitated 'analytic generalisations' (Yin, 2009).

Findings

This research reveals internal dichotomy between human resource management (people development) and operations management (systems focus) in the hotel, reflecting oscillating power tensions emanating from normative values within this establishment. The findings demonstrate that completion of a work-based learning programme may reshape self-identity and perceptions, but also risks rupturing the safety of the familiar (Zemyblas, 2005). Higher Education discourse around work-based learning encourages contemplative values; however these values are not embraced by operational management in the hotel. Overarching issues, such as accreditation and pedagogy, encourage discursive mismatches and inertia between the Institute and the workplace. These issues are compounded by absence of support resources for academics and delivery mechanisms for work-based learning. The study recommends closer tangible binds between current government agency policy and institute rhetoric to reduce the level of risk associated with work-based learning at meso (institutional) and micro (individual) environment.

Originality/Value

An important contribution of this research is an understanding of what work based learning actually involves and the impact of those actions. More can be gained in understanding work-based learning by researching actual behaviours rather than descriptions of potential. This research makes a contribution to defining this aspect of higher education in Ireland, and to developing a set of performance standards in delivery.

Glossary of Terms

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Accreditation | The official authorisation of a programme by the state or territory accrediting body. |
| Accrediting Authority | An organisation with the authority and responsibility for accrediting courses and training programmes. |
| Adult Education | Education of adults; education programmes designed for adults, often incorporating approaches to education which draw on the learner's life or work experiences, involve learners in planning the learning activities, and encourage learning in groups. |
| Assessment | The process of judging evidence in order to decide whether a person has achieved a standard or objective. |
| Blended Learning | A mode of study where learners mostly study at a distance, but with some campus sessions and some online learning. The balance between these can vary, and sometimes can be negotiated with your tutor. |
| Bologna Declaration | A joint declaration signed by the European Ministers responsible for higher education from 29 European countries in July 1999 in Bologna to work towards a European Higher Education Area |

(EHEA) by 2010. This process included the introduction of the three-cycle Xix system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

Cedefop

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

Certification

The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or competences acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies (Cedefop, 2011).

Competence

Ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a habitual and/or changing work situation (Cedefop, 2011).

Constructivism

Epistemological position in which an individual constructs meaning through interaction between the individual and his/her social world (Crotty, 2009).

CPD

Continuing Professional Development. Study designed to upgrade the knowledge and skills of practitioners in professions (Cedefop, 2008a).

Credit System

An instrument designed to enable accumulation of learning outcomes gained in formal, non-formal and/or informal settings, and facilitate their transfer from one setting to another for validation and recognition (Cedefop, 2008c).

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| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. |
| Experiential Learning | Learning through life and work experience that has not been formally structured, assessed or accredited (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| FETAC | Further Education and Training Awards Council. |
| Forfás | Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. |
| Formal Education | Also formal training. Learning that occurs in an organised and structured context (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or learning support). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification (Cedefop, 2011). |
| Formative Assessment | This is where a tutor assesses a learner's performance or work to provide feedback on how improvements can be made. It is usually undertaken at points during the course of a module or unit. |
| Further Education (FE) | Post-secondary education, including higher education, adult education, and vocational education and training. |
| HEA | Higher Education Authority. |

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| HETAC | Higher Education and Training Awards Council. |
| Higher Education Institution | Organisation with the purpose of providing recognised post-secondary higher education such as offered by a university or institute of technology. |
| HRD | Human Resource Development or framework which is to develop skills, knowledge and abilities of employees of a particular organisation. |
| Induction | The process by which the HEI introduces you to its systems, regulations and support available to you as a learner. This is often campus based, but may be virtual or through documents sent to you by post. |
| Informal Learning | Learning that takes place through life and work experience (sometimes referred to as experiential learning). Often, it is learning that is unintentional and the individual may not recognise at the time of the experience that it contributed to his or her knowledge, skills and competences (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Learning | A process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Learning Materials | Handbooks and study materials given to you so you can follow a particular module or unit. This might include handouts or a list of suggested reading. |

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| Learning Outcomes | The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Learning Resources | The term used to describe HEI services that support learning. These will include library services, email and access to the institute network. Can also include placement services, career advice, etc. |
| Lifelong Learning | All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Lisbon Strategy (2000) | Strategy to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy capable of enabling sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion (European Commission, 2010a). |
| Modules | The parts that make up HEI qualifications. They are usually followed in a specific sequence towards a specific qualification title. There may be ‘core’ modules that you must successfully complete, and ‘optional’ modules which you can choose from as part of your programme. |

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| NFQ | National Framework of Qualifications. The list of academic and vocational qualifications and an attempt to indicate the equivalence of knowledge, skills and competence between vocational and academic qualifications. |
| Non-formal Learning | Learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be structured and assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are: learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and in community-based learning (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| On-site Training | Training conducted at the work site (e.g. in a training room) but not on the job (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| On-the-job Training | Training undertaken in the workplace as part of the productive work of the learner (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Programme of Study | The series of modules you undertake in order to reach your target qualification. |
| Qualification | An official record (certificate, diploma) of achievement which recognises successful completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or examination; and/or the requirements for an individual to enter, or progress within an occupation (Cedefop, 2011). |

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| Recognition | The process by which prior learning is given a value (NQAI, 2005). |
| Recognition of Prior Learning | Recognition of Prior Learning is described as “prior learning that is given a value, by having it affirmed, acknowledged, assessed or certified” (FETAC, 2005 p.4.) The acknowledgement of a person’s skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or credit in a subject or module (NQAI, 2005). |
| Return on Investment (ROI) | A performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or to compare the efficiency of a number of different investments. To calculate ROI, the benefit (return) of an investment is divided by the cost of the investment; the result is expressed as a percentage or a ratio. |
| Return on Training Investment | Measurement of training ROI starts with defining the reasons and goals for the training, determining how much the training costs, and verifying the amount of return. Improvement factors include increased productivity, reduction of waste, and improved employee retention (Phillips, 1997). |
| Semesters | Most HEIs organise teaching into two semesters per year. Each is followed by a period where official assessment of learners’ work is undertaken. |

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| | Semesters normally run from September to December and from January to May (Dhillon <i>et al.</i> , 2011). |
| SIF EinE Project | The Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) supported innovation in higher education between 2006 and 2013, and included the Education in Employment (EinE) Project. |
| Skill | An ability to perform a particular mental or physical activity which may be developed by training or practice (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| Social Constructionism | Epistemological position which assumes a social origin of meaning (Crotty, 2009). |
| Summative Assessment | This is where the tutor assesses a learner's performance or work to grade it. It is usually undertaken at the end of a module or unit and 'sums up' achievement. |
| Training | The development of skills, knowledge, attitudes, competencies, through instruction or practice (Cedefop, 2008c). |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training. |
| VLE | HEIs have 'Virtual Learning Environment' (VLE) which learners can access to support their studies. They will often have handbooks and other materials online. They can be accessed from any computer with web access. |

Work-based Learning

Work-based learning programmes provide opportunities to employees to achieve employment-related competencies and qualifications in the workplace.

Workplace Learning

Learning or training undertaken in the workplace (also Workplace Training), usually on the job, including on-the-job training under normal operational conditions, and on-site training which is conducted away from the work process (e.g. in a training room).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As Work-based Learning Development Executive in Athlone Institute of Technology between 2008 and 2011, my remit was to encourage and foster work-based learning partnerships with the regional business community.

In 2008 Fáilte Ireland¹ provided my office with research funding to study challenges and opportunities of work-based learning in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure sector in the Midlands. Published in 2010, the resultant research report portrayed significant potential and industry support for work-based learning partnerships among Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure managers in the region.

This thesis seeks to consider why the potential for work-based learning identified in that research report remains unfulfilled in hospitality businesses in the Midlands. Essentially this inductive research explores spaces between perceived potential for work-based learning in a workplace and emergent issues during delivery.

¹ Fáilte Ireland (The National Tourism Development Authority) is the body charged by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport with ensuring that relevant, high-quality training is provided as required throughout the tourism industry and that maximum use is made of resources of Fáilte Ireland and other relevant providers for this purpose.

There were two methodological phases of inquiry used in the thesis:

The first phase of enquiry was an exploratory case study (Yin, 2009) about delivery of a work-based learning programme to a hotel in the Midlands. The second strand of enquiry involved a Delphi survey, with relevant experts, which informed my analysis of issues identified in the case study.

Chapter 1 introduces the focus of my study - delivery of work-based learning in a Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure environment. The chapter describes work-based learning and introduces the professional context and rationale for the study, in light of current government policy and sector developments. The purpose and objectives of the research are outlined, and the chapter concludes with an overview of forthcoming content.

1.2 Research Proposition

The Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure sector is a critical generator of regional and national wealth in the Irish economy (Melia, 2011). The ‘New Horizon for Irish Tourism - An Agenda for Action’ report, produced for the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism in 2003, identified human resource development as an important policy area affecting tourism growth. The report indicated relatively little direct involvement or investment by the industry at that period.

Since that point, however, the global hospitality, tourism and leisure industry has been shaped by a critical financial crisis that began in the U.S. in 2007 (Kapliki, 2012). As a result, the industry experienced a serious downturn in sales and profitability,

especially during 2009. In 2010 a slight stabilisation meant that international tourist arrivals and receipts recovered, however hotels still experienced a comparatively significant drop in occupancy, average daily rates and revenues per available room. This drop in global demand shifted considerable pricing power to the customer. Paradoxically, hotels that provided superior customer service were less susceptible to these financial difficulties as the number of guests able to afford superior standards grew considerably over this period (Kapliki, 2012). The hospitality industry indicates a sustained recovery from 2012 and a potential return to pre-financial crisis levels in terms of room rates. Kapliki indicates that greater customer connectivity and customer service is seen as paramount for increasing brand value, and capitalising on this rebound is possible through innovation in tourism product delivery (Melia, 2011).

In Ireland, however, the intervening years since 2003, saw a continuance of the practice of non - investment in human resource development (NCPP /ESRI, 2009). This lack of investment compounded the effects of the global crisis (Irish Tourist Industry Confederation, 2010), putting ‘extreme pressure on the maintenance of quality and service standards’ (TTC, 2010, p. x). Consequently, human resource development, and professional standards in the contemporary hospitality, tourism and leisure workplace have become a matter of considerable policy and professional debate (Irish Times, March 2013).

CERT (1999) indicate that the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry has a worldwide industry reputation of lagging behind other sectors in adoption of new management practices. However, in recent years, professional bodies such as the Irish

Hotels Federation (IHF) and the Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI) have expanded their ambitions, acknowledging the important role of professional development for staff, encouraging these initiatives and, on occasions, developing relevant programmes (AIT, 2010).

Motivated by the extant human resource development literature, one might propose that:

1. Effective organisations normally have an appreciation of the impact of higher levels of education on careers and business performance (Hinkin and Tracey, 2010).
2. Organisations have responsibility for developing their staff (Brownell, 2010).
3. Staff developed through work-based learning improve business performance (Mora, in Linehan and Sheridan, 2010).

This research study is situated in a well managed progressive hotel which emphasises customer service as a feature of its business performance. The delivery of a work-based learning programme in this hotel environment involves a multiplicity of mediated interactions between the higher education institute and the hotel. Both parties have intentions of providing for staff learning and development, however, day-to-day internal institutional matters provoke tensions between the achievement of educational goals and the drive to ensure maximum performance in a ‘high stake’ competitive hotel environment (Melia, 2011).

Contextual issues involving leadership, power, resources and culture challenge contemporary academic and political rhetoric around work-based learning initiatives. My research question explores the ‘web of factors’ (Stewart and Rigg, 2011) which influence work-based learning programmes within the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure environment. Therefore the research proposes to capture the complexity of work-based learning, with a view to analysing the ‘web of factors’, and recommending review of delivery.

1.3 Author Background and Interest in the Topic

Motivated by early career experiences in the Irish Defence Forces, I am interested in the influences of local culture and leadership on the implementation of third-level learning in the workplace. My empirical observations indicated that application of third-level learning in the workplace was problematic and posed many challenges.

In 2006, the government introduced the Strategic Innovation Fund to facilitate projects in higher education institutions that enhanced collaboration in the sector, improved teaching and learning, supported institutional reform, promoted access and lifelong learning, and supported the development of fourth-level education (Sheridan, 2012).

Between April 2008 and December 2011, I was employed in Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) under the Roadmap for Employer–Academic Partnerships (REAP) project, which was an initiative funded under the second cycle of the Strategic Innovation Funding. Led by Cork Institute of Technology, other members of the consortium included AIT, Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Sligo, Institute of Technology Tallaght, National University of Ireland, Galway, University College Cork, and Waterford Institute of Technology. The REAP consortium proposed to change the nature of the relationship between education providers and the workplace, by developing a model of cooperation and partnership that recognised and valued the needs and contributions of the worker and identified the workplace as a centre of learning (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012).

As mentioned, within this remit, in 2010 I authored an AIT report ‘Building the Sector Together - Challenges and Opportunities of Work-based Learning in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Sector’. This report observed that learning and development practices varied greatly between Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure establishments and there were often inconsistencies between rhetoric and reality in custom. During 30 research interviews conducted for this report, 70% of hospitality managers expressed positive opinions on potential learning partnerships with AIT. Subsequent to the research, however, neither any of these establishments nor AIT sought to cultivate such an engagement. This phenomenon resonates with the extant literature regarding staff development in the sector (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). I reflected that the situation was more complex than originally envisaged and a variety of influences impact on the development of work-based learning partnerships and staff development interventions.

Within this context, my research thesis is directly related to my employment as Work-based Learning Executive in AIT between 2008 and 2011.

1.4 Work-based Learning (WBL)

Rapidly changing contexts require training and education curricula that are fluid, dynamic, and continually responsive to volatile workplace environments and to societal change (Colardyn and Bjornavold, 2004). As such, third-level institutions in Ireland need to continually engage with the crucible of the workplace, which demands educators to respond quickly to ever-changing circumstances (National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, 2011).

Work-based learning is sometimes portrayed as a transformative approach to radically redefining relationships between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers (Reeve and Gallacher, 2005). Situated as a subset of workplace learning within the paradigm shift from an industrial society to a knowledge society (Rohlin *et al.*, 1998 cited in Linehan, 2008), WBL regularly refers to the achievement of ‘planned learning outcomes’, differentiating itself from conventional learning through conscious reflection on work experience.

Boud (2001) describes how WBL programmes commonly share six characteristics:

1. Establishment of a partnership between an external organisation and an educational institution;
2. Learners involved are employees (with negotiated learning plans);

3. The learning programme offered derives from the needs of the workplace and the learner and not from a pre-defined academic curriculum;
4. The learning programme is individually adapted to each learner according to their previous educational experience, work experience and training;
5. Learning takes place as an integrated part of projects/tasks in the workplace;
6. The educational institution assesses the learning outcomes.

Worked-based learning has been identified as a means of responding to the knowledge economy needs of employers, particularly those in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Linehan, 2008). Appendix 1 of this research report, Backdrop to Work-based learning, outlines various influences which suggest that pressure to compete in increasingly global contexts means that employers need workers to engage in continuous skills development, to improve productivity and to enable organisations to meet challenges posed by countries such as China and India (Brennan, 2005). Linehan (2008) further identifies that responsibility for career management and skills development resides progressively with an individual rather than with an organisation; workers are now expected to be more flexible, to have a wider range of skills, and to be able to take on responsibilities previously undertaken by managers and supervisors. In this context, Linehan (*ibid.*) outlines that technical skills alone are not considered sufficient, as cognitive skills, together with an array of generic skills and dispositions, come to be regarded as essential ingredients of successful performance in the workplace.

However, these progressions may upset existing power relations within organisations leading influential commentators such as Raelin (2008) to point out that current human resource developments such as work-based learning may engage learners in a ‘false consciousness’ about their presumed participation in a social structure.

Conceived and nourished in relationships between the HEI, the employer and the participant (Boud and Soloman, 2001), development of WBL needs careful introduction into a work environment already enduring stagnant economic circumstances.

Despite a long tradition of learning in and from the workplace there is still confusion as to exactly what constitutes work-based learning. In terms of learning that is formally assessed and accredited, Ebbutt (1996) suggested four modes of classification:

1. Work-based learning achieved mainly through accreditation of prior experiential learning;
2. Work-based learning where students gain access to learning in the workplace as part of their degree programme;
3. Work-based learning as a general preparation for the real world, where programmes incorporate the development of transferable skills to prepare students for the world of work; and
4. Work-based learning as a major component of a programme of study where students are full-time employees who mostly carry out research-based fieldwork in their own workplace.

It is the fourth category that most aptly describes the WBL programme at the core of this research. However, the AIT delivery model went a stage further and Ebbutt's fourth classification might be rewritten as work-based learning where students are full-time employees whose programme of study is embedded in the workplace and is designed to meet learning needs of employees and achieve the aims of the organisation.

1.4.1 Worked-based Learning – International Dimension

The scale and extent of academic-industry interaction obviously varies between countries. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'Learning for Jobs' report (2007), even though an estimated one-third of working-age adults in OECD member countries have low skills, the development of up-skilling and adult learning programmes poses particular problems. The OECD outline that the level of capacity for local engagement with industry within a HEI is a matter of institutional leadership and reflects the degree of entrepreneurship within the institution.

A current international innovation is the emergence of the 'corporate university'. Mostly based in the US, corporate universities are associated with large companies who wish to internally resource staff learning and development. A corporate university was defined by Allen (2002, p. 9) as 'any educational entity designed to assist its parent organisation in achieving its goals by conducting activities that foster individual and organisational learning and knowledge'. Globally in 1993, corporate universities existed in 400 companies. Within 10 years this number had increased to

2,000, including Walt Disney, Boeing, British Telecom and Motorola (Tomkins, 2009).

According to Mayo (2004), multinational organisations tend to offer different degrees of freedom to their operations in terms of how learning policies are applied. With regard to human resource development (HRD), these policies are often judiciously applied in the manner shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Creating a Learning and Development Strategy (Mayo, 2004, CIPD)

| Tends to be more localised | Tends to be more globalised |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical training • Education and qualifications • ‘Soft’ skills training • Capability assessment • Trainee schemes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Core competence’ training • Graduate development • Management development • Succession planning • Potential classification |

Research from Australia cited in the OECD report (2007) suggests that small firms are unlikely to have dedicated training staff and training offered tends to be unplanned, informal and firm-specific. In 2009, the OECD further stated that in all member countries, employers make extensive use of workplaces to train existing employees. They also outlined that academic content and theory is often learnt best within the classroom away from the place of work and some practical skills can be learnt most effectively at a slower pace, off the job, for example in simulators when equipment is dangerous or highly expensive.

The European Commission report ‘Work-based Learning in Europe’ (2013) identified horizontal benefits from this type of learning not just for learners, companies and WBL providers, but also for the broader European society.

The Commission (2013) acknowledge that hosting a learner involves a cost for the employer. However, cost issues are moderated in the report, and international precedence that mitigates cost through appropriate utilisation of learning are cited.

For example:

- In Switzerland and Germany, most firms involved in WBL recoup costs by immediately assigning learners to productive tasks;
- In the UK, WBL costs are recouped within the first year in sectors such as business administration and retail;

The report concludes that it is difficult to make specific claims on the benefits of WBL, nevertheless, returns go beyond sole economic returns.

Table 1.2: Meta- Analysis of benefits of WBL

(Adapted from European Commission, 2013)

| | Benefits of WBL |
|--------------------|--|
| Learner | Development of craftsmanship and deep professional expertise |
| | Builds skills and competencies required to operate in the workforce |
| | More informed career decisions |
| | Develop career management skills |
| | Improved self-confidence and motivation |
| | |
| Employer | Positive impact on supply of qualified labour |
| | Addresses skills gaps through tailor-made learning |
| | Positive effect on recruitment and retention |
| | Improved productivity and performance |
| | Positive effects on employed staff development |
| | |
| Education Provider | Better quality of programmes and of learning outcomes |
| | Enhancement of relevance and responsiveness of education and training programmes |
| | Positive effects on teaching staff competencies and development |
| | Better cooperation between college and business |
| | |
| Society | Skilled labour force which responds better to the labour market needs |
| | Positive contribution to youth employment |
| | Cost-sharing of workforce development between state and employers |
| | Combined governance of workforce development |
| | Contribution to innovation and creativity |
| | Has the potential to strengthen social inclusion and improve equal opportunities |

According to Prof. Malcolm Grant, Provost, University College London, higher education's share of the workforce development market (even at intermediate/higher learning levels) is currently lower than anticipated², and this can be attributed to:

- Demand among businesses for more bespoke types of WBL products than HEIs can deliver;

² Estimated at less than 5% of the market by Prof. Malcolm Grant in a presentation to the Employer Engagement Conference organised by Times / HEFCE UK, London, May 2009.

- Perceptions (not always real) that higher education is not up to date with fast changing work environments, especially in high technology areas, nor able to respond with speed to demand for bespoke training;
- Absence of common language for describing skill needs and training;
- Absence of operational imperative as they generally see other priorities (in particular pressures of funding constraints, performance targets and the need for improving productivity) as more immediate concerns;
- Perceptions that WBL is synonymous with continuous professional development (CPD), inferred as having lower status within higher education; and
- Challenges posed by WBL for traditional learning delivery mechanisms and cost implications.

In Chapter 2 these lacunae are explored and contextualised drawing on the extant literature on WBL, particularly focussing on the literature around people development in modern organisations, development of Work-based Learning within Higher Education Institutes, and delivery of Work-based learning specifically within the hospitality, tourism and leisure sector. Definitions of WBL and employee learning are problematic, as both cover a range of individual and organisation processes. Precisely corroborating pedagogic models with definitions of WBL appears challenging and variances often depend on context.

1.5 Research Setting – Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Industry

The Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (HTL) sector is a critical generator of regional and national wealth in the Irish economy. In 2010³ 6.1 million visitors contributed €2.9 billion, a decline of 12.7% between 2009 and 2010. Although these figures had recovered to 6.5 million visitors contributing €3.6 billion by 2012⁴, a Government Policy paper (2013) signposted that a key contributor to these sharp falls, and to eventual recovery, is our performance in providing customers with both real and perceived value for money, and cost competitiveness. However, ultimately ‘Ireland is not and does not want to be a “cheap” destination’ (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2013 p. 17).

The HTL sector is characterised as fragmented, small and non-collectivist with each sub-sector operating at an autonomous level in a heterogeneous mix of enterprises (Travers *et al*, 2004, Fáilte Ireland, 2005a.). Tourism embraces a wide range of business and services in thousands of enterprises, most of them SMEs⁵. There are ongoing challenges in relation to recruitment and retention, and the requirement for training of existing and new staff is high.

³ Central Statistics Office, Principle Statistics. Visitors to Ireland – Estimated Expenditure. (Available at: www.cso.ie). These figures were presented on 30 March 2012 and do not include income from international fares.

⁴ Central Statistics Office, Principle Statistics. Visitors to Ireland – Estimated Expenditure. (Available at: www.cso.ie). These figures were presented on 21 March 2013 and do not include income from international fares

⁵ The HTL sector includes hotels, guesthouses, self-catering establishments, restaurants, licensed premises and tourism services and attractions.

The sector exhibits structural, organisational and cultural characteristics which present particular HR challenges from a strategic and operational management perspective. These include geographical dispersal; disparity in business unit and company size; 24/365 operating cycle; variable demand cycles, notably seasonality; product and service diversity within one operating unit; high dependence on young and frequently untrained workers; and wide ranging skill demands... it is difficult to argue that other sectors exhibit such levels of diversity.

Solnet, Baum and Kralj (2012, p. 582)

Partly to cope with the challenges of recruitment posed by the economic boom, many industry operators recruited non-national migrant workers for their establishment. In the Republic of Ireland in 2005, Melia and Kennedy (2005) estimated the rate of migrant non-nationals in the Irish tourism industry at 17% and, within specific sub-sectors such as hotels and restaurants, at a figure between 25% and 28% of total employees. By 2008 the figure for migrant workers in the tourism industry had risen to more than 33% (CSO, 2008), falling back to 27% (CSO, 2010) by 2010. During this period, migrants constituted 45% of the workforce in hotels (Fáilte Ireland, 2009) and 48% of the workforce in unlicensed restaurants (ibid.).

The Fáilte Ireland Tourism Employment and Training Survey (2007) describes ongoing skill shortfalls in craft skills such as culinary arts, including bar and hospitality skills, customer care and language skills. In 2009 this situation had not improved and a national survey found that training rates in hotels and restaurants were relatively low, with just 34% of workers reporting that they had taken part in employer sponsored training over the past 2 years (NCPP /ESRI, 2009). As a result, the Hotel Industry Forum was set up, with representatives from the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF), the Services, Industrial Professional & Technical Union (SIPTU), and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC).

Supported by Failte Ireland, the forum identified a particular requirement for up skilling in the restaurant and bar area. In response the Hotel Industry Forum ran training programmes in food service and bar service in some regions of the country. The training was carried out by Failte Ireland trainers and took place onsite in individual hotels. A further initiative was the development of a European Qualification Skills Passport (QSP). This is an individual's verified record of all skills, qualifications and achievements an individual has accumulated throughout their career (Farrelly, 2012).

The Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2013 describes the sharp dip in performance and revenues, and outlined that tourism managers (frequently as a result of their training) tend to focus strongly on operational matters, sometimes failing to take a broader or strategic management perspective. Gaps in people management skills are common and support for training is needed to address this issue.

Fáilte Ireland (2010) indicated that there are numerous challenges for the industry in Ireland and predicted that between 2011 and 2015 a number of hotels would close. To date, these closures have been market led and driven by two factors in particular:

- (a) location and
- (b) the financial health of the business.

However, the report outlines that the need for hotel closures would be greatly minimised if the hotel sector grows its share of international visitors. Key challenges include managing overcapacity, room occupancy rates and profits off target, and future market-led closures.

According to Melia (2011) the industry in Ireland is facing a new set of challenges, operating in a volatile and dynamic market. Because of global and national economic conditions, the demand for tourism is difficult to predict in the short term and it is unlikely that the growth trends of previous years will recommence.

“One of the challenges identified for the sector in this period is to recruit, train and retain staff that will provide a highly skilled and flexible workforce. This is crucial in order to gain competitive advantage in what is a “fiercely competitive tourism market” (ibid., p. 12).

However, the sector often perceives education as extraneous, reflected in the views expressed in the UK industry periodical ‘Hospitality in Focus’ that ‘educators do not know what is happening in the business world’ (Boella, 2008, p. 2). In 2009, Prof. Jim Deegan, University of Limerick, admitted in a round table discussion at Dublin Institute of Technology in 2009, that there is a big gap between the (HTL) labour market and what actually happens in colleges and universities. This happens, according to Professor Deegan, not because people are academically challenged, but because people work to incentives.

In the most recent Fáilte Ireland dedicated strategy document on HRD, ‘Human Resource Development Strategy for Irish Tourism 2005-2010’, which set out development strategies until 2010, particular attention is given to the need to align HRD and Human Resource Management (HRM) within organisational thinking. Described internationally as ‘ground-breaking’ (Baum, 2007), the key themes of the report include support for workforce development and learning. Strategic Theme 6 – Strengthening Workplace Practices (HRM) – invites contributions from education providers in the local tourism sector to bring about improvements in existing work practices. Currently, much of Fáilte Ireland’s HRD work is now focussed on enhancing in-house knowledge, skills and capacity and so sustain existing jobs in the industry (Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2013).

According to the 2009 Report of the Tourism Renewal Group, which was revised in 2013, the hospitality sector is one of Ireland’s key economic generators and has the potential to play an even greater key role in the future. Mr Maurice Pratt, Chair of the Tourism Renewal Group explicitly suggests;

The greatest insight I have gained from chairing this review group is the extent to which the sector is taken for granted, principally I believe because tourism is embedded as an activity in every town and parish in Ireland. The numbers don’t lie....it accounts for 4% of the country’s GNP. If it receives the recognition and support, its scale deserves, it stands ready to play its part in our journey to recovery.

Report of the Tourism Renewal Group (2013, p. iii)

However there are inherent challenges for Irish tourism product in playing its part in recovery. According to Tourism Ireland (2012), as the economy improves, the new global middle class will be more demanding and empowered consumers with high expectations. These affluent consumers of the future will crave interactive engagement with locals, demanding a ‘sense of wonder in life’ and ‘an authentic, stimulating holiday experience...delivering the benefit of a feeling of a sense of uplifting’ (Tourism Ireland, 2011, p. 7)

1.5.1 HTL Industry in the Midlands Region

Tourism is one of the largest internationally traded services sectors in the Midlands and is a powerful instrument of regional economic development. In 2010, Fáilte Ireland estimated 27,000 individuals were employed by tourism establishments in the East and Midlands making the region the third largest ‘employer’ of tourism staff – 15% of total tourism staff in the country. In 2011 the number of overseas tourists to County Westmeath, within which AIT is located, was 96,000 and they spent an estimated €39m.

The Midlands includes a wide range of diverse small and medium enterprises that are predominantly owner managed (AIT, 2010). In 2010 O’Cathain noted that reports and national policy statements were urging movement towards the knowledge economy space, and that there were current lacunae and shortfalls in provision in the Midlands to meet this challenge. He specifically identified the requirement for higher quality engagement between state agencies and education and training providers in the Midlands (Midland Gateway Chamber, 2010).

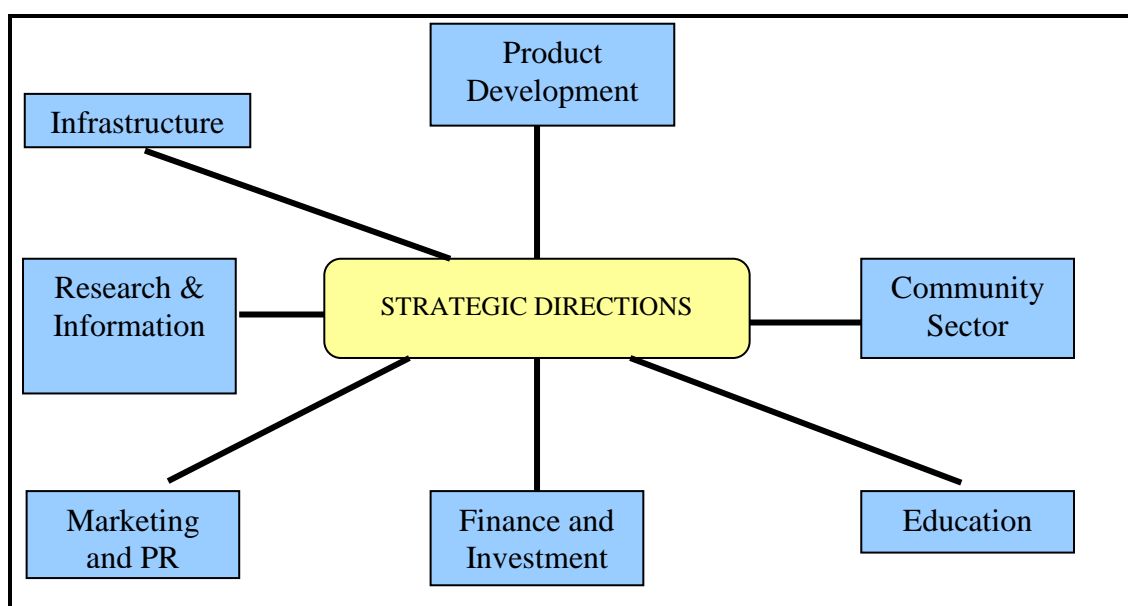
Historically the region was under-represented in terms of educational achievement of its population and this legacy impacted on the economic landscape with a focus on traditional industries (O’Cathain, 2011). In recent years, according to O’Cathain, these sectors have become less competitive due to changes in demand and customer needs and more aggressive competition from other locations. At this important stage, product gaps, shortfalls, opportunities and competitive advantage need to be reviewed and identified with an application of technology, talent, and capital in new ways (ibid.).

1.5.1.1 HTL Development Plan

The advent in 2011 of the Fáilte Ireland facilitated ‘Athlone, Lough Ree and Environs Tourism Destination Development Plan’⁶ identified the response of the tourism industry in the Midlands region as one of perseverance and resilience in the face of recent tourism and economic challenges. Within the context of the headings in Figure 1.1 below, the plan emphasises a focus on value, a need for collaboration and cooperation across the entire business model for the destination, and accessibility of authentic, quality experiences making the best of local culture and natural attractions.

⁶ In 2010 Fáilte Ireland launched a Steering Group with the intention of producing a business-led regional development plan for implementation during 2011-2014.

Figure 1.1: Athlone, Lough Ree and Environs Tourism Destination Development Plan



The aim of the Education sub-strand of this Development Plan is:

To ensure a sufficient and highly-qualified workforce that delivers on the destination service promise and to create and instil the belief and common vision for the destination into every citizen, business and person.

This initiative implies a need to ensure that there are sufficient education and training opportunities for those working in the tourism industry to successfully do their job and fulfil service promise and visitor expectations.

According to this development plan for Athlone and the Midlands region, the tourism industry environment for the near future is expected to be similar to recent years. It will be important for the Midlands region to continue to emphasise the domestic market, particularly Dublin and the East Coast, and develop new markets with potential for long-term growth and higher visitor spending yields. The plan outlines

that more than ever, quality experiences and value will be critical to attracting visitors.

1.5.2 Learning and Development in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Sector

Poon (1993, p. 262) emphasised the critical role of shaping new employees in the hospitality sector through learning and development initiatives:

[Staff] must be trained to be loyal, flexible, tolerant, amiable and responsible. At every successful tourism establishment, it is the employees that stand out. Technology cannot substitute for welcoming employees.

Tourism learning and development is delivered mainly through four strands:

- The Fáilte Ireland training centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford (with temporary centres in Donegal, Galway, Kilkenny and Wexford);
- Third-level college-based education programmes, in this instance delivered in the Midlands by Athlone Institute of Technology;
- Continuing professional development through Fáilte Ireland Tourism Learning Networks and a range of other specifically designed courses, as well as relevant professional bodies.

On-site WBL is promoted as an increasing potential feature in craft skills development courses.

As an interviewee in the REAP report (2009) on learning in the workplace summarised:

Tourism embraces a wide range of business and services in thousands of enterprises, most of them small to medium-sized enterprises. There are ongoing challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of staff, and the requirement for training of existing staff. Also, the rate of new staff is relatively high.

(Interviewee, HTL Sector, p. 46)

This report also emphasised the importance of embedding sustainability in tourism and hospitality programmes.

There is an ongoing requirement for continual professional development programmes to enable staff to update their skills. Delivering real skills that are appropriate to the workplace is important. Staff need to be trained to meet both the immediate needs of the industry and also educated to enable them to innovate and move the industry forward in the long term.

(Interviewee, HTL Sector, p. 47)

Importantly, work-based learning, with recognition of prior learning as a constituent component, was identified by practitioners as most suited to their sector. Potential future forms of engagement between third-level institutions and the HTL sector were identified in the report. These included:

- Use of modern techniques of delivering training through outreach courses and e-learning courses.
- Input into course design to ensure that course content is relevant.
- On-site training to help reduce costs of training.
- Provision of mentors to smaller enterprises.

- Use of facilities to practice skills.

In the report, practitioners considered that strong partnerships between third-level institutions and the sector are very important and saw the necessity for the role of lecturer to change from traditional forms of programme delivery to greater emphasis on preparation and planning elements of new programme design. Interviewees also believed that if new programmes are to be developed, the quality of programmes will depend on the strength of the industry and academic relationship. In particular, the report listed scope for third-level institutions to further engage with this sector providing access to academic expertise, stronger placement networks for colleges and industry representation on academic boards.

Baum (2007, p. 1338) describes the tourism sector as a ‘weak labour market’ sector, where turnover rates are notoriously high. Solnet, Baum and Kralj (2012, p. 581) express concern for the role of the human resources function and ‘people-first’ policies, within the global hospitality industry. They identify tensions between dominant American ‘convergence of practice’ models driven by multinationals, and realities of national and regional cultures within which they are ‘globally located’. This regional focus is leading to a trend of formalised HR practices being downgraded or eliminated. They highlight the need for further study of human resource management practice within the sector. Accordingly, the development of professionalism in most developed countries, has been difficult and eroded further in recent years with the advent of migrant workers.

According to Fáilte Ireland (2005a, p. 60), the ‘vast majority of people working in tourism are knowledge workers’. They outline a need for ‘learning that is convenient, timely and relevant. Delivering real skills that are appropriate to the workplace...’ (ibid., p. 14). Moreover, it is important that staff are not just trained to meet the immediate needs of industry but also educated to enable them to innovate and move the industry forward (Tourism Policy Review Group, 2003).

Within the hospitality sector, there is an ongoing requirement for continual professional development programmes to enable staff to update their skills (Tourism Renewal Group, 2009). Work-based training and education is considered ideally suited to serve this need. However, central to staff development is the commitment of HTL management to facilitate this development (Fáilte Ireland, 2010).

1.5.3 Learning and Development in the HTL Sector in the Midlands

According to the AIT research report (2010), there are particular difficulties with the introduction of WBL in the HTL sector in the Irish Midlands given the history, structure and character of this industry. The report identifies a predominance of SMTEs, many of them family owned businesses that may not have made the transition to professional management. Multi-tasking managers, perhaps without much formal management training, are common throughout the sector, especially in the SMTEs. There are issues around competitiveness and the inability of many SMTEs to perceive or exploit the potential of networking. The report states that

comparatively lower education levels, a poor tradition of workforce development and current financial constraints in the sector generally conspire to make the widespread adoption of WBL a challenge for stakeholders.

1.6 Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)

AIT is the largest provider of third-level education in the Midlands⁷. The Institute's strategic plan drafted in 2009, is formulated within the context of the wider social and economic development of the Midlands region and the Irish economy, and intends that AIT plays a catalytic and leadership role in the successful development of a world-class, knowledge-based and competitive region.

Traditionally the Midlands workforce has among the lowest level of educational achievement in the Republic of Ireland. In 2009, approximately 28% had third-level qualifications, as opposed to 45%⁸ in the Dublin region. Although younger workers have an improving level of attainment, there is a distinct lack of attainment within the 35-65 year old bracket. As stated earlier, this was mentioned in May 2011 by the Institute's President as the 'legacy of a traditional focus on traditional industries'⁹. The impact was already been seen in the region throughout the economic crisis. During the Celtic Tiger years, the Midlands was the slowest region to benefit from increased job creation and following the economic crisis of 2008, the region haemorrhaged jobs at the quickest rate in the country (FÁS, 2009).

⁷ In the context of this study the Midlands are defined generally as counties of Westmeath, Offaly, Longford, Roscommon and East Galway.

⁸ FÁS (the state agency responsible for training during the period of research), 2009.

⁹ Address to Border Midland Western Regional Assembly, 6 May 2011.

1.7 Case Study Description

Between October 2009 and April 2011, as part of a Fáilte Ireland-funded research project, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) delivered a FETAC accredited WBL programme to line staff in a medium-sized (180-bedroom) four-star hotel in the Irish Midlands. Their rationale was to deliver a pilot programme to hotel staff in order to develop staff in the hotel and build Institute capacity with regard to WBL. Academic staff in the Department of HTL Studies, AIT, are tasked with development and delivery of programmes to meet sector challenges in recruiting, retaining and developing a highly skilled workforce (www.ait.ie/htl).

The programme was facilitated by the author as Institute WBL Development Executive and delivered by staff members of the Department of HTL Studies, AIT, using members of full-time faculty and associate faculty with industry experience. Before commencement of the programme, an assessment of prior experiential learning was conducted with each participant and familiarisation visits to AIT and to other hospitality establishments were conducted. Lectures were delivered on site in the hotel and occasionally on campus in the Department of HTL Studies, AIT.

On the advice of the Head of the Department of HTL Studies, the programme was not governed by a memorandum of understanding or any formal agreement. However, it was monitored by a project steering committee, which met bi-monthly and included members of academic management, policy experts and industry representatives (See Appendix 2 for sample of minutes of a steering committee meeting). Almost all communication to participants was delivered directly through academic tutors.

Twenty-nine staff members applied to undergo the programme and commenced various stages of the programme. Twenty-one participants completed programme modules, six of whom completed the entire programme. This cohort included representatives from functional units of the hotel — bar, restaurant, carvery, banqueting and café.

Using Riley's categorisation (1996), staff in the hotel can be categorised into:

- (1) Management-level staff,
- (2) Qualified technical staff such marketing, culinary preparation and spa personnel,
or
- (3) Unqualified line employees who work on bedroom preparation, waiting, or serving in the bars or restaurant.

The majority of middle management, for example bar and restaurant managers, are relatively young, with management qualifications in the HTL sector. Senior management, including the General Manager and Marketing Manager, were very experienced in the sector but without formal HTL qualifications. Technical staff were normally qualified in their chosen field and their age profile generally reflected their discipline, e.g. culinary preparation personnel were generally older than those working in the spa for example.

The majority of participants were unqualified bar and restaurant staff, aged in their early to mid-twenties, and had moved to Ireland from Eastern Europe for work purposes. A small minority of participants were from the locality. Most of the migrant

participants had already achieved degree-level qualifications in other disciplines in their native country, and a significant minority were qualified to postgraduate level. The routine of these participants throughout the programme generally involved an extended return visit to their country of origin immediately after the Christmas break.

At the start of the WBL project the hotel employed a dedicated Human Resources (HR) Manager who reported to senior management. The HR Manager was relatively inexperienced in the HTL sector, and having worked previously in the services sector, envisaged nurturing of a learning and development culture in the hotel. The HR Manager was receptive to a partnership invitation from AIT and was responsible for developing a profile for the programme within the hotel and amongst the executive management. Approximately six months after the programme commenced, the HR Manager resigned to take up alternative employment in a different establishment in the same industry. Following his resignation, the post of HR Manager within the hotel was vacant for an extended period, until it was eventually filled by an interim HR Administrator.

More detail on the programme content is available in Appendix 3.

1.8 Research Rationale

The AIT report in 2010, while providing a comprehensive description of prevailing attitudes, did not explore the realities of WBL delivered in the HTL environment.

I would like to extend the previous research to examine factors in delivery of a WBL programme by AIT between 2009 and 2011 and determine their impact on this learning partnership which connected a HEI and a medium-sized hotel in the Midlands.

Consequently, as Thomas and Harris (2001) suggested, research activity will then provide direction for new courses and expertise for its delivery. Practitioners, development agencies, professional bodies and academics will benefit from a comprehensive understanding of WBL, leading to the refinement of delivery techniques and the creation of capacity.

1.9 Research Motive and Objectives

1.9.1 Research Motive

As an executive in AIT, I wanted to identify effective modes of WBL delivery which engaged both participants and hotel management, thus creating demand from the sector for WBL interventions, and contribute to skills development in the Midlands region. My personal interest was influenced by HRD literature, which strongly proposed a rationale for WBL and indicated that this high profile hotel, which employed an active HR Manager, would provide a suitable setting for WBL.

1.9.2 Research Question

My research question was to ascertain the factors that influence the delivery of work-based learning programmes within the HTL environment with a view to recommending improvements.

1.9.3 Substantive Research Questions

In order to 'operationalise' that question I drew up three questions.

- What issues impact on delivery of WBL in a HTL business in the Irish Midlands?
- Are there particular cultural issues in the HTL sector which affect the development of WBL?
- What can make WBL 'work' for the HTL sector in the Irish Midlands?

From these questions I formed secondary research objectives. These objectives are:

- Identify if HTL management engagement impacted on programme delivery;
- Establish if current WBL programme delivery strategies are fit for purpose;
- Establish if the application of programme learning was encouraged in the work context;
- Examine if the WBL programme was culturally appropriate for a medium-sized hotel;
- Determine the contribution of academic faculty during delivery of WBL.

1.10 Research Strategy

There are two methodological phases of enquiry employed in the research. The first will be an exploratory case study (Yin, 2003) to identify persistent underlying tensions that impact on the delivery of work-based learning programmes within the sector. This inductive study seeks to tell what was as it was, to lay open the rich structure and understand the phenomena (Bassey, 1999).

Based on the findings of the first phase, the second phase of enquiry will be a structured discussion on the findings using a Delphi survey in two rounds, with experts in the area of HTL educational policy, tertiary education, work-based learning and industry.

The research study adapts Yin's (2009) approach to case study research:

- Stage 1:* Identify the research question
- Stage 2:* Design the research methods using Mason's (1996) matrix for linking research questions and methods
- Stage 3:* Draw up ethical guidelines (simultaneous with Stage 2)
- Stage 4:* Collect and store data
- Stage 5:* Analyse data collected and generate findings
- Stage 6:* Review case study findings by Delphi study
- Stage 7:* Analyse case study findings for latent meaning
- Stage 8:* Decide on conclusions and recommendations.

1.11 Overview of Thesis Structure and Content

Chapter 1 provides a background to work-based learning and introduces a brief context and rationale for the study. The rationale for the study is highlighted against the backdrop of government policy and sector developments. The general purpose of the study and research questions are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of studies on work-based learning, and in particular discusses relevant literature concerning:

- People development in an organisation
- The field of work-based learning
- Work-based learning in the HTL sector.

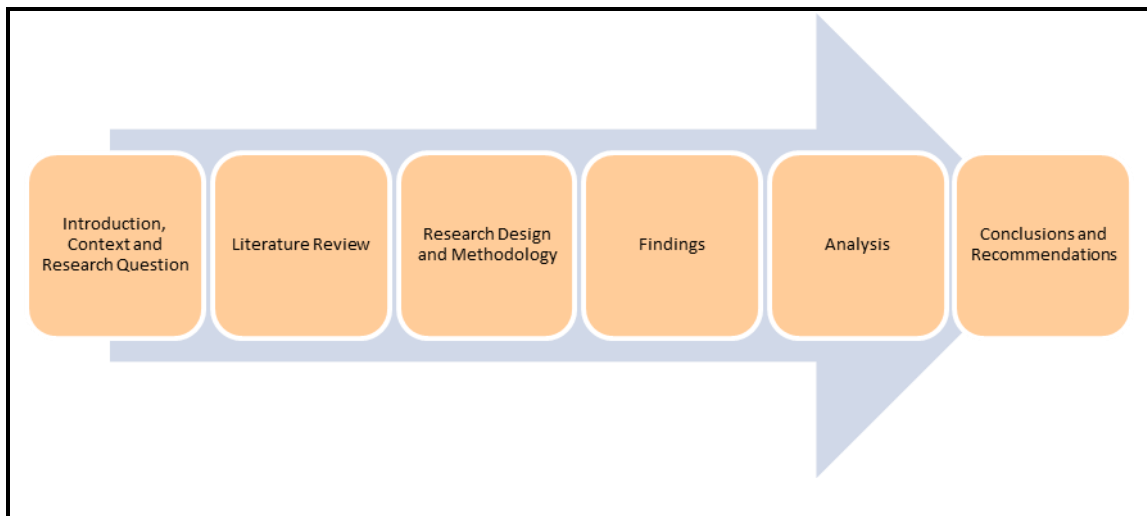
Chapter 3 describes general assumptions on the research design and methodology. Philosophical underpinnings of the interpretative approach adopted are discussed and the research process is examined.

Chapter 4 presents case study findings under a relevant theoretical framework and also presents the comments of a Delphi survey in regard to those findings.

Chapter 5 analyses findings in light of extant literature, while considering the significance of their latent meaning in relation to existing practice.

In Chapter 6, strengths and challenges of the research are discussed and contributions to higher education and enablers for the development of work-based learning as a facet of higher education provision are proposed. Finally, recommendations for further research are briefly presented.

Figure 1.2: My Research Trail



1.12 Conclusion

The research study engages with an important issue in a globalised context; how to realise the potential of work-based learning initiatives facilitated by higher education providers in industry settings. Chapter 1 describes the setting for the research, which is the complex backdrop of work-based learning within the HTL industry, acknowledging Irish government policy and the impact of a global financial crisis. This topic is explored through evaluation of an existing work-based learning programme in which I was involved. The empirical study aims to ascertain and understand the factors that influence delivery of work-based learning programmes within the HTL environment with a view to recommending improvements. The general structure and strategy used to address this research question are outlined, along with a brief description of the case study methodology employed. Finally the purpose and content of each chapter in the study is outlined.

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Chapter 2 now presents the extant literature which informs the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I introduced the concept of WBL and the context of higher-level learning derived from working life nationally and internationally. Chapter 2 focuses on the rather diffuse literature regarding development and delivery of WBL within higher education. It also contextualises and discusses the intellectual background facilitating the emergence of WBL in the HTL sector.

The literature reflects a significant increase in higher education awareness of an apparent role in workforce development, particularly in the UK, which has seen the emergence of WBL as a distinct area of provision. The review describes growing sophistication in theorisation and development of WBL in higher education, with its emergence as a ‘distinct field of practice and study supported by relevant pedagogies and concepts’ (Lester and Costley, 2010).

Throughout the chapter, pedagogical concepts and approaches to WBL which have dominated the literature since the early 1990s are presented. Key concepts are identified and methodologies are critiqued. I suggest that some previous research adopted a relatively narrow focus on WBL itself. In particular many studies focussed on assumption of positive outcomes and successful deliveries, and therefore failed to elicit the richness of learning experiences of the participants and their management during programme delivery.

Moreover, they frequently assume unity of purpose and common approaches to programme delivery among academic staff and sometimes overemphasise the structured nature of learning to depict successful outcomes, when more useful information might have been garnered if they had remained longer in the ‘swampy lowlands’ exploring the experience of participants and the nature of WBL.

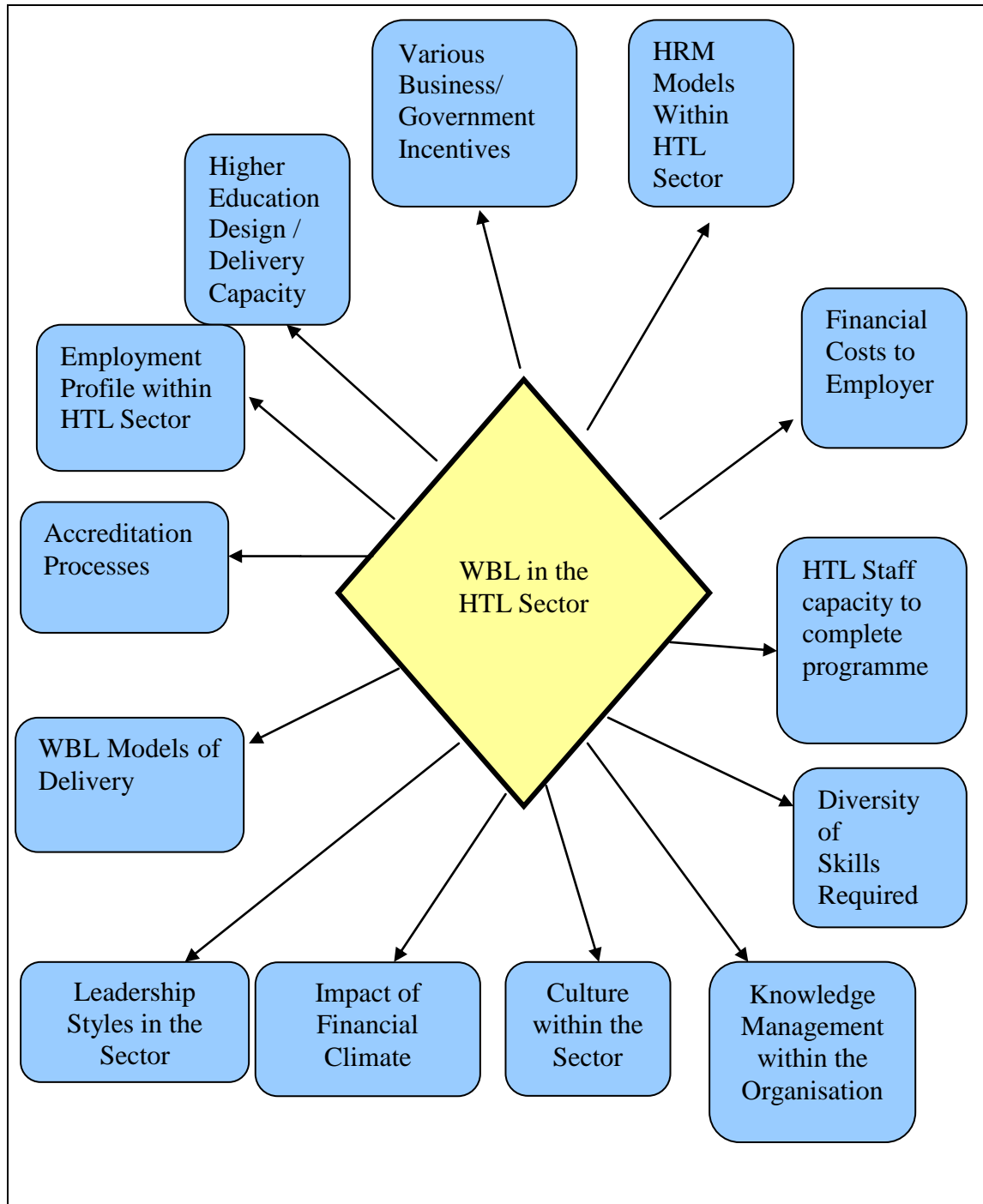
In this chapter, I explore these influences in the extant research searching for rich descriptions of tensions and contradictions within WBL thus providing signposts to guide my own particular journey within the academic-industrial partnership field.

I suggest that my questions can best be understood in the context of understanding influences of the social milieu on main stakeholders of the programme, namely programme participants, academic lecturers and the hotel management of the research site. The need to shift from examining an individual approach to learning, to gain understanding of the social environment where learning takes place, is proposed. This argument is introduced in this chapter and developed in the subsequent chapter on research design.

With these comments to the fore, I drafted factors which might shape a conceptual framework for development of WBL within the HTL sector. Following Veal (2011), this mind-map of factors helped to formulate the basis of my literature review, contextualised my thinking and shaped the subsequent overview.

These included:

Figure 2.1: Factors Shaping Conceptual Framework for Work-based Learning



2.2 Earlier Studies

The idea of linking learning to work is as old as civilisation itself with universities emerging from schools of apprenticeships and communal learning (Heffron in Hoey, Heffron and Heffron, eds., 2001). However, philosophical roots of linking learning to work are traced by Sobiechowska and Maisch (2006) back to seminal educationalists such as Dewey, and still earlier, to both John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The additional influence of social scientists such as Bourdieu developed greater interest in workplace culture and its relationship to theory. This emergence is related to the concept of ‘flexibility’ which emerged as all organisations, including higher education, are expected to respond to labour market changes. Such flexibility may require working in partnership or collaboratively with other organisations to achieve desired goals most effectively. Roodhouse, in Roodhouse and Mumford (2010), associates this drive to create flexible organisations with corresponding emphasis on flexible learning, within and across organisations, including different learning levels, contexts, and modes of delivery and assessment methodologies.

According to Sanders *et al.* (2011), the principal platform for WBL is found in theories and models of experiential learning (Dewey, 1938; Lewin, 1942; Kolb, 1984), as people learn through a process of reflection and review.

Dewey (1938) regarded experience as an essential component of the educational process. His model of experiential learning consisted of logical sequences of experience, reflection, conceptualisation and application to bring meaning to given experiences as a result of interaction between the learner and that experience. He argued that learners process new experiences increasing learned knowledge and understandings derived from earlier experiences. Dewey argued that work is pivotal in most people lives and could be an organising principle of curricula through which conventional disciplines of study could be taught.

Kolb (1984), Schön (1983), Boud (1988) and Eraut (1994) are renowned as seminal thinkers in the field of learning at and through work. The following paragraphs are influenced by Roodhouse (ibid.) who provided succinct summaries marking their contributions.

Kolb developed the Experiential Learning Model composed of four elements:

- Concrete experience;
- Observation of, and reflection on that experience;
- Formation of abstract concepts based upon reflection; and
- Testing the new concepts.

These four elements formulate a spiral of learning that may commence with any one of the four elements, but most often begins with a concrete experience. His model was developed predominantly for adult education, but has found widespread pedagogical and largely uncritical application within higher education (Fenwick in Murphy, 2008).

Schön was largely responsible for introducing reflective practice which is a continuous process and involves the learner considering critical incidents in his or her life experiences. As defined by Schön, reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's own experience in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline. In education, it refers to the process of the educator studying his or her own teaching methods and determining what works best for the students. He additionally argued that organisations and individuals should be flexible and incorporate lessons learned throughout their life spans, into what is now a well-established discipline in management and business studies: organisational learning.

Boud is interested in how people learn and the fostering of that learning through mechanisms such as problem-based and negotiated learning incorporating reflection and reciprocal peer learning. He developed student-centred models for learning from experience and developing the role of those who facilitate learning, whether or not they are identified as teachers.

Boud and Solomon (2001) described work-based learning in terms of programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in the workplace. They identify the typical characteristics of work-based learning including:

- A partnership, maybe contractual, between an external organisation and an educational;
- An institution specifically established to foster learning;

- A programme is derived from the needs of the workplace - work is the curriculum—established once learners have identified their current competences and learning, and;
- Learning projects oriented to the challenges of work and the future needs of learner and organisation;
- The assessment of learning outcomes under the auspices of an educational institution,
- Respect is proffered to a framework of standards and levels.

How professionals learn in workplace settings has been Eraut's focus. He found that most learning occurs informally during normal working processes and that there is considerable scope for recognising and enhancing such learning. As mentioned earlier, the current focus is on developing an 'epistemology of practice where knowledge is created and used rather than codified' (Costley and Gibbs, p. 221 in Garnett, Costley and Workman, 2009).

Raelin (2008) argues that work-based learning can be distinguished from traditional classroom learning in a number of ways. In particular, he notes that work-based learning is centred around reflection on work practices, that learning arises from action and problem solving within a working environment where people discuss ideas, share problems and solutions. Finally it requires not only the acquisition of new knowledge but also the ability to learn how to learn.

Armsby and Costley in Garnett, Costley and Workman *eds* (2009), identifies that the literature on how work-based learning and employee learning is developed and structured reflects two main trends: one that focuses on WBL associated with professional learning situations within the workplace, and one associated with higher education and accredited learning.

2.3 The Field of Work Based Learning- Overview

According to Evans (2009) the field of WBL is full of very different perspectives and instead of each illuminating a different fact of the larger whole, tend to be set up in opposing and excluding ways – thus these various lenses have a tendency to produce tunnel vision and exclusivity. Raelin (2008) recommends that we attempt to understand the epistemological tradition of WBL and the very foundation of what makes up knowledge itself. However, as with the concept of lifelong learning, WBL has involved the invention of a new language for sets of ideas with roots in different philosophical traditions, and occasionally radical pedagogies.

First is the version of WBL as appropriated by HE – WBL is described as a ‘class’ of programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces – These typically acknowledge rich traditions of each (Evans, Guile and Harris in Malloch *et al.*, 2011), for example medical students, and in Wengers (1998) view, accept that knowledge is something that is stored and presented by colleges without distraction in a succinct and articulate way to receptive students.

According to Murphy (2008), the traditional pedagogy of higher level learning model begins with broad, introductory content where the foundational disciplinary knowledge is laid down. Complex and increasingly theoretical knowledge builds on these foundations. Specialism and expertise are expected at the later stages of the programme. Knowledge is mainly propositional and generic at the base of the programme, with practice usually held back until the final stages where application in a work context is anticipated.

Then there are ‘workplace’ lenses – which are facilitated through HRD within organisations, encouraged by a systems approach to managing employee competences and delivering a business appropriated approach. Commentators such as Cunningham (2007) and Miao and Hoppe (2011), place these emerging theoretical frameworks of WBL in the context of sociocultural understanding of learning rooted in constructivist and activity models as well as integration of situated learning and the community of practice approach (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Cunningham *et al.* (2007) describe that social interaction and problem solving is necessary for full development of cognition. This theoretical orientation considers the context of learning and the community of practice as key elements influencing the process of learning. These concepts have helped academics understand how learning in natural settings, such as the workplace, emerges from participation in socially valued activities within a community.

These viewpoints have encouraged a whole family of sociocultural approaches which according to Evans (2009) have had an inclination to be overly focused on communities of practice as a rather benign notion of developing knowledge. In her 1998 paper, Anna Sfard suggested that two basic metaphors of learning compete for dominance today: the *acquisition (or possession and transfer)* metaphor and the *participation* metaphor, and that too great a devotion to either metaphor can lead to distortion of learning capacities.

With regard to emerging theories of working knowledge, Cunningham *et al.* (2007) drew on influences of Boud, Bandura, Eraut, Engestrom, Hager, Lave and Wenger, Billet, Piaget and Vygotsky to integrate positionalities drawn from an activity model and a situated learning model. This integration demonstrates common metaphors of learning which achieve a form of ‘common constructivism’ (Murphy, 2008) between these theories of working knowledge outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Emerging Theories of Work-based Knowledge
(Cunningham et al., 2007 as summarised by Murphy, 2008)

| Theory | Constructivist/ Activity Model | Situated/Participatory /Capability Learning Model |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Epistemology | Knowledge is constructed and based on experiences | Knowledge is produced collaboratively among individuals, groups, artefacts, affordances, contexts and situations |
| Origin of Learning Goals | Goals determined by tasks/problems set by others | Goals are context- determined |
| Motivation | Extrinsic and intrinsic | Extrinsic, intrinsic and collective |
| Learning approach | Collaborative or individual | Collaborative, distributed |
| Importance of external environment | External environment may be significant | External environment always significant |
| Method of Learning | Action learning, applied project | Trial and Error, deduction, team work, experimentation |
| Locus of dependency | Individual or team | Team and/or artefacts and environment |
| Pedagogical Approach | Project-centred | Task, process and output centred |
| Type of Learning | Individual and Group | Distributed and situated, context-dependent, community of practice |
| Metaphor of Learning | Learning as inquiry and search for understanding | Learning as co-creation, communally constructivism and co-generation |
| Main Theorists | Boud, Bandura, Eraut, Engeström, Piaget, Vygotsky | Boud, Billet, Hager, Eraut, Lave and Wenger, Illeris |
| Implications for higher education | Complex tasks essential. Individual and collaborative learning opportunities needed | Authentic contexts essential, learning contracts, collaborative reflection, insights important, applied dimension, importance of contextual artefacts/ technologies |

Influenced by Murphy (2008), the rationale for the literature review is as follows:

The first section - **Definitions of Work-based Learning** reviews definitions of WBL as they provide a useful foundation for understanding various interpretations of where the discipline fits into adult learning in the workplace and more generally.

The second section - **Influence of constructivist Rationalist orientation – Reflective Practice** examines the constructivist tradition of experiential learning

which has encouraged humanist, learner – centred and reflective forms of Work-based Learning.

The third section - **Influence of situated contextual orientation – Participation** moves the focus of experiential learning from internal processes into the context of communities of practice through legitimate peripheral participation.

Section four – **Influence of cultural resistance and power dynamic** examines arguments that learning in a particular cultural space is shaped by authority figures within that context.

Section five - **WBL and the Higher Education Environment**, examines the impact of WBL within the Higher Education environment and Section six, **WBL within HRD scholarship**, discusses WBL in the current emergent scholarship within the field of HRD.

2.4 Defining Work-based Learning

2.4.1 Emergent Definitions of Work-based Learning

Gunnigle *et al.* in Reidy (2003, p. 57) defines the terms learning, development and training.

(Learning is) A process through which people assimilate new knowledge and skills that result in relatively permanent changes in behaviour. Learning can be conscious or unconscious, formal or informal, and requires some element of practice and experience.

Development is defined as ‘the acquisition of skills and abilities that are required for future roles in the company’.

Training is defined as ‘the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform effectively in a given role’.

Based on these definitions, people development within an organisation incorporates the systematic acquisition of both general and specific knowledge through a variety of means, in order to build competitive advantage (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000).

Finke *et al.* (2007) and Linehan (2008) identified difficulties defining precisely what Work-based Learning (WBL) means. There is a distinction between WBL, that is learning that takes place in the workplace solely, and learning that takes place for the workplace, where programmes may be wholly delivered in the educational institution or through a mix of both locations. According to Lester and Costley (2010) on the other hand, the term ‘work-based learning’ logically refers to all and any learning that is situated in the workplace or arises directly out of workplace concerns.

Complementing Bouds characteristics of WBL stated in Chapter 1, Gray (2001) identified four different forms of WBL:

1. Work-based Learning used to access higher education programmes and experience may count towards credits for particular units through recognition of prior learning processes.

2. Work-based Learning as preparation for the real world – whereby higher education institutions include work-based competency skills in course programmes, e.g., numeracy, communication, and problem-solving.
3. Work-based Learning as the primary form of study – whereby full-time employees take on the additional role of student. Learning takes place within the workplace with support from higher education institutions to share ideas generated from the workplace.
4. Work-based Learning as preparation for future employment – wherein a period of work-experience is incorporated into higher education courses.

It appears crucial that partnership members involved in designing specific programmes are in agreement, and can state explicitly, what constitutes WBL in their particular context.

2.4.2 Characteristics of WBL Initiatives

1. Relationships

The development of WBL partnerships is based on a number of interrelated factors (Shiel *et al.*, 2007 cited by Linehan, 2008). These include partners that:

- Are receptive, responsive and sufficiently visionary.
- Have full support from senior management.
- Have sufficient funding and resources.
- Understand the pedagogical ethos of WBL.

- Have procedures in place to approve/accredit and quality assure flexible learning programmes.
- Have key practitioners with a sufficiently broad repertoire of expert knowledge in WBL and teaching competencies.
- Have an understanding of relevant institutional policy, politics and procedures, curriculum development, consultancy and project management skills.

2. Relevant and Practical

If programmes are derived from the needs of employees and industry partners, then there is strong motivation for both groups to be involved in the design (Stewart and Rigg, 2011). There is a greater stake in the outcome for the employee and alignment with business objectives will achieve greater buy in from employers (Fink *et al.*, 2007; Linehan, 2008). Dhillon *et al.* (2011) recommends the involvement of all stakeholders in design and implementation of WBL. This could include employers, learners and external trainers.

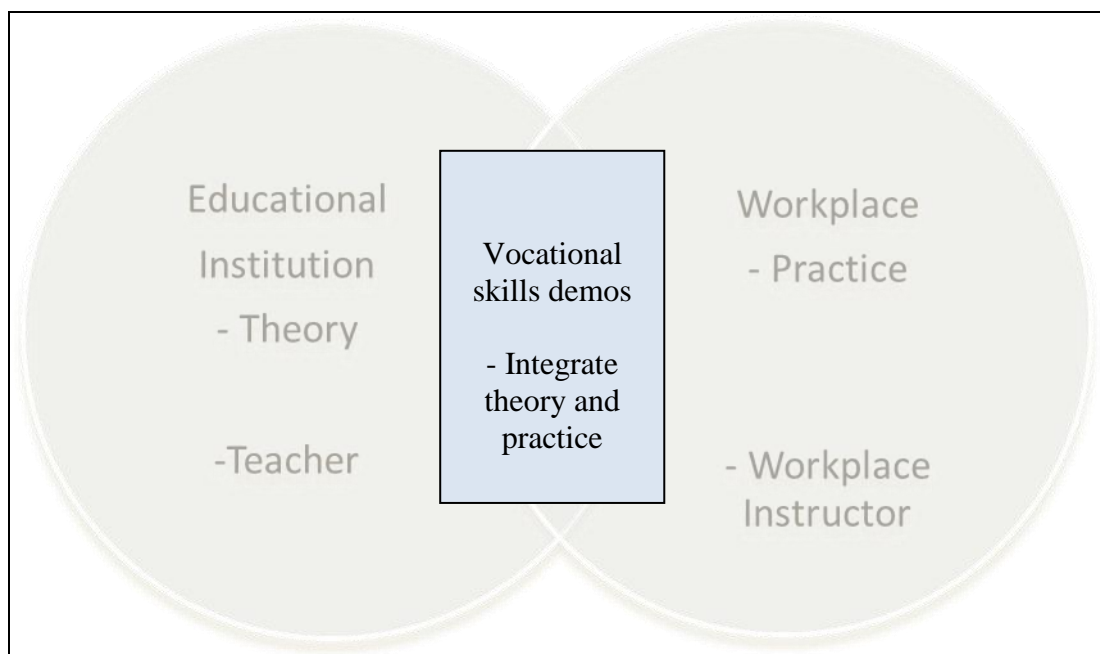
Practical considerations relating to the needs of learners and industry partners include location, timing and structure of courses, modes of delivery, student and mentor support systems and subsequent embedding of learning in the organisation (Cornford and Gunn, 1998; CERT, 2002; Kemmis and Smith, 2007).

In Biggs' view (2003) traditional teaching methods such as lectures, tutorials and private individual study do not provide sufficient support for higher level learning processes. These methods are effective for the academic, highly motivated student, but not for the majority of students. In order to cater for the highly motivated student and achieve successful outcomes for WBL, the logical conclusion is that students

must want to learn. Biggs refers to Feather's expectancy-value theory, which suggests that students must see the learning to be important, i.e., it must have value to the learner, and that the learner must expect to be successful at the tasks to be undertaken.

Stenström in Stenström and Tynjälä (2010) identifies the place of workplace instructors who assist in the delivery of practice oriented material to learners on vocational programmes, thus helping to create a sense of cooperative connection and relevance between the workplace and the educational theory. In this model (Figure 2.2), teachers provide the theoretical knowledge, while the workplace instructor provide professional and workplace specific expertise. According to Stenström, these workplace instructors need specific guidance in assessment criteria and techniques to facilitate joint assessment by both academics and professionals.

Figure 2.2: Stenström's Connection between Education and Working Life in Vocational Skills Demonstrations



3. Adapted to Participant Education, Work Experience and Training

Recognition of prior formal learning (RPL)¹⁰ and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) are important components in the delivery of WBL. They are particularly important in tourism and hospitality where many of the more mature employees have experience and skills but no qualifications (Fáilte Ireland, 2008a). The OECD (2007) identified that awareness of RPL amongst Irish employees and workers and the general public is low.

Garavan *et al.* (2003, pp. 3-4) view learning as a process rather than simply an outcome. They suggest that learning is now likely to embrace the following ideas:

- Learning is not just about knowledge. It is also about skills, insights, beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, feelings, wisdom, shared understandings, and self-awareness;
- Learning outcomes can be incremental (building gradually on what has already been learned) or transformational (changing ways of being, thinking, feeling and action);
- Transformational learning, for some learners and for some organisations, may be a struggle, may take time, and may involve conflicts over aims and outcomes;
- By its very nature, learning is essentially individual, but it can also be collectively generated in teams and organisations;
- There is no one right way to learn for everybody and for every situation;
- Questioning, listening, challenging, and enquiring are crucially important to effective learning; and

¹⁰ Recognition of Prior Learning can be defined as recognition of learning prior to enrolment on a programme of study.

- When the learning process is self-managed, it becomes more effective.

In a sense, all these elements are present within the different models of work-based described by Nixon *et al.* (2006) who also identified four main types of WBL in higher education, which emerged from the motivations of the individual and/or the organisation to invest in learning:

Type 1 – investing in learning to improve personal performance in securing new work;

Type 2 – investing in learning to bring knowledge and skills into the organisation;

Type 3 – investing in learning to improve personal and professional performance in existing work/organisation; and

Type 4 – investing in learning to improve the organisation's performance and competitiveness.

While types 3 and 4 can be seen as more closely aligned to upskilling/reskilling an existing workforce, Nixon *et al.*'s study notes that regardless of 'type', institutions' pedagogical approaches are distinctive in that 'they emphasise a process – rather than content-driven curriculum which is strongly student-centred and less derived from pre-set curricula' (Ibid., p. 38).

In their introduction to *A Review of Work-based Learning in Higher Education*, Brennan and Little (1996) concluded that WBL could be defined as linking learning to the work role, but not necessarily preparing for a specific job. Three strands of WBL were identified: 'learning for work, learning at work, and learning through work'.

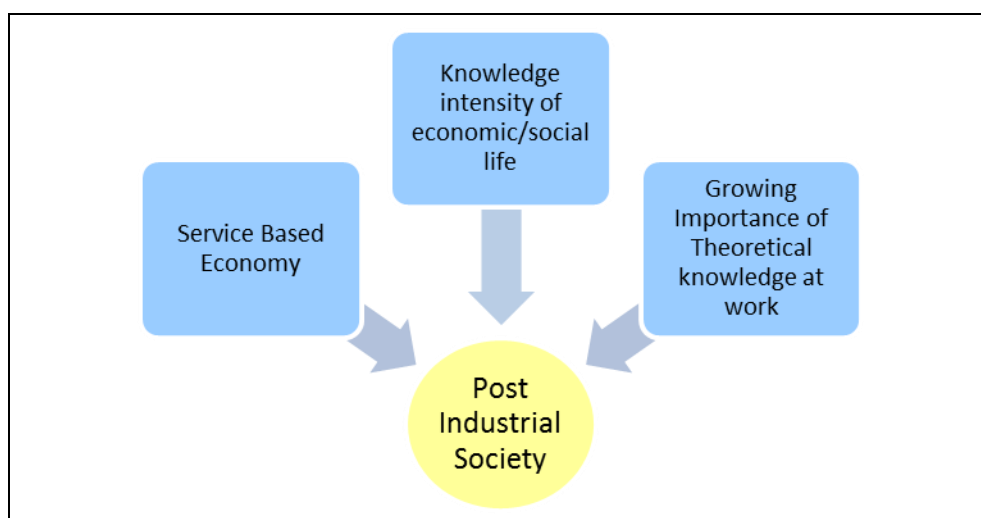
According to Boud and Solomon (2001), the implication of these theories for HEI delivery pedagogies challenge and require the integration of mixed mode delivery, work related projects, learning contracts and concessions by academic staff regarding the ownership and equivalence of knowledge through reconstructed boundaries.

They outline that WBL repositions the social context of workplace knowledge as the platform of internalised learning. Although less linear, the direction of learning is more likely to enable critical reflexivity in ‘the particular and the present’ where the prior experiential learning is compared with newly acquired disciplinary knowledge.

2.5 Influence of Constructivist Rationalist Orientation – Reflective Practice

Daniel Bells seminal work ‘The Coming of Post-Industrial Society’ (1973) outlines an almost utopian vision of the future where society is dominated by the services sector and knowledge based goods/services have replaced industrial, manufactured goods as the dominant wealth generators.

Figure 2.3: Bells’ Characteristics of Post Industrial Society (Hislop, 2005)



In his 1998 work 'Futurewise: Six Faces of Global Change', Dixon observes that many authors argue that innovation is the most efficient method of dealing with change. He contends that most managers are more inclined to reflect on staff individual capabilities rather than their organisations elemental capabilities, and that; ultimately, the fundamental challenge for managers is the pace of change. He poses questions about an organisations flexibility and mechanisms to cope with change, while simultaneously facilitating and managing organisational learning. In Teares' opinion (2011), if Dixon is accurate, this implies that much of work is essentially making sense of what is happening in order to take appropriate action.

Since Schön's seminal work in 1983, 'The Reflective Practitioner', the nature of professionalism, skills and competency development has matured to facilitate a philosophical shift of responsibility for development from the organisation to the concept of learner responsibility for their own development.

Schön (1983, 1987) argued that professional practice can be based on 'knowing in action' and developing capacity for self 'reflection' in order to develop the ability to learn through and within a practice. In Schön's view, the primary competence required of any professional is the ability to reflect, as this is a key to acquiring new skills and improving professional practice.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, employer facilitation of individual and group reflection on a problem as part of the learning process is often encouraged within

WBL. This is prominent within a large body of writers within adult education possibly influenced by Kolb's Learning Cycle and Schön's 'reflective practitioner'.

Boud and Walker (1993), in Boud and Solomon (2001), outline three essential factors for reflective learning from experience. Firstly learners must be able to recall and describe the experience; secondly, learners must be attentive to the feelings associated with the experience; and thirdly, learners must be able re-evaluate and validate the experience in the context of previous and present learning. Boud and Solomon maintain that reflective learning is more complex and difficult to achieve than perceived, and their experiences are inconclusive regarding successful learning.

Moon (2006, p. 76) suggests that use of learning journals in enhancement of reflective practice needs to be carefully managed in order to be most effective. The simplest journal entries involve the learner becoming aware that they can learn through practice. This develops into recognition that learning has implications for future practice and there is some linkage between theory and practice. At the most advanced stage, Moon suggests that there is a broadening and deepening of reflection content. However she notes that free formats can have their role as well, allowing students make sense of their experiences, can act as a 'friend', someplace to vent feelings or to sort out daily dilemmas and difficulties.

According to post modern critiques, the success of reflection as an aide to learning can be influenced by whether reflections are individualised, and the learner develops their sense of voice (Moon, 2006), or universalised, through group reflection. Boud and Walker (2002) argue that individual reflection is of limited value and suggest that reflection becomes laboured in process through emphasis on academic writing, is

often censored by the student, and inconclusive regarding individual engagement with learning.

Moon (2006) suggests that the entire concept of reflection is constrained by a narrow contemplation of a single idea and Collins (2011) advocates that refraction, which sends an idea out in new directions, is a more comprehensive change model in teaching and learning.

Hase and Kenyon (2000) conceptualise the paradigm shift within the adult learning process from teacher centred approaches dominant in traditional approaches to pedagogy and andragogy, to the recent development of heutagogy, or study of self determined learning. This shift occurred in the context of economic and educational reform which encompasses the potential of WBL strategies and facilitates:

- Self-determined learning as it replaces 'knowledge hoarding' with 'knowledge sharing'; and
- Focus on a knowledge-based future, knowing how to learn as a fundamental competence, given the pace of innovation and the changing structure of communities and workplaces.

According to Jones and Robinson (1997) few organisations saw obvious benefits in systematically evaluating people development. This, however, began to change with the advent of the concept observed by Bolden *et al.* (2003), that organisations, particularly service organisations, benefited more from particular mindsets, rather than the exhibition of particular behaviours. This led to increased reflection on what actually 'worked' rather than reliance on what worked in the past.

Recognition of these issues may have influenced Civelli (1998) who identified the emergence of personal ‘employability’ where each individual monitors and manages development of their own competences and behaviours. Civelli recognised that self directed development can be a more powerful motivational tool than traditional performance management systems such as appraisals and evaluations.

2.5.1 Learning Projects

Recent studies have summarised that people learn at work:

- By doing the job itself;
- Through cooperating and interacting with colleagues;
- Through working with clients;
- By tackling challenging and new tasks;
- By reflecting on and evaluating one’s work experiences;
- Through formal education;
- Through extra-work contexts;
- Through offering leadership to others; and
- Through making mistakes and learning not to repeat the mistake.

(Gerber, 1998; Heikkila, 2006; Tikkamaki, 2006; Billett *et al.*, 2005; Collin and Valleala, 2005 cited in Linehan, 2007).

Poell (2006), for example, proposed a model of learning projects through which employees learn something new by solving specific work-related problems. Poell’s studies have shown that in organised learning projects, participants are able to combine developing their competences with improving their work. While WBL

programmes can be constructed from any coherent mix of activity, it is the pursuit of learning projects in the workplace that tends to characterise such programmes. Projects are undertaken not just to equip students to contribute to the organisation, but to make a tangible step towards doing so. Organisational and individual capabilities are thus linked. Boud and Middleton (2003) suggest that this grounds learning and gives a focus to it. It enables managers and supervisors to see that learning is not a self-indulgent activity, but actually contributes to the organisation and needs to be supported by it.

This section indicates a considerable shift in the literature in the way individual learning and development is understood and characterised. There has been a move from identifying training needs to identifying learning needs, suggesting that development is owned by the learner with the need rather than by the trainer seeking to satisfy that need (Nikolou-Walker, 2008). In other words, the impact of reflective practice moves work related learning to demand led rather than provider driven. This has important challenges for the manner which needs are identified and the way that those needs are met.

2.6 Influence of Situated Contextual Orientation - Participation

Kock and Ellstrom (2011) asked the question if a qualified person was by necessity a competent professional. They argued that depending on context, qualifications do not necessarily equip the holder to perform a task or job role effectively, and pointed out that an individual may possess a range of competences that are not qualifications, and have never been prescribed or recognised by the employer. They challenge the view

that formal courses are necessary and contend that learning strategies must be formally integrated into daily work.

According to Gosling and Mintzberg (2003, 2004), the key attribute for the necessarily complicated work of a worker who operates in a multi layered environment is the ability to synthesise information originating from different mindsets. Elmuti, Minnis and Abebe (2005) refer to the constant gap between what is taught in formal education and what is required in industry. On reflection, this automatically raises the importance of ability to interpret and categorise communication within the work context as a key work attribute.

Illeris (2003) identified that adults desire to learn when they can identify a use for that learning within their own life situation, and that competence in a particular work situation cannot be acquired through traditional education. Employers on the other hand, use resources in ways that are relevant for the enterprise. Illeris, therefore felt that theory is needed and qualifications, such as flexible apprenticeships that relate particularly young adults to their particular situation, using cognitive, emotional and social-societal dimensions. The developing awareness of the importance of context led to further discussion questioning the value of people development programmes that were not contextualised and thereby abstract (McKenna, 2004), drawing the conclusion that effective work relevant knowledge could not be learned from theory but in practice.

Schein (2004) mentions the impact that culture has on learning and argues that even the concept of learning is heavily nuanced by cultural assumptions and that learning can mean very different things in different cultures and subcultures. Schein draws attention to the need for conceptual clarity regarding organisational learning and that clarity cannot be attained without first addressing the role of learning within the culture of an organisation. He also emphasises that learning cannot be forced on people and that the more turbulent the organisational climate, the more the learning process must be shared by all members of the social unit. Schein notes that learning and development opportunities are now offered to make an employee more employable in any organisation, as a job for life can rarely be offered. Webb (2004) creates a complex representation of learning and argued that the learner is complex, multidimensional and embedded in a social world, far from simple cycles of reflection traditionally attributed to Kolb.

Silverman and Casazza (2000) illuminate the role of facilitators or mediators in the learning environment. They build on Vygotsky's description of an individual's zone of proximal development as an area between latent ability and realised potential, and that guidance through that zone is a necessary ingredient for learning. Responsibility for learning is then gradually released to the learner through social interaction and exchange of knowledge in a group setting. In this sense, they identify that knowledge moves from Freire's banking 'deposit' metaphor to a socially constructed expansion of the learner's zone of proximal development.

2.6.1 Sociocultural Perspective on Learning at Work

Le Clus (2008) categorises key categories of sociocultural learning relevant to this research study. The first, developed as situated learning by Lave and Wenger, highlights how learning occurs through participation in social activities. The second, participation in social practice, describes development of ‘community of practice’. Billett (2002, p. 56), suggested the need to consider learning in terms of ‘the product of participation in social practice through engagement in the activities’. The third category, workplace culture and socialisation, argues that social relationships within the workplace can facilitate or restrict learning in that environment. Billett (1998, 2001, 2002) emphasised the influential role that historical, cultural and situational factors can play with regard to the kind of learning that occurs through work.

Le Clus suggests therefore, the necessity to understand the extent that workplace culture and socialisation play in affording or constraining informal learning opportunities. She drew a number of conclusions, firstly, that informal learning takes place as part of everyday activities and can be planned, spontaneous, intentional, or unintentional. Secondly Le Clus found that sociocultural processes and relationships between workers ‘afforded’ or constrained informal learning opportunities within the workplace. This study indicates the important role that relationships and attitudes can play an important part in the development of learning opportunities in the workplace. These themes are expanded in the next section.

2.7 Influence of Critical Cultural Orientation –Resistance Power

2.7.1 Power as a Feature of People Development

Hislop (1999) defines power as a ‘resource whose use allows people to shape the behaviour of others’ and outlines that consideration needs to be given to power issues within any context of learning. Schein (2004, p. 16) identifies the important role that culture plays in determining this behaviour and teaching ‘the correct way to perceive, think and feel.’ This manipulative development of thinking was previously identified by McGregor (1960) seminal work which argued that humans are malleable and will respond adaptively to the assumptions that are held about them.

Freire (1970, p. 45) in ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ describes feelings of ignorance and self depreciation that can exist in the manager – subordinate relationship drawing attention to the implicit power imbalance, ‘The peasant feels inferior to the boss because the boss seems to be the only one who knows things and is able to run things’.

Freire referred to the emancipatory power of consciousness of reality through reflection and action in order to transform the world. In people development, this notion of ‘praxis’, which is not always comfortable , frequently involves confronting powers that be, indeed to the point of ‘liberation’, and ultimately acknowledges that managers, educators and programme participants share mutual interests and can learn from each other.

Increasingly organisational people development literature interweaves the concept of organisation with society. This moves the social responsibility of organisations towards shared values and employee wellness leading ultimately to enhanced productivity (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

Bourdieu (1986, 1993) offered a model for understanding how power is better understood through interrelationships between individuals and social structures. He developed the concepts of 'habitus', 'capital' and 'field' which can be applied to rationalise any social situation, including work organisations. Informed by a combination of a person's personal and social background, 'Habitus' describes the combination of inclinations, habits and ways of thinking and behaving that an individual brings to social occasions. A person's sense of entitlement, ability to voice dissent, confidence and how they carry themselves physically are all influenced by their sense of 'habitus' expressed through micro-political behaviours.

'Habitus' is very much influenced by resources or 'capital' available by virtue of their social position or dispositions; which is determined by such factors as their socio-economic background, their ethnicity or gender. 'Capital' can take a number of forms – social capital which is acquired through social networks or groups and consists of cultural capital representing symbolic skills, abilities or assets, economic capital fostered through financial and material assets or symbolic capital such as individual honour and prestige, converted from other forms of capital.

Field is a distinct aspect of human activity, context or setting where particular explicit or tacit rules or forms of authority are impressed on people who enter. A practical example of field according to Stewart and Rigg (2011) are the conventions of professional bodies or representative groups.

The extent to which one can influence others in a particular social setting or field, depends on a combination of the capital (social, cultural or economic) they can muster and the choices available to them within the norms and rules of their field.

Lukes (1974) argues that powerful elite groups are able to persuade less powerful groups to hold views or act in ways contrary to their own interests, by influencing, shaping or determining their own wants. Lukes points out that these groups exercise power through control of debate and shaping of political agendas, thus keeping issues in or out of the public arena, dependent on interests. Categorising discussion on knowledge workers using the concept of capital is according to Garrick and Clegg (2000) a shrewd move as it moves knowledge into the realm of a marketable product, albeit often intangible.

Stewart and Rigg (2011) outline a summary in Table 2.2 of how different perspectives on power influence decision-making in an organisation.

Table 2.2: ‘Learning and Talent Development’ -Resource Based Perspective
(Adapted from Stewart and Rigg, 2011, p. 122)

| Perspective on Power | Perspective on Decision-making | Assumption of the Regulation of Individuals |
|--|--|---|
| Classical Unitary : individual interests aligned with a shared organisation goal | Rational decisions made on the basis of evaluation of information against pre-set decision criteria | Individual behaviours are regulated through the formal authority and roles of the organisation hierarchy |
| Pluralist: negotiated order | Decisions are affected by the political behaviours of groups and individuals pursuing their own career and status and the extent to which they exploit uncertainty and incomplete information to control agendas | Individuals are empowered or constrained by the extent to which they are members of influential groupings |
| Structuralist | Decision – making forums are defined by organisational procedures and norms which limit the types of decisions and who can participate | Institutional rules and norms exert a self – regulating influence on individuals |
| Bourdieu: structure + agency through habitus, capital and field | Individuals’ capacity to influence decision-making is the result of the interplay between conditions in the context (field), individuals predispositions and way of presenting themselves (habitus) and their individual social and economic resources (capital) | Individual action is regulated by a combination of structural constraints in the context (eg rules, procedures, formal authority) and self regulation by internalised acceptance of norms of behaviour in the context |
| Foucauldian model of Discourse: language as power | Influence is exerted on decision-making by the way a problem is defined by dominant individuals or groups, the spaces available for dialogue and the communicative acts that at times open up engagement and at other times constrain participation | The language used to name things and frame problems shapes thought, subconsciously regulating choices individuals consider available to them for action |

From these perspectives, power can exist as a stable resource independent of people and can be used with the aim of achieving particular goals. Hales (1993) described two ways in which people can have access to knowledge based power resources. Firstly through possessing scarce and valuable knowledge, (personal knowledge power), secondly, through their position within the organisation, management can have access to power by using their position as a gatekeeper role for access to

information, for example by employing an external consultant. Hales makes a distinction between different types of knowledge by categorising administrative knowledge (knowledge of processes, rules and regulations) and technical knowledge (specialist knowledge of particular work tasks) as different sources of power.

With the advent of the knowledge worker, power balances can be disturbed as power over employees can be contingent of the organisational context and consequentially management power can be affected by the shifts in power relations (Crowley, 2012). Tiernan, Flood *et al.* (2001) consider that knowledge workers are imbued with power through the importance of their knowledge and the scarcity of skills in the labour market. These factors imbue knowledge workers with power and may mean ultimately a less subordinate position to management than other types of workers.

2.7.2 Voice and Empowerment

In the context of development of self as a professional, a number of writers talk of the importance of development of 'voice' (Moon, 2006). Described by Griffiths, (1998) as social identification with others, voice can be understood as the opportunity to speak and subsequent emergence of ideas, perspectives and metaphors. Closely related to debates about power and empowerment are debates about power and voice. According to Griffiths (*ibid.*), voice can refer to individual expression or something more collective, social and clearly political. However Freire (1970, p. 67) observes that dialogue cannot subsequently exist without humility of all parties contributing to the conversation.

2.7.3 Foucauldian Perspective

Griffiths (1998) points out that in the liberal view, power can be understood as personal power over somebody else, and discussed in relation to ‘authority’. In the socialist, or Marxian view, power is exercised through culture and economic means, which act on the thoughts and desires of whole social classes. An alternative to both of these, according to Griffiths, is the Foucauldian post modern and post structuralist analysis of power, knowledge and relations.

From Foucault’s perspective, power/knowledge is a phenomenon embedded within micro social relations and is given legitimacy through particular ways of acting, thinking and expression. Foucault’s ‘discursive formations’ (1970) which constitute structures of knowledge and exercise power often through discourse, can lead to exclusion, in education or the workplace, suggesting that power is constituted by management and employees when they interact with each other and that power and knowledge are inseparable. The logical extension of Foucault’s position would appear that all uses of knowledge or attempts to shape and manage knowledge within organisations are dependent on the exercise of power through social relations.

Building on this, social constructionists argue that we come to know our world through the language, terms and ideas available to us. Therefore language ultimately makes sense of and influences our experiences by becoming a ‘communicative act’.

In work organisations, language use is a tool of persuasion and used to mobilise support for positions, for example the debate around ‘rationalisations’ or ‘redundancies’ during industrial negotiations. Garrick and Clegg (2000) identify that through language and communication processes, power is now exercised through emerging discourses, facilitating an epistemology of objectives, obligatory tasks and subdivision of labour in ‘*knowledge what works*’. Within this discourse the term ‘intellectual’ has expanded to cover explicit working knowledge perceived and promoted by some management as a desirable quality of organisational life. Control over access to ‘discursive space’, such as a meeting, where people communicate, is also seen as an integral part of exercising influence as agenda’s and participation can be shaped and outcomes controlled. Informal conversations and meetings can be an alternative ‘discursive space’ as power can be exercised in conversation or in the ‘discursive act’ of welcoming or positioning.

Garrick and Usher (2000) draw on Foucault to place ‘capacity-building’ as a technology of productive power that defines certain kinds of communication processes and workplace relationships associated with management of knowledge in the work place including; learning organisations, flexible learning, human and cultural capital, productive diversity and capacity-building. It signifies a pragmatic outlet for ‘working knowledge’ and ‘knowledge workers’ who are required to help organisations meet contemporary business challenges—and the subsequent demands for new forms of ‘capacity-building’.

Learning relationships can thus perpetuate and magnify power relationships in an organisation. Noticeably, Garrick and Clegg (2000) feel there is potential that rather than liberating, by making tacit knowledge explicit, WBL can actually trade away the knowledge that empowers them. Lester and Costley (2010) highlight perceptions that WBL is ‘trapping the learner into an employer-driven or instrumental agenda’ and ultimately that WBL facilitates emergence of the Foucauldian perspective that the self managed focus of WBL can be turned into a form of self ‘governance’ or enslavement to corporate will through discursive terms such as ‘flexibility’, ‘teamwork’ and ‘self-enhancement’ (Zemblas, 2005).

Schultze and Stabell (2004) ‘dissensus’ based framework assumes however that antagonistic relations are an inherent feature of social dynamics. This model uses perspectives on social order to emphasise that in knowledge processes in organisations, power and knowledge are conceptualised as being closely inter-related.

Figure 2.4: Four Discourses on Knowledge Management
(Adapted from Schultze and Stabell's, 2004)



Stewart and Rigg (2011) feel that it is obvious that power and powerlessness will provoke emotion. Although people may accept powerlessness in exchange for employment and money rewards, they may still experience a deep sense of ‘emotional labour’ by maintaining a facade in interactions, whilst concealing internal feelings of insult or fear. Being involved in uncertain conditions such as that of a ‘weak labour market’, may provoke a sense of being out of control and physical discomfort.

From a Foucauldian perspective, power is inevitable within groups and affects learning and development interventions as delivering knowledge can be viewed as acting with deliberate intent to redress imbalances, and one must always be cognisant of the adage ‘knowledge is power’.

The ‘classroom as real world’ has been identified by several studies including Reynolds and Trehan (2001) and Rigg and Teehan (2004), as an opportunity for participants to use critical learning to make connections between power and emotion in their work experiences. This thinking further challenges and provokes insight into traditional power relationships in the workplace or even the classroom. For example this thinking can inspire experiential learning, negotiated curricula and reflective learning journals that help participants not only to identify and articulate power imbalances in the workplace, but help them to shape their educational experiences.

According to Stewart and Rigg (2011), professional power is developed through widespread recognition of certain occupations as being special by virtue of their control of specialist knowledge. Supporters of this concept argue that membership of professional bodies elevates influence, in terms of Bourdieu’s social, cultural and

financial capital. However the downside of this 'professional' approach is the exclusion of the unqualified from this society created by education, and supported by membership rules.

Crowley (2012) feels that firms and their employees approach production with different and often competing objectives. Workers often seek not only wages, but avenues for self expression and self- realisation. Firms, in contrast, seek to maximise returns on wages and deploy a host of control techniques designed to curb resistance. Many of these controls limit opportunities for creative and meaningful work. Crowley suggests that coercive controls found in the manual and service sectors, limit not only self – expression but also effort and pride, in part because they dehumanise workers and invite abuse from customers. The oppressive environment of multiple constraints remind Crowley of Goffmans (1961) 'total institutions', a term originally applied to prison camps. Workers in these environments seek to maintain a protective distance from employers, limiting perceived exploitation and emotional stress. Crowley identifies 'on the job training' and 'participation' as forms of control that position workers as stakeholders in the firm and then secures consent by offering career advancement and intrinsic rewards in exchange for terms of production. She suggests that rather than eliminating indolence, coercion appears to generate worker reticence, and limits workers capacity to take pride in their work.

It is clear from this section that, depending on circumstance, WBL has the potential to shift power relations within an organisation. Bourdieu recognised that social capital within 'habitus' can determine power, and attempts to change power relations may cause antagonism. Schultze and Stabell, (2004) identify an inherent antagonism in

some sectors, and are fearful that management culture might exercise power through exclusion or social relations (Foucault, 1970). Participation in WBL can therefore be risky for employees in certain situations.

2.8 Work-based Learning and the Higher Education Environment

2.8.1 Factors Shaping Work-based Learning within the Higher Education Environment

Academic teaching and research are pushed towards the realities of a global knowledge marketplace as institutions compete for fee-paying students and research funding. This phenomena, according to McIntyre and Soloman (1999), repositions the tertiary sector as a generator for the growth of an economy by producing ideas and people to drive economic development and national competitiveness. While academia is still regarded as a site of traditional scholarship, they saw where teaching and learning were becoming somewhat 'marketised'. This growing influence of market rationality on the higher education systems led some observers at that time to coin the phrase 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie, 1999). This change requires a cultural shift, including changing staff recruitment approaches to deliver on these demands (Smith, Poppitt and Scott, 2011).

However, according to Castells and Cardoso (2005), academia and industry have disparate goals, objectives, and obligations. To remain competitive, companies must make a profit by producing a novel product that will benefit many, so confidentiality is important. Academics traditionally seek new knowledge and have obligations to communicate that knowledge in a largely open forum.

Drucquer, Thomas and Morrison (2011) in the Higher Education Academy report on WBL experiences in UK ‘Learning from Experience in Employer Engagement, summarise stakeholder motivations.

Table 2.3: Stakeholder Motivations in Employer Engagement

| Participants | Interests |
|--------------|---|
| Employer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Building • Completed Projects with knowledge transfer • Element of academic input |
| University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be satisfied that assessment of learning is of appropriate quality • Opportunities developed need to be cost effective for the HEI • Should represent appropriate business development opportunities |
| Learner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development • Career progression • Qualification |

Thomas, in the same report, outlines that traditional HEI employer engagement business model involves provision for specific cohorts from large employers or recruiting part-time students from large employers, where there will be repeat business. There is an underlying financial logic here in relation to HEIs own economies of scale and the resource expended on recruiting students. SMEs are generally viewed as a much more difficult market to address, from a university perspective and lacking scale for business development.

Gallacher and Reeve (2002) suggest that four concepts are regarded as particularly important to understand work-based learning in higher education:

1. *Partnership*

The purpose of a specifically established partnership is to foster learning between an employer and an education institution which is seen to satisfy a need in return for revenue.

2. *Flexibility*

Capacity building is about developing a workforce of ‘enterprising selves’ with capabilities that enable successful engagement with the unpredictability of market-places. Flexible learning has come to be associated with e-learning, distance learning and with negotiated learning outcomes.

3. *Relevance*

WBL has a role in helping higher education institutes to ‘meet the needs’ of collaborating employers.

4. *Accreditation*

It is argued that all forms and modes of learning have equal value to traditional academic learning, and should receive recognition in the form of equal credit (Brennan, 2005). Award of credit for learning achieved in the workplace rests on particular approaches to the curriculum where learning is defined in sets of learning outcomes, grouped in units or modules, and at an identified level and volume.

The *Stepping Higher* UK Report (2008) mentioned that development of WBL brought many challenges for HEIs. These actions include the need for a proactive attitude to demonstrate interest and capacity in this field, embedded systemic infrastructures, suitably motivated and competent academic delivery staff, adaptable accreditation processes and positive internal and external marketing to businesses.

The increase in academic focus on learning within the workplace by higher education institutions, and sociologists has caused Fenwick (2001, p. 3) to reflect:

This explosion of understandings and practices of workplace learning is challenging traditional learning models and educators' roles. Strong concerns about knowledge are embedded in action, interrelation of contexts and identities, the dynamic of difference and continual change, politics and power relations, ecology and ethics, and knowledge processes in work and organisations are moving workplace education practice in new directions.

Embedded within these multiple themes are the challenges of developing and delivering relevant learning in the workplace.

Moran and Wall in Edmunds *et al.* (2011, p. 179) place the strategic imperative as a prerequisite for embarking upon accreditation of industry programmes. They identify that accreditation of work based programmes involves almost all HEI services, and without strategic commitment of HEIs, there is no 'leverage to encourage either academic departments or central services to cooperate'. Perhaps implying a scarcity of such skills, they emphasise the critical requirement for staff involved in this activity to have a working knowledge of higher education systems, processes and funding, aligned with the ability to communicate effectively and gain the confidence of organisational partners.

The Education in Employment report (2008) recommends that clear procedures are implemented which allow feedback on quality and standards of work-based or placement learning to be available to and used by all partners, enable institutions and work-based learning providers to identify and take appropriate and timely action, where necessary, and provide opportunities to note effective practices. They also recommend that feedback may be obtained from providers in a number of ways. These can include, for example, regular meetings between the awarding institution and any learning providers, employer representative(s), and students, as well as questionnaires and focus groups which can be used to gain the views of those involved.

Murphy (2008) presumes a future linkage of academic learning and WBL through CPD collaboration between HEIs and professional bodies. This view envisages the emergence of a dual model between HEIs and professional bodies outlined in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Models of Work-based Learning

| Constraining Model of WBL | Liberating Model of WBL |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Upholds academic traditions of curriculum | Is a change agent in the curriculum |
| Specific to practice | Defines curriculum as generic |
| Lacks Innovation | Real – world related |
| Tight control of the curriculum | Responsive to societal change |
| Discipline- specific knowledge | Values multiple knowledge |

In order to facilitate the liberating model Murphy feels that a range of procedures and services are required, including information and guidance for both academics and professionals in curriculum planning and assessment.

Tallantyre (2008) quoted in the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) 2011 report on WBL (p. 130), makes an emphatic case for delivery of work-based learning within universities:

At the level of equity and diversity, it is essential that higher education supports people who wish to continue their learning to higher levels ... in whatever context they ... find themselves. Since work dominates adult life as the main form of sustainable existence, many will inevitably make their choice in that context. Moreover, for many it is the source of both greater motivation than earlier academic experiences for which they could see less applicability, and greater support from employers than from parents whose own aspirations were limited. It has already been proven that workforce development activity is more likely to widen participation by those from lower socio-economic groups than almost any other activity.

2.8.2 Design and Development of Industry WBL Programmes

In September 2010 during his address at Farmleigh to the REAP Seminar on Industry Collaboration, Mr Michael Devane, Chair of Irish American Chamber Research and Development Working Group stated;

I think the education system needs to focus on recycling the current working population and developing a realistic and flexible adult learning model. If we are going to meet the challenge that is ahead of us, we need to take a significant volume of people (some of whom may have no third level background), and put them back into the education system. Clearly, we need some form of apparatus to plan this; we do not have a planning system currently and it's a major gap, and without it we cannot be successful.

According to Brew and Boud (1996), when making decisions about the conduct of additional workloads, academics have to balance competing demands of their discipline, department, their students and organisational goals and strategies. They maintain that despite substantial bodies of work examining disciplinary practices, research community building in laboratories, the interrelationship of knowledge and

society, and the relationship between teaching and research, studies of how academics make decisions in the face of such competing demands were rare.

However, despite the emphasis on quality management in the business world, some observers have noted slow progress among higher education institutions in moving systematically toward closing the ‘binary divide’ between academia and the workplace (Smith, Poppitt and Scott, 2010) and adopting comprehensive development systems for WBL initiatives. Lester and Costley (2010) identified that tensions still exist in HEI that respond to demands and opportunities provided by the workplace and demonstrate desire to support personal development while maintaining academic validity.

Bok (2006, p. 316) stated:

In theory, universities should be leaders in such efforts, since they have pioneered developing methods for evaluating other institutions in society. In fact, however, they leave a lot to be desired when it comes to working systematically to improve their own performance... The assumption is that good processes will generate good outcomes.

A number of consequences flow from this imperative to merge vocational knowledge into Higher Education systems (Smith and Preece, 2009), not least the development of a vocabulary for curricula by HEI academics and management. Accordingly, a number of terms such as ‘transferable skills’, ‘enterprise’, ‘outcomes’, ‘capability’, ‘project-based’ or ‘work-based learning’ have entered the lexicon.

Dhillon (2011) draws attention to numerous case studies which advocate that workplace assessment may be shared with various stakeholders, including students and industry supervisors, but it is ultimately recognise that assessment responsibility remains with the HEI and academic supervisors. This appears to reaffirm the place of WBL within its academic context through the medium of assessment and in my opinion is a key challenge for management of the work place partnership arrangement.

Building on Fullan (1991) insights, Murphy (2008) recommends adoption of active initiation, participation and support of relevant educational staff and management, reassessment and necessary change of belief on epistemic matters within colleges and a subsidiary attitude with regard to ownership in order to sustain momentum and responsiveness.

According to Vaill (1997) WBL is much more than the familiar experiential learning that consists of adding a layer of experience to conceptual knowledge. In WBL, academic theory may be acquired in conjunction with practice. Theory-building may be viewed as part of practice because those in practice are fully capable of producing theory. The theory produced by the practitioner may be a more practical, common sense theory, but a theory nonetheless.

Lester and Costley (2010) identify a growing sophistication regarding the way WBL is being theorised and facilitated in higher education. Biggs (2003) three Ps constructivist approach is influential as a relevant model for learning in the workplace. The staged model involves the *presage*, the *process* and the *product*. The

presage takes place prior to learning and involves consideration of the student's prior knowledge and ability, together with programme design, i.e., 'what is intended to be taught, how it will be taught and assessed' (Biggs, 2003, p. 18). The *process* is the 'learning-focused activities' which the student will undertake, and the *product* is the outcome desired from those activities (Biggs, 2003, p. 19). Aligning these three elements will, in Biggs' view ensure compatibility and consistency between the 'curriculum' (whatever shape that takes), the teaching method and the assessment set.

In particular, Walsh (2007) considers Biggs (2003) model of constructive alignment appropriate for development of WBL capacity and emphasises the importance of appropriate assessment, pointing out that students learn what they think they will be tested on. Work-based learners are generally concerned with their professional practice—their need is for functioning knowledge. He points out that decontextualised assessments, such as examinations, are useful for assessing declarative knowledge. However, this declarative knowledge is only one aspect of functioning knowledge. In arguing for the active demonstration of the knowledge in question, Biggs makes the case for 'performance assessment', claiming that this is the most appropriate way of assessing functioning knowledge. Examples of performance assessment include: problem-solving, presentations, vivas, critical incident analysis, individual and group projects, and learning contracts.

In order to develop professional skills in students and to create functioning knowledge, Biggs argues that it is necessary for students to have exposure to declarative knowledge (the relevant knowledge base), procedural knowledge (the skills necessary to apply this) and conditional knowledge (an awareness of

appropriate circumstances in which to apply the rest). He argues that, traditionally, HEIs have taught much declarative knowledge and some procedural knowledge, but that the students have had to develop the conditional knowledge which is necessary to achieve fully functioning knowledge on their own after graduation. Biggs maintains that constructive alignment can help address this issue, and ensure that students are more fully prepared for their professional role.

This sustainable change, according to Murphy (2008), must then be embedded in standard systems of the HEI, requiring a critical mass committed to the changes required, sustainable and quality procedures, training opportunities for existing and new staff, and needs accessible on-going supports with clear policy positions.

Gvaramadze (2008) refers to the inherent quality processes inbuilt into the Tuning approach which is at the centre of the Bologna¹¹ process. He emphasises that quality at programme level means coherence between the ‘fitness for purpose’ and ‘fitness of purpose’. In other words, quality in programme design and delivery means coherence of academic strategies towards achieving declared objectives of the programme and suitability of programme objectives to meet expectations of learners, academic staff, employers. This should be achieved through consultation with stakeholders such as the academic community, employers and professional bodies. They emphasise that a quality culture calls for cooperation and partnership among the stakeholders in order to share experiences and work together.

¹¹ The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world. The Bologna Process is named after the Bologna Declaration, which was signed in the Italian city of Bologna on 19 June 1999 by ministers in charge of higher education from 29 European countries.

Gomes *et al.* (2005) identified elements that could enhance HEI-industry collaboration. These included:

- Knowledge Transfer (individuals) – offer programmes to company staff and incorporate industry experts in academic delivery.
- Knowledge Transfer (organisation) – training centres, conferences, seminars, workshops.
- Internal Renewal – organisational structures, which facilitate collaboration.
- Internal Renewal of Academic Curricula – realigning curricula with societal needs, emphasis of learning capability and creativity.
- External Support to Collaboration – e.g. relevant agencies such as EI, IDA facilitates collaboration.

Regarding curriculum revision, Gomes *et al.* (2005) emphasised more generic academic elements rather than very applied vocational skills, which might have been expected for industry attraction. Having analysed what makes HEI-industry alliances work and what contributes to failure, studies recognise the different culture and all tend to emphasise the importance and commitment of the senior people involved in organising the collaboration and delivering on it (Gomes *et al.*, 2005).

Flint and Jones (2011) observe that the WBL discourse and practice is dominated by the language of educators and their particular metaphors of learning, thus requiring a major shift in power balance from HEI 'provider's to partnership approach with an underpinning principle of 'emancipatory learning'.

Hodkinson (2008) discusses the concept of 'Principled Pragmatism' as useful in the workplace-learning context. 'Principled' in that the practitioner has thought hard about what is to be learned, how and why; and 'pragmatic' because learning needs to be adapted to specific circumstances. This calls for high levels of flexibility and innovation from academic delivery staff and there are insinuations that academic staff are not interested in providing for this type of learner.

Further constraints are identified by Smith and Preece (2009) include quality assurance stringencies seemingly reserved for WBL programmes, absence of particular government funding, the intensity of labour required for WBL programmes, lack of sufficient flexibilities required by WBL students and dearth of management support.

Mythen in REAP (2009), called for a designated aide or implementation of a 'diagnostic kit' for the SME— a catalyst to 'get small businesses to think about understanding what elements are critical to their success and how they can actually collaborate effectively with a HEI to achieve this success'. This point is elaborated by Smith and Preece (2009), who suggest 'learning contracts' on WBL programmes allow stakeholders to reflect on whether needs are being met. To ease the cultural and language barriers between those in employment and academia, the University of

Glamorgan (2011) instigated production of a series of toolkits for employers, participants and HEI delivery staff. These toolkits outline some of the issues for supporting learners, supports and materials available and practical information.

Sheridan and Murphy (2012) outline the importance of an outline Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which provides a positive backdrop for future development work.

2.8.3 Use of Adjunct Faculty on Work-based Learning Programmes

Delivering WBL can create resource problems for academic departments because they cannot always recruit the additional staff they need (Smith and Preece, 2009). Several commentators (including Gappa, 1984; Louziotis, 2000 and Rice, 2006) have studied recruitment of adjunct faculty to fulfil additional obligations in academic departments.

Gappa (1984) defines part-time faculty, or an adjunct, as ‘anyone who (1) teaches less than the average fulltime teaching load, or (2) has less than a fulltime faculty assignment and range of duties, or (3) may have a temporary full-time assignment.’ There are two basic types of part-time faculty: those who teach occasionally and have other endeavours that they devote the majority of their time to (i.e., practitioners), and those who string together a series of part-time teaching positions in order to teach full-time.

Louziotis (2000) speculates that increased use of adjunct faculty may result from the idea that practitioners are better equipped to teach new practices than some full-time faculty who may not have practical business experience, however he warns against the potential denigration of programmes into a module of ‘war stories’. The increase in adjunct faculty has become a common phenomenon and presents challenges and opportunities for HEIs as they seek to deliver relevant learning of appropriate quality in a coherent fashion. The challenge for HEI administrators according to Louziotis is to use adjunct faculty in ways that meet the needs and demands of the public without damaging the mission of the academy. Louziotis identifies that adjuncts coming from the world of professional practice, may also have a solid foundation in the fundamentals of their field and be better suited to teaching students in areas of rapid change such as technology or areas of global business.

Rice (2006) outlines the new context for higher education provision which requires a re-evaluation of the work of academic staff. He is critical of the growth of nontenured full-time positions, the uses of adjunct faculty, and the demographic shifts in non tenured faculty—more female, diverse, and older—as the result of short-term decision-making rather than careful planning.

Linehan (2008) recognised that to be effective in meeting employers or customer needs, industry programmes need to be able to draw upon ways of working that are outside traditional subject disciplines and are transdisciplinary. These include partnerships with other providers of high level education as well as third level organisations, thereby promoting a collaborative approach to delivery of learning.

2.8.4 Challenges with Developing WBL within Higher Education

A 1988 study identified three key barriers to industry-HEI collaboration, (Van Dierdonck and Debackere, 1988). The barriers, which can occur on both the industrial and university side of the collaboration, were:

- Cultural Barriers which are manifested by differences in reaction speeds, short or long-term approaches, reward systems which can lead to mutual incomprehension;
- Institutional Barriers which are manifested by unclear norms and policies leading to stagnation and inertia; and
- Operational Barriers which are manifested by problems during the implementation of the project as a result of rules, norms, etc.

Symes and McIntyre (2000) suggest that the adultification of universities threatens the academic identity of staff where staff are forced to acknowledge adult learners as producers of knowledge. Murphy (2008) maintains that this acknowledgement is central to existing delivery complexities and hampers the strategic positioning of HEIs in this regard.

Lester and Costley (2010) identify that problems with WBL originate in a 'lack of fit' with the popular division of HEI programmes into either taught or research-based. These issues mainly appear in the grey literature such as project reports and are often the topic of validation events in HEIs (Lester and Costley, 2010), and some of them are discussed in literature concerning issues of academic value.

Critiques of WBL courses in universities were not however, evident in much of the published literature even though tutor/researchers in the field are aware that there are reservations about the substance of WBL programmes and modules from some parties. The Education in Employment and Roadmap for Employer Academic Partnership project reports identified issues raised by academic managers (concerned about viability) and academics (concerned about legitimacy). These issues were:

- Labour intensive support is required from academic staff to deliver WBL;
- Work-based Learning is complicated and demanding for HEI systems;
- Uncertainties exist about the academic benefit;
- Work-based Learning is not cost effective;
- Over emphasis on process rather than academic content;
- Lack of subject discipline-specific content;
- Difficulty in codifying knowledge arising from experiential learning (although because of EU initiatives a certain percentage of experiential learning is now becoming more acceptable and being recognised by HEIs); and
- Absence of written exam assessment.

Concerns are expressed that the economic value of developing the workforce is being prioritised over the academic value of developing individual people. Other issues arise because of the paradigmatic shift involved in such programmes, where much of the learning is not based on disciplinary knowledge but broader and practice-based knowledge (this has been cited in the literature as an internal obstacle). Much of this learning can be outside the realm of what HEIs could reasonably be expected to

engage with as it is at too low a level or ephemeral in nature (Lester and Costley, 2010).

According to Fullan, 'Education change is technically simple and socially complex' (Fullan, 1991, p. 109). While it is obvious that change in education is not always technically simple, it can indeed be socially complex, involving multiple social interactions among hundreds of people. Fullan outlines that implementation of education change, following the decision on adoption, is a dynamic process involving interlocking variables with key success factors and themes. These factors, or themes, include the nature or characteristics of the change itself, the local situation or characteristics and external factors or pressures. Keep and Mayhew (1999) refers to the misplaced confidence in current lifelong learning policies and concepts in the UK and highlights the dwindling role that employers are afforded in strategies.

The HEA Academy (2011) 'Learning from Experience in Employer Engagement' report on recent experiences of delivery of WBL in the UK identifies the following barriers to developing academic staff interest in WBL:

- Competing priorities of teaching, research and administration which contend for time and esteem;
- Employer engagement may be seen as a threat to tradition through engaging new audiences with more vocational content rather than traditional perceptions of higher academic study; and

- Some academic disciplines are historically more abstract in nature, making immediate and specific employer relevance less apparent, and perhaps more of a challenge to core disciplinary values.

Drucquer, Thomas and Morrison (2011, p. 62) state in the report;

Some academic prejudice comes from reasonable concerns about preserving the quality of education. It may be that there is a perception that WBL is of lower quality than traditional learning, or it may be doubts over the possibility of ensuring appropriate learning outcomes and enabling a student experience of suitable quality. Clearly, of course, some problems arise because this is a relatively new area of practice, and requires different skills and infrastructure for delivery.

Therefore, according to Murphy (2008), staff need to be given time to struggle with the ambivalence of initiatives like WBL before sustainable practices and clear expressions through appropriate learning outcomes can be comprehensively adopted to accurately reflect student achievement. Used rigidly, some commentators feel that learning outcomes become the sole focus of any classroom interaction and stifle discussion, encouraging a reductionist approach to cover only the lecturer's prior knowledge of the subject (Maher, 2004).

It is obvious, according to Reeve and Gallacher (2005), that regardless of the plethora of reports into the potential of WBL, there is little evidence to suggest the discipline has become a major form of provision in third level education, demand is limited and this is in part due to the problematic concept of public/private partnership. They note that over formalisation may place an administrative burden on employers, leading to 'collaborative inertia' and that employers needs might be much more diverse than formal programmes. Citing lack of organisational fit and academic resistance, Smith

and Preece (2009) question the real extent that UK government and state agency WBL policy is translated into organisational practice in HEIs.

Garrison and Anderson (2003) outline that higher education places value on higher order learning outcomes, and the development of critical thinking processes required to achieve these outcomes through complex and sustained communication between and among the teacher and students. According to Lester and Costley (2010), although higher level skills and learning are relevant, a significant proportion of workplace learning is not considered appropriate for a HEI due to its low academic content or transient nature.

Roodhouse in Roodhouse and Mumford (2010) provide a rather practical explanation for lack of staff interest. They identify absence of strategy at local level, of an overall institutional strategy and lack of relative importance for these activities, compared with developing academic research and international standing.

Kelly (2010) also identifies an adversarial culture which exists between management and unions representing academic staff in the Institute of Technology sector. Presenting this culture as a barrier to change within the sector, he refers to the traditional tight control of teaching hours and duties, bound by taut management and union relationships.

However despite Workman (2008) conceptualisation of WBL as a field of learning rather than a recognised mode, there is no doubt that the theories and practices of WBL are developing legitimacy as a source of tertiary learning (Murphy, 2008). Lester and Costley (2010) support this observation and are positive regarding emergence of WBL, outlining that ‘evidence indicates that well-designed work-based programmes are both effective and robust’, calling for more sophisticated partnerships with more attention to individual learners stretching beyond the perspective of their current employment.

Smith and Preece (2009) also identify disjuncture between UK government policy and practice. Relating resistance to ‘non – converts’, or those academic staff not involved, and other local constraints, the introduction of WBL is stymied by other paradigmatic changes in higher education, including the advent of managerialism, quality assurance and changes in funding models. Resistance among academics to WBL, according to Smith and Preece (*ibid.*), is actually a form of self protection.

There are obvious emergent tensions between the theories described by Cunningham *et al.* (2007) and the schools of thought that require constructive alignment of WBL programmes in the manner proffered by Biggs (2003). In the context of the learning outcomes approach, and emphasis on accreditation adapted within Irish HEIs, these tensions are real and potentially detrimental to the emergence of WBL as a legitimate form of learning that crosses the cultural divide of industry and academia, from its position of ‘a bit of “cottage industry” supported by enthusiasts’ (HEA, 2006, p. 16).

Lester and Costley (2010) provocatively highlight suggestions that reliance on lukewarm university- employer partnerships may actually hinder the development of WBL and its conceptual role in workforce developments needs further critical analysis.

The extant literature outlined in this section indicates that Van Dierdonck and Debackere's (1988) barriers to collaboration are still very relevant today. Although knowledge of the principles of collaboration has increased, there is little evidence in the literature of a response to Garrick, Chan and Lai's (2003) challenge to HEIs to think beyond pre-set curricula and accreditation processes, to allow learning at work a place on their schemata.

2.9 Emergent Work-based Learning Scholarship within Human Resource Development

2.9.1 People Development within an Organisation

'The only way to cope with a changing world is to keep learning' (Dixon, 1998, p. 31). In today's society there is increased recognition of the importance of lifelong learning, as reliant, organisations are dependent on complex products and services characterised by constant access to innovation (OECD, 2007). Since the mid 1970's, economies and societies in general have become more information and knowledge intensive, with information/knowledge intensive industries becoming more prevalent and generating more wealth than manufacturing industries (Neef, 1999).

Given this context, flexible learning can be seen as both a condition of and contributor to changes in the social and economic division of labour, the organization and management of work and production, and the management of workplace culture. Flexible learning is also, from an educational perspective, about the appropriate provisions required to meet such changes. Traditional knowledge canons and pedagogic are increasingly seen as inflexible, challenged and displaced by more flexible contents and modes of learning regarded as more congruent with the flexibility in labour processes, markets, products and patterns of consumption that characterise post-Fordist processes of flexible capital accumulation.

Garrick and Usher, (2000) <http://www.sociology.org/content/vol005.001/garrick-usher.html> (Accessed on: 10th June, 2012).

Garrick and Usher's comments help to contextualise rhetoric and gradual societal acceptance that lifelong learning is a necessary part of career progression and a legitimate way of establishing social capital in the workplace. They identify emerging concepts of capacity building of staff through investment in social and human capital, and developing staff capability where employees redefine their identity and subjectivity in the world as a personal agent of 'enterprising self'.

According to Hayes (2007) organisations seek to avoid entropy with the ultimate result of effectiveness being survival, and senior managers seek to achieve this by aligning the organisation with the environment. Organisational learning, therefore, involves developing the collective ability to act more effectively within your labour market context.

However this all takes place within 'wider inter and intra organisational contexts' and attitudes to people development differ substantially (Smith and Preece, 2009). The attitude of some organisations is to avoid training their employees as it is an unnecessary expense (Reidy, 2003) or alternatively, organisations aspire to be

learning organisations defined by Pedlar *et al.* (1988) as ‘an organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself’.

Reidy (ibid.) proposes that an organisations attitude to people development is influenced by four considerations:

- Management trends and culture that influence the belief that people development benefits the organisation;
- The implications of employment legislation and the obligation to provide certain training;
- The availability of skilled labour through the labour market; and
- The availability of adequate resources such as time, money and access to up skilling opportunities.

These attitudes are balanced by ensuring that employees are able to meet demands necessary for competitive functioning and according to Stewart and Rigg (2011), the purpose of learning and talent development in work organisations is always related to achieving some combination of individual and organisational desired results. By implication, the people development debate moves to the strategic linking of development activities with corporate objectives and the necessary involvement of line management in people development activities. However Reidy argues that development of a learning organisation, due to the expense and difficulty involved in implementation, is not necessarily suitable for every organisation and Van Grisven and Visser (2011) refer to emergent pessimism regarding the feasibility of overall concept.

Although learning in the workplace is increasingly associated with organisational performance, assessment of learning in the workplace is increasingly significant but difficult to capture given the various ways that learning is conceptualised and measured (Collins, 2011). WBL through informal methods is increasingly recognised as more relevant than formal learning and that creating the conditions for informal learning were more valuable to organisations. Mayo (2004) proposed this view stating that successful learning interventions are not solely about processes and practice, but requires a supporting culture that thinks learning and values it seriously, while following a desired end state or vision against which progress can be measured.

Stewart and Rigg (2011) advocate embedding these concepts by thinking through the steps required in the planning, delivery and review of learning interventions in the workplace. They proposed a simple model to assess design and delivery which will capture factors such as appropriateness of the objectives, alignment with business strategy, organisation context, transfer and application to work. In this model, ten factors are identified that are necessary for the design of strong learning solutions.

These factors include:

Figure 2.5: Factors in the Design of Strong Learning Solutions



According to Stewart and Rigg, successful design and delivery is dependent on this wide set of interconnecting factors elaborated in Appendix 4. Evaluation of any intervention should be guided by the following points:

- Is trust in the value of learning and development high, medium or low?
- Is alignment required for long-term strategic capability or short-term performance priorities? The starting point for any intervention is its purpose and the expectations of key stakeholders.
- What are the stakeholders expectation of learning and development?
- What kind of evaluation measures are required – efficiency, benchmarking or return on investment or return on stakeholder expectation?

Linking a learning and development intervention to business strategy is described as ‘alignment’. Stewart and Rigg (2011) outline that horizontal alignment links an intervention with other HR and HRD activities. Vertical alignment links the business approach to learning and development with the overall business strategy.

2.9.2 Role of Employers/Employees

WBL has been identified as a means of responding to the needs of employers, particularly those in SME’s. A key aspect is the direct involvement of employers and their commitment to providing the context for learning (Boyer, 2000). According to the OECD (2010), employer willingness to offer workplace training provides a signal and verification that a learning programme is relevant and has labour market value.

Employer involvement can range from hosting a period of work experience to delivery of training entirely in the workplace. Employer-led training is increasingly considered an important source of skills development, as employers are ultimately end-users (McIntosh, 1999).

Hodkinson (2008) identifies dissonance between what employees want and what employers want. Employees may request learning interventions that they feel they require (Lester and Costley, 2010), but the employer may feel that these interventions will be too disruptive to established working practices or not fit in with current development plans. According to Lee (2008) success in work-based study requires the development of effective personal study strategies which develop independence, and ability to manage concurrent projects and help integrate learning into the workplace. Embedded in this idea is that a continuing process of learning for employees is facilitated by employers and will be at the heart of achieving organisational success and enables goal achievement.

Adler and Heckscher, cited in Daniels *et al.* (2010) argue that neither bureaucratic authority nor market contrivance can optimise both the creation and dissemination of knowledge at work at the same time. They suggest that only a collaborative community based on shared object, mutual trust and non zero sum outcomes can achieve this.

According to Billett, Smith and Barker (2006) employers have a number of reasons for participating in WBL; the first is a business expectation whilst the second was more altruistic. Employers primarily expect to develop new employees, whilst they also expressed a social obligation for providing employment opportunities for students and future graduates on work placements. Truelove (2006) advocates that all management should accept personal responsibility for the training and development of their own staff, but realises that prioritising staff development into important work is problematic.

Employers altruistic motives were questioned by Ahlgren and Tett (2010), highlighting statements by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, which argued that too little weight was given to the reality that, for many employers, it is not in their financial interest to invest in portable skills that could be utilised by competitors. They referred to a study carried out in Scotland in 2006, which revealed that there were more likely to be extensive 'latent' skills where employers neglected to consider that further investment in staff development could yield improvements in performance, particularly with lower skilled occupations. This was reportedly because organisations reporting skills problems were less likely than average to have been growing and providing training for their staff. Ahlgren and Tett theorise that the gap between high and low skilled will continue to increase if employers maintain this narrow vision of learning and employee development, thus increasing the likelihood that learning will be accessed by those who are already well educated. Their research found that the learning culture in the workplace had a strong influence on the nature of learning and training opportunities offered by employers.

Fuller and Unwin (2004) developed the expansive – restrictive framework to provide a conceptual and analytical tool for evaluating the quality of learning environments and for analysing an organisations approach to workforce development. They identified three participatory dimensions:

- i. Opportunities for engaging in multiple (and overlapping) communities of practice in and beyond the workplace;
- ii. Access to a multidimensional approach to the acquisition of expertise through the organisation of work and job design; and

- iii. The opportunity to pursue knowledge-based courses related to work. Organisations with a restrictive approach impose many limitations on learning, whereas those with an expansive approach foster a wide array of formal, non formal and informal approaches to and opportunities for learning.

Using this framework outlined in Table 2.5, Ahlgren *et al.* (2007) found that eight out of fourteen SMEs researched offered ‘expansive’ learning opportunities where learning for the whole workforce was developed, employees were seen as an asset and there was a belief that everyone can learn. Managers from companies with this orientation considered that organisations would benefit from employees bringing learning back to the workplace.

In this study, managers with a ‘restrictive’ attitude to learning were more negative about opportunities and imposed limits on learning. In these companies, procedural compliance took precedence over other aspects such as enhancing employees’ understanding of their job, ensuring job retention or helping employee’s progression. Apart from compulsory training essential for the job, such as health and safety, little money was invested in learning activities. Most learning was informal and took place on the job, but managers did not appreciate learning as essential for the maintenance of production. The major concern of employers was cost and the loss of income when employees were not focusing directly on the job.

Fuller and Unwin indicated that organisations that are closer to the expansive side of the spectrum are better at integrating the personal and organisational development of employees and managers. Particular characteristics of the expansive learning environment include access to learning fostered by cross organisational experience; organisational recognition and support for career development; managers as facilitators of career development; cross boundary collaboration and teamwork; and a multidimensional view of expertise.

***Table 2:5:Expansive and Restrictive Learning Environments
(Fuller and Unwin, 2004)***

| Expansive | Restrictive |
|--|--|
| Participation in multiple communities of practice inside and outside the workplace | Restricted participation in multiple communities of practice |
| Primary community of practice has shared participative memory; cultural inheritance of workforce development | Primary community of practice has little or no participative memory; little or no tradition of apprenticeship |
| Broad: access to learning fostered by cross-company experiences | Narrow: access to learning restricted in terms of tasks/knowledge/location |
| Access to range of qualifications including knowledge- based vocational qualifications | Little or no access to qualifications |
| Planned time off the job for knowledge- based courses and for reflection | Virtually all on the job; limited opportunity for reflection |
| Graduate transition to full, rounded participation | Fast- transition as quick as possible |
| Vision of workplace learning; profession for career | Vision of workplace learning; static for job |
| Organisational recognition of and support for career | Lack of organisational recognition and support for employees as learners |
| Workforce development is used as a vehicle for aligning the goals of developing the individual and the organisational capacity | Workforce developments used to tailor individual capability to organisational need |
| Workforce development fosters opportunities to extend identity through boundary crossing | Workforce development limits opportunities to extend identity: little organisational boundary crossing experienced |
| Reification of ‘workplace curriculum’ highly developed (e.g. through documents, symbols, language tools) accessible to apprentices | Limited reification of ‘workplace curriculum’; patchy access to reificatory aspects of practice |
| Widely distributed skills | Polarised distribution of skills |
| Technical skills valued | Technical skills taken for granted |
| Knowledge and skills of whole workforce developed and valued | Knowledge and skills of key workers/groups developed and valued |
| Teamwork valued | Rigid specialist roles |
| Cross – boundary communication encouraged | Bounded communication |
| Managers as facilitators of workforce and individual development | Managers as controllers of workforce and individual development |
| Chances to learn new skills/jobs | Barriers to learning new skills/jobs |
| Innovation important | Innovation not important |
| Multidimensional views of expertise | Unidimensional top-down view of expertise |

Ahlgren *et al.* (2007) describes a third category, the passive-restrictive approach. Managers with a passive-restrictive attitude to organisational learning focus on providing learning and development opportunities for employees involved in the production or service side of the business. The development of other employees is not seen as important for the business and was therefore did not feature.

According to Watson (2006) provision of alternative environments could be due to differing management philosophies characterised as systems – control, which views the organisation as run and engineered like a machine, in contrast with process – relational which sees the organisation as a network of interlinked relationships. According to Stewart and Rigg (2011), employment of either philosophy reflects a manager's sense of identity, core values and purpose at that point in time.

Hodkinson (2004) argues that a person's activities and choices are both constrained and enabled by their horizons for actions and are influenced by evident possibilities and perceptions. Ahlgren and Tett (2010) concur, identifying that even when organisational culture facilitates personal development through learning, not all employees are orientated to learning. Barton *et al.* (2007) emphasise the cluster of social, psychological and affective characteristics which constitute identities, circumstance, and exercise of personal control and importance of personal plans. These diverse identities influence incidence of uptake of opportunities and also the 'affordance' of learning occasions within the workplace. Nixon (2006) feels that representative bodies are more proactive in this work. Nixon advocates that more energy should be directed towards motivating employers and employees to engage in

higher level skills development, and establish closer relationships to overcome cultural and language differences.

Evans, Guile and Harris (2011, p. 159) advocate use of ‘industry educators’, or industry professionals who can contribute to educational programmes in order to facilitate ‘recontextualisation’ of knowledge from academic theory to practical application. In their view, this facilitates learning from ‘knowledge brokers’ who have experienced the same pathway as learners and are aware of challenges and working cultures.

This significant impact that WBL can maximise broad participation and facilitate growth of higher learning across all levels of society is emphasised by Lester and Costley (2010) who refer to ‘growing body of evidence to indicate that work-based learning of various kinds is effective in increasing adult participation in higher education’. They also refer to unpublished and anecdotal evidence that WBL programmes can play a catalytic role for those with a rather weak attachment to their employer, in facilitating movement out of their organisations because their current employers proved unable or unwilling to give expression to new learning.

Fleming, Harley and Sewell (2004) observed that employment statistics in Australia between the years 1986 and 2000 called into question, rhetoric regarding the knowledge society with polarised and unequal growth in highly skilled professional occupations and also growth in lower skilled occupations. These findings challenged the knowledge based society argument. In support of those findings, McKinsey (2009) outlines that US workers in non routine manual tasks, that cannot be easily

automated, have been largely unaffected by the skill based technology trend. The workers in this sector, (e.g. customer service agents, maids, etc.) were still experiencing demand growth, while their traditionally modest wages barely grew between 1997 and 2005 mostly due to the effects of immigration, deunionisation, female participation in the workforce, workforce aging and off shoring of services. At the same time there has been an increasing demand for tasks that demand human skills complemented by technology. However, consequentially for this thesis, for those in routine manual tasks and classic ‘blue collar’ work, increased skills led to pay premiums for higher formal education qualifications.

2.9.3 Work-based Learning in Small Businesses

The SME dimension is particularly important. According to Hogarth *et al.* (2007), there are particular difficulties with the introduction of WBL in SMEs given the history, structure and character of their businesses. In the past, most managers of small firms had limited experience of higher education (HE) and may not appreciate and be unresponsive (Gray and Lawless, 2000) to the diversity that HE can provide and what modern graduates can offer. They outline that relatively few have links with HE and can appreciate their knowledge transfer and problem solving capabilities. SMEs can have relatively high transaction costs in dealing with and have different perspectives on timing and delivery (requiring more flexible learning packages than HEIs have traditionally been able to offer). From an HE perspective, it seems a very fragmented market, with large numbers of small businesses having varied needs, and being reluctant to pay for a quality product.

As for smaller employers, Hogarth *et al.* (2007, p. 12) reflects the HE experience:

One thing that both sides of the employer-HE relationship were agreed upon was that the constraints identified above are much greater, relatively, for small and medium-sized enterprises [SMEs] than for larger organisations.

Thomas, in the HEA 2011 report on WBL delivery in UK HEIs (p. 134), recognised difficulties of this cohort of business, and outlined the need for a new educational paradigm that was grounded in personalised individual development and scalable for any organisation. Thomas suggested integration of IT toolkits, WBL projects and three way learning agreements supervised by both industry and academic mentors to meet the needs of smaller companies.

Thomas observes that organisational support for learning is limited, citing factors outlined by Keep and Rainbird (2000) including shorter thinking on pay and costs, minimal utilisation of existing skills and delegation of authority, low trust and high surveillance culture, business growth via mergers and acquisitions rather than organic growth and the prevalent culture of the notion of management as doing/action rather than reflection/analysis, hence managers lack the skills/behaviours and attitudes to develop learning.

Difficulties with partnership are by no means unique to WBL as demonstrated by the research of Huxham and Vangen (2000), who drew on action research with 13 different partnerships across the public and private sectors to explore just what made partnerships work. They conclude, somewhat pessimistically, that while the aim was to achieve ‘collaborative advantage’ through partnership, in practice many partnerships fell into ‘collaborative inertia’ where progress was either negligible or hard won. Indeed they found ‘it was not uncommon for people to argue that the

positive outputs have happened despite the partnership rather than because of it' (p. 294). Problems emerged in managing the aims of the partnership, managing different languages and cultures and in managing issues of trust and power.

The significance of these problems is reflected in their conclusion: 'don't do it unless you have to; or, more formally... unless you can see the potential for significant collaborative advantage' (p. 307). For in order to achieve success, 'significant resources and personal energy need to be allocated to the partnership' (p. 307).

For example, they point to tensions which arise from differences in decision-making procedures of large bureaucratic organisations (often, though not exclusively, in the public sector) and other smaller SME partners with more direct processes. While these practical differences are significant, they are very often compounded by differences in professional languages and associated values that partners work within. West (2004) stated that organisational culture must encourage learning and tolerate ambiguity within and between work groups who struggle to adapt to the pressure of 'similarity'. West also noted that personal power issues internal to the organisation, can inhibit companies from moving from control to coordination.

2.9.4 International HRD Practice in the HTL Sector

According to Ko (2012) the HTL industry requires intensive human capital contributions as well as concentrated technical proficiencies, citing Hwa (2008), who makes human resource capabilities a key factor in the 90% of success or failures in the HTL industry. However, in the opinion of Westwood (2002), referenced in Baum (2007), work in services such as tourism and specifically, hospitality has been widely

characterised as ‘low skills’ in both the academic literature and the popular press. Ayikoru, Tribe and Airey (2009) outline challenges to educators in an industry where previous research indicates employers do not consider HTL qualifications a necessary requirement for employment and anecdotally that qualifications are a hindrance when seeking employment. This reflects the theoretical basis of most higher education curricula which overemphasise theoretical discussions (Ko, 2012) and dearth of relevant professional experience in HTL faculty staff according to Becket and Brooks (2008).

The need for improving proficiencies within the industry has been expressed for some time and as far back as 1988, the International Hotel Association (IHA) commissioned a study designed to ascertain the strategic importance of HRM and its priority on the management agenda. This study, conducted by Horwath and Horwath (1988), stated:

Throughout the course of our research it has become apparent to us that human resources are perceived to be the single most important issue facing the industry during the next two decades and beyond.

(Ibid., as cited in Hulton, 1992, p. 231).

In the 1990’s heightened recognition of the importance of people for competitive success focused HRM to the forefront of hotel management concerns. Therefore, as Conrade *et al.* (1994, p. 20) observed:

Failure on the part of hotel firms to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours of these employees can have a dramatic effect on the viability of the entire organisation.

Randall and Senior (1996) identified a link between effective management of training and improved customer service, and Burns (1997) defined growing sophistication of skills development within parts of the hospitality sector, noting that:

... the different sectors that comprise tourism-as-industry take different approaches to their human resources, and that some of these differences ... are due to whether or not the employees have a history of being 'organised' (either in terms of trade unions or staff associations with formalised communication procedures). (p. 240)

At that period, the dynamic noted by Burns of 'organised' sectors, such as airlines and some larger hotel companies where clearly defined staff relationship structures are recognised and valued is contrasted with catering and fast food operations who 'operate within a business culture where labour is seen in terms of costs which must be kept at the lowest possible level' (ibid., p. 240) and where skills, therefore, are not valued financially or culturally.

Cornford and Gunn (1998) in a study of WBL in the HTL sector outlined the following difficulties:

- Opportunities to practice skills may be limited in some establishments especially in SMEs that have a restricted level of skills and learning opportunities available for students;
- Smaller establishments may not have the ability, will or time to provide the necessary mentoring and structured workplace learning practice and experience necessary;

- Difficulties around employer–teacher communication and cooperation. A lack of engagement and linkage between industry and the education institution creates a discontinuity between the integration of theory and practice; and
- The lack of training for coaches/mentors/supervisors in the workplace. It is assumed that coaches in addition to having the specialist skill also have the ability to impart this to the student and this may not always be the case. In the Cornford study less than half of the supervisors/coaches had received tutor training.

Keep and Mayhew (1999a, pp. 8-9) describe characteristics of hospitality work that tend to confirm weak internal HRD focus at that period which can be summarised as generally low wages, unsocial hours, male domination of higher level work, unstructured career practices, absence of significant trade union presence and high turnover with difficulties in recruitment and retention.

Many theorists including Amenumey and Lockwood (2008) contend that the service environment must be flexible enough to allow employees to respond creatively to customers' needs. They cited Jong and Ruyter's (2004, p. 459) arguments regarding the radical demands of a service environment.

The atypical, complex, and disturbing nature of service recovery problems,..(where) employees need to show flexibility in their contact with customers.

This resonates with Baum (2007) who felt that commentators underestimated the level of performance required from general workers in the sector, who were required to display a wide ranging bundle of attributes, extending beyond traditional interpretations of such work that are focused, primarily, on technical aspects of product delivery'. He points that definitions of skills in the sector are socially constructed and may be defined as a result of unequal social processes that reflect power structures within the sector. He identifies the challenge for HRD international hospitality practices as helping migrant employees bridge the social and cultural gap between their home experiences and the performance required in the industry. Baum feels that conventional training processes cannot achieve this 'mean challenge' of the demand for increasingly sophisticated language and aesthetic skills of an affluent country.

Clark, Hartline and Jones (2009) found that managers who are committed to service quality and employ an empowering leadership style, that is , decision-making without consultation with a supervisor, as defined by Conger and Kanungo, 1988, in Clark Hartline and Jones (2009) can facilitate development of higher level of quality in serving hotel guests. They found that employees whose ideas or suggestions were repeatedly ignored were less likely to share the managers values and less likely to provide a high quality service.

These opinions are supported by Kusluvan *et al.* (2010, p. 171) who proposes that:

The human element in tourism and hospitality organisations is critical for service loyalty, customer satisfaction and loyalty, competitive advantage, and organisational performance.

Kusluvan *et al.* (ibid.) categorise human resource development within the sector into variants of resource based theory (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991) and its variants – dynamic capability theory (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000), competency – based theory (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990), knowledge based theory (Grant, 1996), organisational social capital theory (Naphapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), and intellectual capital theory (Edwinsson and Malone, 1997; Stewart, 1997). These theories subscribe that firm specific resources, assets that are valuable, ‘imperfectly imitable’ or rare, such as employee performance, are a source of sustainable competitive advantage among firms. Kushluvan *et al.* acknowledge that necessary employee attributes within the hospitality sector are directly influenced by HRM policies, practices, and capabilities within that organisation, as well as the organisational culture and climate.

They mention the extant literature, including Bitner, Booms and Tetrault (1990), Nickson *et al.* (2002) and Schneider (2003) which indicates the role of employee management in provision of service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, competitive advantage, organisational performance, and business success in the hospitality sector. They outline that treatment, management and development of employees should be of ‘crucial concern for managers in the tourism and hospitality sector’.

Table 2.6: HRM Practices and Consequences in the HTL Workplace
(Adapted from Kushlivan et al. and Fáilte Ireland, 2010)

| HR Practices | Organisational Impact | Literature |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Employee recognition, respect and reward | Profits, market share and guest satisfaction | Maxwell and Lyle (2002) |
| Top Managements' vision of a quality culture, communication, employee involvement, job design, teamwork, empowerment, career development and job satisfaction | Total quality management culture, employee turnover, sales, on time orders, productivity, problem solving ability of personnel, sense of unity, customer satisfaction | Partlow (1996) |
| Performance appraisal, remuneration, and training | Improvement in staff relations, improvement in quality, employee commitment, productivity, profitability, reduced employee turnover and costs | Davies, Taylor and Savery (2001) |
| Training, communication, orientation, advancement opportunities, job security, selective selection, participation in decision-making | Organisational commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, customer service, pride in working for the company, adoption of company values | Kinicki, Carson and Bohlander (1992) |
| Innovative training, strategic recruiting, and provision of a teamwork environment | Service Quality | Jago and Deery (2002) |
| Culture of caring, flexible scheduling, innovative recruitment, training viewed as an investment, performance management systems | Customer Service | Hinkin and Tracey (2010) |

Hinkin and Tracey (2010) correspond with Fáilte Ireland's Management Education report in 2010 and outline that international Human Resource Development practices are increasingly improving within a number of HTL organisations and that certain multinational hospitality firms (e.g. Four Seasons and Marriott International) are listed regularly in 'Best Places to Work' in business magazines.

These views contrast somewhat with Baums (2007) reflections that the human resource contract has been eroded over the years as trade unions have failed to address the needs of the service economy and allowed the weakening of employees position in the sector, perhaps due to HTL management attitude. Many employers operate a 'just-in-time' attitude in response to variable demand, streamlining processes and relying on the energy of workers for delivery of services. He cites previous reports by Canny (2002) outlining that in major cities in the UK and elsewhere, perhaps half of all tourism workers are notionally full-time students and that much of the industry operates on the basis of high turnover, low pay, poor conditions and minimal investment in training. Many tourism businesses do not perceive the need to change because low cost employees are readily available and forego productivity in favour of lower labour costs. As Lashley (2011), observed 'there is no strong employer commitment to an education and training culture'. In fact some commentators feel this reflects a 'low road' culture (Lucas, 2004) within the hotel sector which prioritises labour cost management, values limited investment in recruitment and development activities and neglects a recognised career path linked to qualifications. Baum (2012) however differentiates in that big hotel chains have HRD resources including in-house and on-job-training, whereas SMTEs lack the capacity to do so and rely more on the vocational system to meet their training requirements.

Baum, however, observes previous sector reports on the increasing emphasis on 'emotional labour' in the sector, and decrease in social distance between the guest and employee in developed countries, placing greater emphasis on employees aesthetic appearance, 'soft skills' and management of emotions for financial reward, for example, the Disney theme parks and airline attendants. Baum observes the role of

global consumers who in their demand for low cost services, pressure operators into undesirable and practices that are often outside the law. Accordingly these recent contradictory developments of ‘gentrification of skills’, and low cost migrant labour, challenge education systems and ‘point to a significant mismatch between education and training and the requirement of the contemporary industry’ (Ibid., p. 1393).

Denayer (2008) points to a lack of ‘social capital’ and political power which function as significant barriers to integration of migrants into the workplace. Developing this notion, Baum (2012) identifies that migrant workers in the hospitality sector in developed countries suffer from a lack of voice. They are often are significantly over-qualified for the working roles that they play and are disproportionately likely to remain in low skills and lower paid positions in the sector. Promotion and career development opportunities for migrant workers are frequently limited and inaccessible, and only infrequently is supportive trade union representation available. As a practical response to this dilemma, Baum notes that Fáilte Ireland has sought widespread access to its formal training programmes for tourism workers to migrant workers seeking to enhance their skills and opportunities in the industry.

Baum and Szivas (2007, p. 791) recognises the role for government intervention in tourism education where there is ‘market failure’ and identifies ‘evidence of market and cultural failure in the coordination and management of HRD within tourism’. Where this exists, they advocate partnerships between public and private sectors and dynamic partnership between education and training, and the industry.

Concern regarding the impact of previous HRD reports is expressed by Melia (2011, p. 56) who points out that hotel companies have an ‘overly financial focus’ placing a greater emphasis on financial performance than any other dimension. Melia (ibid.) also observes that suggested performance measurement frameworks do not transfer directly from the manufacturing sector to the service sector, as unique organisational characteristics and critical success factors play a greater role than anticipated.

Solnet, Baum and Kralj (2012, p. 581) express concern for the role of the human resources function and ‘people-first’ policies, within the global hospitality industry. Building on Baum (2007) and Kuslavan *et al.* (2010), they question current understanding and evolution of the role of HR Managers, within the context of tensions between dominant American ‘convergence of practice’ models driven by multinationals, and realities of national and regional cultures within which they are ‘globally located’. This often resulted in more regionally focused agile and business-centred HR solutions, which are deeply relevant to their context, even including employee satisfaction, but is leading to a trend of formalised HR practices being downgraded or eliminated. They highlight the need for further study of human resource management practice within the sector.

2.9.5 HRD Practice in the Irish HTL Environment

Baum and Szivas (2007) are highly flattering regarding the proactive role of the Irish state, expressed since the mid 2000’s through Fáilte Ireland, in coordination and operations in the field of tourism education in Ireland. They feel this governmental role reflects on the maturity of the Irish HTL industry and builds on the work of previous direct interventions. One of these previous interventions, CERT (2000a)

identified that issues pertaining to the recruitment, development and retention of the workforce had started to move centre stage within the industry. This followed a report the previous year (Hospitality 2005 – A Human Resource Strategy, 1999) that recommended that firms recognise the importance of training and qualifications in developing a committed workforce. Firms should encourage and facilitate career progression by way of certified in- company and off-site training and CERT should promote certified training as a vehicle for individual progress.

CERT (2000b), in a review of international culinary ‘best practice’ operations identifies features of good practice for the Irish industry. In the main, these were identifiable in larger organisations where staffing and facilities were available for training (although there were some smaller operations that prioritised training). Best practice features included induction training by qualified trainers, structured accredited staff development, use of senior staff supervision, e – learning and multiple hotel cooperation.

By way of illustration, O’Mahony and Sillitoe (2001), maintain that a professional competitive industry endeavouring to deliver international standards of service greatly depends on the training and education of its personnel. Nolan (2004) highlights widespread acknowledgement that quality of service provided to the hotel guest is integral in shaping the customer’s experience of the Irish service and links the provision of HRD and positive HR outcomes. These include lower staff turnover, increased commitment, greater job satisfaction and morale, and also organisational outcomes such as increased service quality and enhanced productivity.

Baum (2006) describes Fáilte Ireland's proactive coordination role of HRD as probably unique within the international tourism field. Designed to ensure initiatives are coherent with wider tourism policy and responsive to changing market opportunities, Baum feels this role reflects high levels of financial and professional investment but questions how results of this state-led investment can be measured or quantified. Baum (2007) identifies that increased mobility in the form of labour migration has implications for marketing of countries like Ireland which depends significantly on images of people and place in destination branding. Decreased distance and expectations between the guest and employees of 'interpretative representations', may place strain on the nature of hospitality expected from front line staff.

In the Fáilte Ireland Education Strategy (2008a) the following key elements for training and development to address skills shortfalls are relevant¹²:

- A focus on leveraging the potential of **employer-led skills and WBL**.
- A focus on **customer service and inter-personal skills** as core element of the required skill set in the hospitality sector.
- **Accelerated and total immersion programmes** of skills training.
- A focus on the contribution to be secured through development of **Accreditation of Prior Learning**.
- A determination to support and improve **craft-based education** and an active programme to promote and deliver education at this level.

¹² Fáilte Ireland own bold emphasis.

The Fáilte Ireland study ‘Management Education for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Ireland’ (2010) refers to initial influence of the European model of personnel development, with emphasis on development of technical and operational skills. This was followed by a move since the mid Seventies towards the Cornell model, combining operational skills and management subjects such as marketing, finance, economics and HRM. The study concludes that growth within the HTL management education sector has been significant.

The impact of these reports and development bodies is questioned as Melia (2010, p. 56) notes that the Irish hospitality has ‘poor administration in the industry, financial dyslexia, resistance to learning- linked to fear and dearth of knowledge about aspects of performance other than financial performance’. Nolan *et al.* (2010) agreed also highlighting the need for greater collaboration and partnership between the industry and Irish education providers in preparing students to meet the needs of the hotel industry.

According to Melia (2011, p. 10) again, there is shortage of qualified and experienced staff and skills in the Irish hospitality industry defining it as ‘an industry that is struggling to provide quality of service.... despite the increases in unemployment.’ Melia (*ibid.*) outlines that the major survival challenge for Irish owned hotels is to achieve best practice in every aspect of their business including customer service and operations and match the standards of service provided in large multinational chains.

2.9.6 Occupational Profile of the Hotel Industry, Demography and Stability of Employment in the Industry

There is a predominance of Small to Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) in the HTL sector, many of them family owned businesses that may not have made the transition to professional management (AIT Report on WBL, 2010). As stated, multitasking managers without much management training are common throughout the sector especially in the SMTEs.

Key commentators, including Riley (1996) and Baum (2012), defined the HTL labour market as a ‘weak labour market’ within certain obvious features including high proportion of unskilled occupations, transferability of skills at any level between a broad range of similar HTL establishments, high levels of labour turnover and low levels of pay, particularly for unskilled work. Workplaces frequently draw workers from the most vulnerable segments of the labour market and jobs are typically low skilled, flexible (insecure), have few language skill requirements and thus served by a multicultural labour market. This multicultural workforce is frequently overqualified for their employment (Wickham *et al.*, 2008). However, changing customer values and expectations will require the industry to maintain increasingly high standards (Davison, McPhail and Barry, 2011).

Riley argues that these features are worthy of further analysis as they are intrinsically interconnected. Because they can be learnt quickly, unskilled HTL occupations are available to the general unskilled workforce, thus creating a continuous surplus supply of labour, in turn depressing rates of pay. Skills that are generally transferable only within the industry, i.e. skilled workers, such as chefs, spend their careers in the HTL

industry whereas mobility into the industry is confined to unskilled jobs. In the HTL labour market, Riley identifies that the dynamics are very much determined by skillsets and ultimately the HTL labour market is explained by how pay and skills structures integrate, depending on the nature of occupational skills involved, fluctuating seasonal consumer demand and the taste and ability of customers to pay.

Riley uses a classification provided by the UK Hotel and Catering Industry Training Board (HCITB) to classify skills into four tiers:

- Managerial – estimated 6% of staff skills composition of a HTL business unit
- Supervisory – estimated 8% of staff skills composition of a HTL business unit
- Craft – estimated 22% of staff skills composition of a HTL business unit
- Operative – estimated 64% of staff skills composition of a HTL business unit

Accepting that managerial and supervisory are skilled activities, the difficulty for Riley is separating craft, for example cooking, silver service waiting and wine waiting, which all require some form of formal development intervention, and operative, or unskilled work, which implies work skills that can be learnt on the job. Depending on class of establishment, cooks and waiters form part of the ‘sometimes skilled’ category, varying between craft and operative classifications. However Riley proposes that occupational rigidity operates in the sector, and cooks cannot normally become a waiter, and that for individuals in the craft, supervisory or managerial categories, acquiring higher vocational skills may require moving to organisations with higher standards. Likewise this implies that occasionally skilled individuals work at levels below their standards and there is a top limit to the capacity for skill and

knowledge learning in each establishment, and productivity does not depend on job tenure to any large degree. Therefore one can assume that in certain establishments, there are no incentives to higher skills acquisition and long service, and an individual's personal attributes assume pre-eminence. Strikingly, Riley argues that these influences encourage a surplus of supply of workers through the unskilled nature of the work and if this surplus keeps pay down then it is always in the interests of managers to de-skill.

Accordingly when business fluctuates because of consumer demand, the commonest approach is to set up a buffer consisting of part-time workers, casuals, overtime and bonus incentives, and now according to Baum (2012) very often migrant and female. Therefore as it is easier to adjust the supply of unskilled labour to that of skilled, the continuous fluctuation in consumer demand creates an additional incentive to de-skill. This can simply mean a change of work practice, e.g. from silver service to a buffet.

Commentators such as Jago and Deery (2002), speculate that functional flexibility through cross skilled staff or the ability to change job within the business unit would lessen the need for numerical flexibility and increase retention of multiskilled staff, occupational rigidity in the sector counters against this phenomena. Riley outlines ironies identified with building a personnel policy around skilled workers within a business unit; often this requires a different management strategy to the unskilled and in the HTL industry, the absence of specific criteria for promotion ironically often leads to a high rate of promotion from workers to supervisors. Most crucially unskilled workers often produce more revenue and profit than the skilled. For example, in any given day, a room cleaner could potentially produce much more

revenue than a chef skilled in pastry making. Collectively agreed pay in the hotel and restaurant sector is low when compared to average wages in almost all EU member states in 2004 (Baum, 2012). Although Riley makes a strong case for HTL organisations not developing robust personnel skills development policies, there are certain circumstances when these are justified: where is no variation on customer demand; where there is a genuine staff shortage; and where considerable time is needed to train the unskilled.

The above discussion then identifies conflict over who would teach skills in the sector. There is dichotomy over the interests of the individual business unit which might encourage de-skilling and the industry as a whole which aims to maintain its qualitative capacity. Weak personnel development policies at unit level therefore throw responsibility for teaching skills unto the vocational education system which is focussed on junior management and supervisor level training. If units develop through industry training and promote from within, the rate needed to induce unskilled workers to engage with skills building must be comparable with those entering industry from vocational education. Therefore those building skills on the job compete with entrants with vocational qualifications for pay rates. This entry level rate may not be sufficient to entice unskilled to undertake vocational training.

Demand by customers for high skills level backed up by customer's ability to pay determines pay differentials between skilled staff. However if customers demanded a low quality product, then skills required are less and management are tempted to de-skill the job. The industry currently has core staff, full time, and some part-time

employees, but increasingly, is turning to casual labour and outsourcing to assist with labour cost containment (Lam and Han, 2005 in Davison, McPhail and Barry, 2011).

The central tenet of the discussion by Riley is that the economic interests of each business unit conflict with the overall skills needs of the HTL sector. It appears that in the majority of SMTE cases, it is in the interest of management to maintain a weak labour market, influenced by fluctuating consumer demand with a surplus supply of unskilled workers. As a result, skills development is generally limited to either vocational education providers or hierarchically-structured units such as multinational corporations.

2.10 Synthesis of Extant Literature

The extant literature outlined in this subsection indicates that Van Dierdonck and Debackere's (1988) barriers to collaboration are still very relevant today. Although knowledge of the principles of collaboration has increased, there is little evidence in the literature of a response to Garrick, Chan and Lai's (2003) challenge to HEIs to think beyond pre-set curricula and accreditation processes, to allow learning at work a place on their schemata.

In my view the literature is dominated by the overarching challenges of cultural resistance and power dynamics within the domain of WBL. Key arguments included McGregors seminal argument in 1960 that humans respond to assertions that are held about them, Freire (1970) hierarchical assumptions of 'boss – subordinate' relationships and Hales (1993) identification of technical and administrative knowledge as a source of power within an organisation. These theorists laid the path

for emergent consciousness of reality- power issues within any context of learning (Hislop, 1999) and the realisation that the concept of a 'knowledge worker' leads to shift in power relations (Crowley, 2012).

This shift in power relations can lead to antagonist relations which are an inherent feature of social relations (Schultze and Stabell, 2004), thus encouraging a manifestation of management culture that exercises power through language, exclusion or social relations (Foucault, 1970). According to Crowley (2012) such manifestations are regularly described in the services sector where coercive controls dehumanise workers.

The increasing pressure to produce profits in addition to knowledge is evidence of the growing influence of market rationality on higher education systems (McIntyre and Soloman, 1999). In my view, imposed constructs such as partnership, flexibility and relevance have emerged within the lexicon (Gallacher and Reeve, 2002) and there has been an explosion of understandings of learning in the workplace (Fenwick, 2001) and resultant epistemic and pedagogical challenges (Murphy, 2008). WBL delivery models such as Biggs (2003), invite structured phased delivery, with a distinctive construct away from the traditional model of delivery within third level education.

Institutional obfuscation (Van Dierdonck and Debackere, 1988), obscure process (Linehan, 2008) and lack of strategic commitment (Moran and Wall, 2011), all indicate a deeper need for change in behaviours and beliefs if WBL is to be properly embedded as a facet of higher education. Fullan (1991) provided signposts to the social complexity of higher education institutes and the difficulty of introducing change in this environment.

Often requiring practitioner teachers (Evans, Guile and Harris, 2011) who are more expert in vocational content than full time faculty (Louziotis, 2000), employer engagement may be seen as a threat to tradition (HEA Academy, 2011) and even perhaps as Murphy (2008) suggests, leading to acknowledgment of adult learners as co-producers of knowledge.

Hodkinson's (2008) dissonance between what employers and employees want, aligned with management cultures, societal trends and internal competition for resources (Reidy, 2003), influence the role of people development in each organisation. Always related to desired individual and organisational results (Stewart and Rigg, 2011), for many employers it is not always in their immediate financial interest to invest in portable skills. This requires employers who are sufficiently visionary (Shiels *et al.*, in Linehan, 2009) to develop WBL.

Most workplaces can therefore be categorised within Fuller and Unwins (2003) expansive and restrictive framework. This well known framework initiated Watson's (2006) distinction between expansive workplaces which facilitate a wide array of learning and maintain a process/relational focus with employees, and restrictive workplaces which limit learning and focus on systemic controls.

Despite the influence of resource based theorists who maintain that HTL employees are the source of competitive advantage (Kushluvan *et al.*, 2010), traditionally employers within the sector see labour in 'terms of cost' (Burns, 1997) and qualifications are often perceived as unnecessary for employment (Ayikoru, Tribe and

Airey, 2009). In my view, these dichotomous views appear incongruous with the radical demands of a service environment where creative responses are required (Amenumey and Lockwood, 2008) and HR capacity is the key factor of success or failure of businesses in the HTL industry (Hwa cited in Ho, 2012). Therefore I see emergent tensions between the dominant American ‘convergence of practice’ thinking and realities of cultures within which they are globally located (Solnet, Baum and Kralj, 2010), ultimately raising questions regarding the appropriateness of superimposing HRD theory in this regard.

In Ireland the government, through Failte Ireland, have played a dominant role in promoting HRD within the HTL sector. Described as unique in the world (Baum, 2006), I think the systematic promotion of the linkage of provision of HRD with positive HR outcomes and improved service quality (Nolan, 2004) should have translated by this point into sector wide appreciation by HTL management. However, as Melia (2011) observed, this is patently not yet the case as the sector remains blighted by poor administration, financial dyslexia and resistance to learning while struggling to provide quality of service.

Larger companies have adjusted their internal systems to reflect increased devolution of human resource activities to line management, and by necessity, developed managerial skill sets to reflect these responsibilities (Baum, 2007), but there is little evidence that smaller HTL operations have done much to meet this need.

2.11 Identifying the Gap in the Literature

According to some commentators such as Reeve and Gallacher (2005), WBL has sometimes been offered as a fundamentally new approach which will have elemental impacts for the nature of Higher Education (HE) and expand interactions between academia and employers in the UK. However I can observe a number of areas of concern. Firstly there appears to be limited research evidence that employers wish to connect to any great degree with higher education institutes (HEIs), secondly, the research indicates significant cultural differences between both parties and thirdly, the emergence of the quality assurance agenda in HE has created a dichotomous situation where potential influence of employers in WBL programmes is encouraged by strategic policy makers but difficult to foster at operational level.

For all researchers it is important to find the gap in the literature. Despite extensive research conducted in field of learning at work (Carbery and Garavan, 2009), some gaps emerge with regard to development of WBL within the HTL sector. There is an absence of academic studies outlining implementation issues in delivery of WBL partnership and indications where HTL establishment benefited from WBL (Hegarty, Kelly and Walsh, 2011).

Few studies have examined actual delivery of WBL in the hospitality sector to investigate how to make Work-based Learning work in a busy operationally focussed environment. This resonates with Smith *et al.* (2011, p. 2) who identified ‘a dearth of critical accounts of practice within WBL programmes from the perspective of academics’ and the requirement for this research given the priority by government in the UK in relation to forging links between business and higher education. Evans,

Guile and Harris (2011, p. 153) identify the ‘failure to combine organisational, individual, and wider socio-economic perspectives’ in much of current theory and practice. There also appears to be an absence of Irish academic studies outlining delivery of WBL to business and subsequent analysis of impact of this investment of time and energy. I also failed to unearth much research into integrating academic faculty into delivery of a WBL programme.

Baum (2006) describes the traditional research focus on hospitality work as concentrating on areas that provide, primarily, food and beverage rather than accommodation. Baum admits that research into wider areas of hospitality work, particularly those that have emerged with the expansion of customer services and functions in the area (front desk, leisure, entertainment, and reservations call centres) is sporadic.

From a methodological perspective, there appears a dearth of qualitative studies that isolate the human interactions, tensions and contradictions of WBL in the HTL sector. Most extant studies use questionnaires, or interviews that have tended to look at experiences retrospectively or they capture only a snapshot of opinions, rather than capturing experiences. Furthermore, I think that pedagogical confusion around WBL contributes to the current scarcity of comparable studies.

According to Costley (in Malloch *et al.*, 2011), the story of WBL and such, in a higher education environment needs to be told by those who are directly involved in its development. It is this rationale that provides an imperative for this study.

2.12 Conclusion

In summary, this literature review has explored the extant literature:

- in People Development,
- in WBL, and;
- in delivery of WBL in the HTL sector.

Defining WBL and employee learning is problematic, as both cover a range of individual and organisation processes. The issue of whether pedagogic models and definitions of WBL corroborate is challenging and variances appear depending on context. Billett (2001) advocates reappraisal and reconceptualisation of the workplace as a site for learning, and emphasises that learning is not exclusively ‘situated’, but interdependent on social practice and individual agency.

The review has explored features of policy, education and training strategy and aspects relating to practical application of work-based learning in the HTL industry. It has identified difficulties around delivery of WBL and also features of good practice in application of this form of training and education.

The key message emerging from the literature is that WBL practice is varied, at times complex to organise and requires considerable flexibility and motivation on behalf of employer and HEI. Commentators including Tallantyre (2008) provide a strong rationale for a liberating model of WBL but are HEIs and HTL businesses able and willing to respond to this challenge? There appears to be a lack of academic studies in this regard.

Awareness developed throughout the literature review meant that I now brought into the study ideas from writers such as Foucault and Bourdieu which influence the study. The challenge in Chapter 3 was to select a methodology that would grasp the essence of the issue, and identify methods that would provide findings relevant to the research question.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Adopting Seaman's (2008) approach, I contend that building theory from complex social situations requires at least two inputs from researchers. Initially, it requires a depiction of an individual's interactions, at the level of both action and motivation. Such a picture may only emerge through close observational techniques. Secondly, it requires theoretical work to explain why individual interactions take patterns observed during those techniques (Porter, 2003, p. 70).

Chapters 1 and 2 introduced a contextual platform for this study and outlined previous literature on development and application of WBL. Chapter 3 defines research orientations that predominate and shape this study. It considers relevant methodologies and their potential employment in order to provide a firm foundation for my work. In particular, this chapter describes relevant research methods used within this 'systematic enquiry' (Bassey, 1999) and discusses how they reflect multiple views and allow the study 'get to grips with the dynamics that they were observing' (Daniels *et al.*, 2010, p. 1).

Hence there are two main aspects to the study. Conceptually, in order to develop ideas grounded in practice about the delivery of learning and development to the hospitality sector, I wish to generate descriptions and perspectives portraying the 'what' and the 'why' as well as the 'how' (Morrison in Briggs and Coleman, eds., 2007).

Secondly, as the study establishes ideas and patterns emerging from the research, it will address the ‘so what’ by capturing descriptive context for these perspectives through an appropriate lens or analytical framework.

3.2 Overview of the Research Enquiry

3.2.1 Key Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Issues Relevant to this Study

In common with Sikes (2000), the most significant influences on this research are my assumptions regarding:

- The nature of knowledge production – or epistemological assumptions on how knowledge is generated;
- The impact of social reality – or implicit ontological assumptions surrounding the nature of phenomena that I wish to investigate; and
- Human nature and agency – or my assumptions about how people relate and interact with their environment.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, cited in Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez (2009), new knowledge is created along cycles of interaction between epistemological and ontological dimensions. This conceptualises externalisation or conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit, as key to knowledge creation in the workplace, because it creates new explicit concepts through sequential use of metaphor, analogy and models.

One might appreciate essential differences in approaches by mentally distinguishing research activity into two major considerations — conceptual or theoretical and methodological. By isolating these two concerns, a clear appreciation of differences in approach is observed.

3.2.2 Epistemological Perspective

Epistemology relates to creation of acceptable knowledge or ‘evidence of social reality’ (Mason, 1996) in a field of study. Bryman (2001) deliberates whether knowledge is hard, objective, tangible and thus positivist, or if knowledge is softer, personal, subjective and unique in nature, and thus interpretivist, where personal reality is constructed.

Pikes (1967) captures these contrasting approaches specifically with regard to gathering data which ultimately imply an epistemological position. An emic approach prioritises the perspective of the subject within the culture being studied, contrasted with an etic approach which provides an objective description of a ‘neutral’ observer.

In terms of exploring how individuals in the HTL and HEI sectors interpret their particular circumstance, I am anxious that their social realities emerge, reflecting individual attitude and circumstance, thus characterising interpretivist perspectives as defined by Ribbins (2009). Ribbins interpretivist ontology does not permit the researcher to stand back from the reality of the research world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and because I was responsible for WBL in the Institute, as well as an observer, I was deeply embedded in this research. Therefore I could never claim to be a passive observer, and throughout the study was involved in meaning-making and construction

of data, including the views of outsiders to add perspective to my findings, but interpreting the data from my unique perspective.

Consequently, following Denscombe (2003), the research approach is essentially emic, as my perspectives underpin the theoretical and methodological approaches, and considers insights and experience through an interpretative stance.

3.2.3 Ontological Perspective

Concerned with the nature of the phenomena, different ontological positions stimulate different perspectives on social reality within the nature of a phenomenon, which can be revealed through purposeful questioning and enquiry.

Described as ‘realism’ or ‘objectivism’ if one subscribes that subject matter can be observed, measured and studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), researchers offer that social phenomena and categories used in everyday discourse have an existence that is independent, external from social actors or separate from the human mind (Bryman, 2001). For example, organisational culture would be seen as an external ‘tangible’ reality that acts on and constrains employees. It has the characteristics of an ‘object’ and can be researched as such.

‘Constructionism’ or ‘subjectivism’, on the other hand, believes that no universals exist outside of the mind (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). These theorists view organisational culture as socially constructed by employees of the organisation, and in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction. In their view it is the role of the

researcher to seek to capture and understand the subjective reality of employees in order to understand the culture (which reflects their motives, actions and intentions).

Within this study, as a researcher immersed within the WBL community in the Midlands, I am drawn to Bryman's description of the nature of social entities as a facet of social construction developed from 'perceptions and actions of social actors' (Bryman, 2001, p. 17) and the perceived relevance of our understanding of social order rather than rules. Mason (1996) is also interesting in this regard citing the need to capture 'structures', 'actions' and personal 'texts' or 'scripts' if the researcher is trying to reflect a qualitative analysis. Therefore, from these ontological platforms, delivery of learning and development within the HTL sector can be studied as an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction. I feel this stimulates an inductive study which reflects fibrous links of policies, organisation and culture, and interweaves the role of participants from the HTL and HEI sectors in construction of their own realities. Accordingly, my shared view with Denscombe (2003) is that reality, truth and agency are products of individual creativity, and that multiple realities can potentially be captured through a flexible interpretative stance.

3.2.4 Overarching Aims and Structure of the Research

The philosopher Karl Popper was quoted:

One learns to work hard and long at the formulation of problems before one switches one's main attention to the search for possible solutions: and one's degree of success in the latter is often determined by one's degree of success in the former.

(Magee, 1973, p. 66)

Rudestrom and Newton (1992) state that research needs to be shaped according to the perspective that provides the greatest insight to the question. The purpose of this research is to identify persistent underlying factors that impede development of WBL partnerships within the HTL environment, with a view to suggesting improvements. Crotty (1998) offers a helpful structure for the design, process and outcomes of this particular study through linear consideration of:

- Epistemology or the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective, and thereby the methodology;
- Theoretical perspective or ontological stance informing the methodology, grounding its logic and criteria, and providing a context for process;
- Methodology or the strategy or plan of action lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking choice and use of methods to desired outcomes; and
- Methods or techniques and procedures used to gather and analyse data related to research questions or hypotheses.

Crotty (1998) links together these concepts in a hierarchical design relationship that helped structure this research.

***Figure 3.1: The Relationship between Conceptual Issues in Research Programmes
(Adapted from Crotty, 1998, p. 3)***

Epistemology → Theoretical perspective → Methodology → Methods

3.3 Research Methodologies

3.3.1 Research Strategy and Methods - Overview

This research strategy employs a inductive methodological strategy facilitated by an qualitative evaluative case study, using Yin's approach to single case research, in order to gain a better understanding of the delivery of WBL in a medium-sized hotel in the Midlands region. Within the case study, data is gathered from academics, hotel management and participants through document review and semi-structured interviews.

Table 3.1: Methodological Strategy and Methods- Overview

| Methodology | Research Subject | Method | Data Analysis |
|---------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Organisational Case Study | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of WBL programme• Management Role• Participants' role• HEI role• Learning and development culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Document review | Yin's (2009) Pattern Matching |

Subsequent to the case study, the findings of the case study are considered by experts in the area of HTL educational policy, tertiary education, WBL and the HTL industry using the Delphi method.

3.3.2 Using Evaluative Case Study as a Research Strategy

Used extensively in tourism research and teaching (Beeton in Richie, Burns and Palmer, eds., 2005), a case study provides an opportunity to explore a complex phenomenon in depth over a sustained period (Crotty, 1998). According to Eisenhardt (1989), case research is excellent at answering the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions as it can delve more deeply into motivations and actions than structured surveys. This is particularly suited to a small-scale study of a ‘bounded’ phenomenon (O’Leary, 2011), in this case examining delivery of a WBL programme within a medium-sized hotel over an 18-month period. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that a case study is an ideal starting point for new research and recommends this methodology is entirely suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate.

Bassey (1999), and Yin (2009) both distinguish case study as an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when;
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Bassey stresses the importance of being where the action is, taking testimony from and observing actors in their environment. Yin suggests that the decision to use case study should depend on my research question and the degree to which the purpose is to explain some present circumstance, and provide an extensive description of this phenomenon. In his opinion the implications of case study inquiry include coping

with a technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and therefore reliance on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. As a result, case studies can benefit from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

Described as ‘seeking data to assess what some activity- a programme, practice, project or policy has accomplished’ (Yin, 2012, p.168) an evaluative case study facilitates inclusion of alternative perspective to the effectiveness of WBL delivery within a non-random (O’Leary, 2004) quasi-experimental single-site case study. This offers an opportunity for a ‘picture drawing case study’ (ibid.) and for presenting an analytical account of the delivery of a WBL programme within the context of a medium-sized hotel.

3.3.3 Selection of the Case Setting

In line with the recommendations of Denscombe (2003), selection of this particular hotel as a site of research was particularly appropriate as it enabled a rather ‘vicarious experience’ (Stake, 1995) for the reader. Geographically close to the HEI, typical of the region and managed by local management staff, the hotel offered a strong example of the phenomenon and culture being investigated. The hotel selected was a regionally recognised and well regarded brand, employing approximately 250 full- and part-time staff, while operating in the locality for several generations. Following the economic downturn in 2008, the hotel maintained staffing levels and achieved several national awards recognising the quality of products provided to the public. When receiving a national award for management, the managing director attributed their success to the

loyalty, friendliness and professionalism of the staff and a relentless pursuit of excellence by the directors.

The research setting therefore provided an opportunity to conduct an empirical enquiry and research an ‘interesting and worthwhile’ phenomenon (Bassey, 1999) in a natural setting, with the potential for sufficient data.

3.3.4 Researcher Role

Between 2009 and 2011 during programme delivery, for the most part I had a facilitator role that can be described as ‘observer as participant’ and defined by Glesne ‘as a distanced observer, they have some interaction with participants in the field’ (Glesne, 2005 in Yamagata- Lynch, 2010 p66). This implied an observation schedule, field notes, winning the trust and confidence of those involved (Wisker, 2008, Veal, 2011).

Indeed the hotel participants and I were well acquainted, however, and as WBL facilitator I had briefed the subjects on the programme and provided other assistance to delivery staff and participants. Thus, there were moments in the investigation when I assumed the role of more than an outside observer, but more interested ‘participant’, defined by Glesne in Yamagata- Lynch (ibid), combined with a sense of collegiality with AIT delivery staff. In this situation, participants viewed my primary role as a community member who happened to be conducting a study on the WBL programme. For the most part, I operated in the background and maintained a watching brief, occasionally responding to assist participants as necessary.

3.3.5 Project Timelines

The programme commenced in October 2009 with RPL assessments and delivery of Module 1. Module 2 was delivered between April and October 2010. Module 3 was delivered between November 2010 and March 2011, and Module 4 was completed by May 2011. Gathering primary data for the research commenced immediately on conclusion of programme delivery in May 2011 and continued until March 2012.

Figure 3.2 Project Timelines

| Event | 2009 Q2 | 2009 Q3 | 2009 Q4 | 2010 Q1 | 2010 Q2 | 2010 Q3 | 2010 Q4 | 2011 Q1 | 2011 Q2 | 2011 Q3 | 2011 Q4 | 2012 Q1 |
|--|---|------------|------------|--------------------|---|------------|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Project Planning Phase | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 (29 Participants) | | | | Christmas Break | | | | | | | | |
| | Dedicated and committed HR Manager support to project | | | | No dedicated fulltime HR Manager appointed in hotel | | | Interim HR Administrator fulfils HR appointment with minimal appreciation and support for project | | | | |
| Module 2 (21 Participants) | | | | | Summer Break | | | | | | | |
| Module 3 (12 Participants) | | | | | | | Christmas Break | | | | | |
| Module 4 (6 Participants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Participants' Graduation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data Collection | | | | | | | | | Document Analysis | Interviews with HEI management and delivery staff | Interviews with hotel staff | Interview with policy expert/ Delphi |

3.3.6 Application of Yin's Approach to Case Study Research in this Study

Yin recommends using single case design when the case is:

- Critical or unique or where the researcher is able to access a previously remote phenomenon;
- A pilot study shown to be representative of a greater population;

In this research, case study facilitated an inductive study of both the context and the delivery process, intending to expose the realities of WBL. I feel it would have been impossible to gain a full picture of the realities of WBL delivery without consideration of holistic context and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.

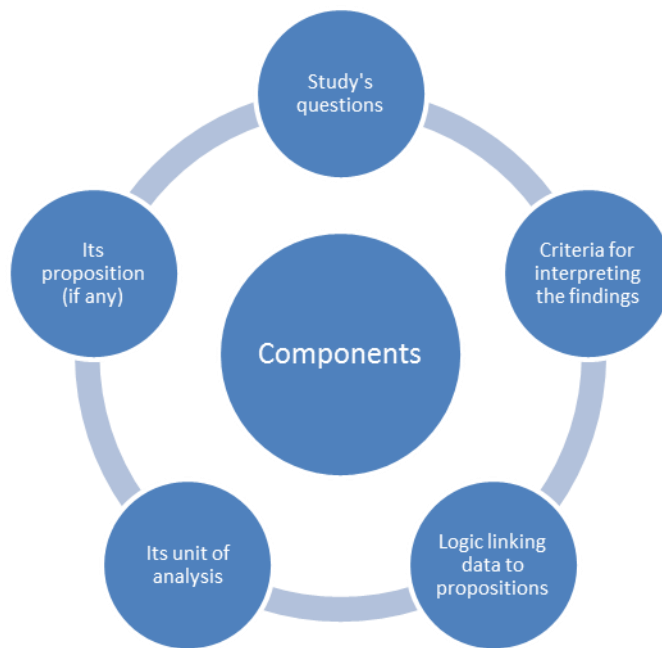
Yin quotes Schramm (1971) that the essence of a case study is illumination of a decision or a set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result. He identifies opportunities for case study when (a) 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events and (c) the focus is on a real life phenomenon within a real life context.

As this research focuses on 'what can be learned from the delivery of a WBL programme', Yin's architecture suggests an evaluative study, the goal being a summative evaluation of a real world event. He acknowledges concerns that case studies can appear sloppy, lack rigour, and provide little basis for scientific generalisation, but counters that those fears are balanced by sophisticated and deep analytic techniques.

3.4 Components of Case Study Design

The research design underpins the logic that links data to be collected to the initial questions of the study, and in Yin's (2009, p. 26) view, generates a logical plan of 'getting from here (initial set of questions) to there (answers)'.

Figure 3.3: Yin's Components of Research Design



These components logically integrate the research study questions with the study propositions as they direct attention to the scope and limits of the study.

3.5 Yins Case Study Design - Research Proposition

In this research, the study is leveraged by the overall proposition:

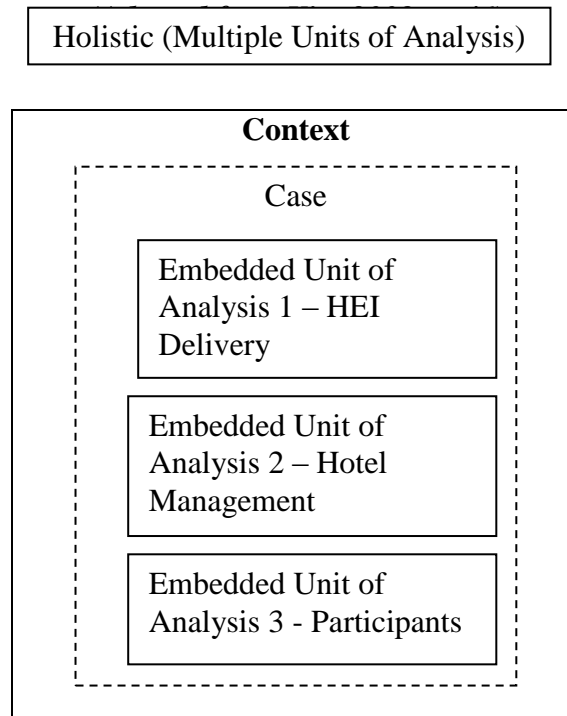
1. Effective organisations normally have an appreciation of the impact of higher levels of education on careers and business performance (Hinkin and Tracey, 2010).
2. Organisations have responsibility for developing their staff (Brownell, 2010).
3. Staff developed through work-based learning improve business performance (Mora, in Linehan and Sheridan, 2010).

Following Yins (2009) recommendations, this proposition therefore frames the research question concerning work-based learning programmes within the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure environment, within theoretical propositions which guided the study.

3.6 Yins Case Study Design - Units of Analysis

Using Yin's rationale, this research involved generation of a single case that potentially included characterisation of multiple units of analysis as logically embedded sub-units. Informed by Boud and Soloman's (2001) description of triangular WBL relationships entwined between academia, learners and the workplace, I identified the roles of the HEI delivery personnel, programme participants and the hotel management as three separate embedded sub-units of analysis which are given attention within this study.

Figure 3.4: Model of Single Case Study with Multiple Units of Analysis



Multiple units of analysis facilitate an illustration of consistent patterns of evidence across different units, but still within the overall case. By using embedded units of analysis in a single case study, I could identify common questions, but also gather multiple layers of data within the study.

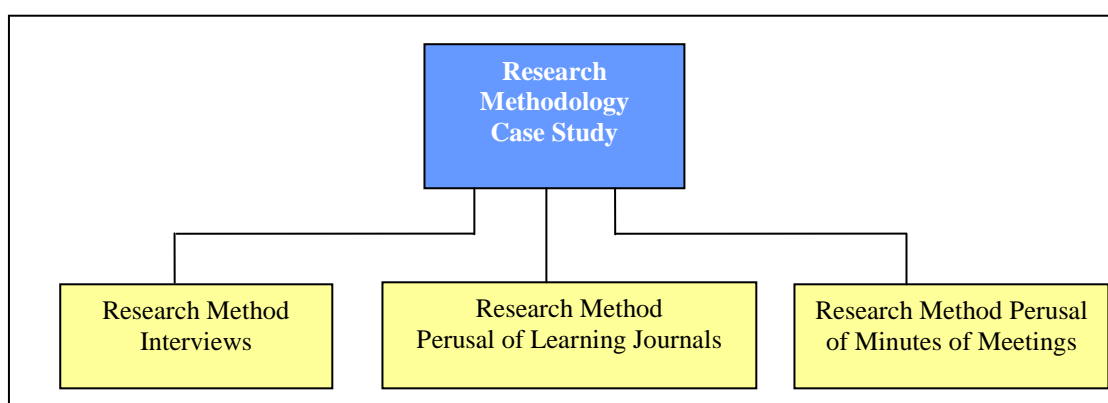
3.7 Yins Case Study Design - Linking Data with Propositions - Data Gathering

The case study achieved triangulation by gathering data using three methods. These were interviews conducted with participants and those associated with the programme, an analysis of learning journals completed by participants, and analysis of minutes of the project steering committee. Informed by my previous research data gathered during 30 structured interviews conducted with HTL managers during the previous AIT research report, 9 semi-structured interviews facilitated a deep

conversation with 3 programme participants, 3 academic delivery staff, and 3 representatives of hotel management and Fáilte Ireland who designed the programme.

Learning journals allowed evaluation of the extent to which students internalised and implemented programme learning within their work environment (See Appendix 5 for a sample learning journal). Minutes of the project steering committee allowed me to measure both hotel and HEI management attitudes towards the programme, identify administration tensions and constraints, and deepen my personal understanding of the culture of both the HTL sector and HEI management.

Figure 3.5: Overview of Research Methodology and Data Gathering Methods



Detailed linkage of research methods with research questions using Mason's (1996) matrix is outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Matrix for Linking Research Questions and Methods (Adapted from Mason 1996)

| Research Objectives | Data Sources and Methods | Justification |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Determine if HTL management engagement impacted on the programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTL Management – 2 Interviews • HTL Staff – 3 Interviews • HEI Delivery Staff – 3 Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with HTL managers of relevant operational units will reveal feelings towards staff development, i.e. based on their own experiences, selection of staff and how learning is used in the operation. • Interviews with HTL staff will reveal their experiences of how HTL management handled previous staff development issues, staff selection and application of learning and how learning is used/rewarded. • Interviews with HEI delivery staff will describe their experiences during delivery of WBL. |
| 2. Establish if current WBL programme delivery strategies are fit for purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTL Management – Interviews • HTL Policy Expert – Interview • HEI Delivery Staff – Interviews • Perusal of Learning Journals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with HTL management will describe their experience of working in partnership with a HEI, advantages, distractions, de-motivators and suggested improvements. • Interviews with HEI delivery staff will describe their experiences of delivery of WBL. • Perusal of participant learning journals will indicate WBL implementation. |
| 3. Establish if application of programme learning was encouraged in the workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTL Management – Interviews • HTL Staff – Interviews • Perusal of learning Journals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with HTL management will reveal the tangible benefits that have emanated from the WBL programme. • Interviews with staff will describe ‘affordances’ or opportunities for implementation of learning. • Perusal of participant learning journals will indicate WBL implementation. |
| 4. Examine if the WBL programme was culturally appropriate for a medium-sized hotel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTL Management – Interviews • HTL Staff – Interviews • Minutes of Steering Committee Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with HTL management will describe HRD planning within the sector. • Interviews with HTL staff will describe staff experiences of HRD planning. • Minutes of steering committee meetings will indicate attitudes of HTL community. |
| 5. Determine the contribution of academic faculty during delivery of WBL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTL Staff – Interviews • HEI Delivery Staff – Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with participants will describe experiences and interactions with delivery staff. • Interviews with delivery staff (academic and adjunct) will describe their experiences. • Minutes of steering committee meetings will indicate attitudes of HTL community. |

3.7.1 Primary Data - Interviews

Interviews facilitated a relativist investigation (as defined by Guba and Lincoln, 1994) of participants' impressions of the practical aspects of undergoing the programme, and explored learning application in the workplace.

Semi Structured interviews afforded the chance to meet the subjects of the research. The purpose of the interview was not just to collect detailed information rather also to engage with the participants in context (Mason, 1996). Semi structured or open ended interviews provide comparable responses and was an opportunity for interesting dialogue (Bell, 2010). Interviews were designed to subdivide the bigger research questions into 'mini-research' questions, using Engeströms (1987) activity systems framework to draw out emergent tensions between the HEI, the hotel and participants in the case study.

In defining, designing and conducting the research interviews, I decided to adapt the model proposed by Sashkin (1981)

Step 1: Define the Semi Structured Interview Objectives

Step 2: Identify the Population to be Studied

Step 3: Select the Sample

Step 4: Construct the Semi Structured Interview

Step 5: Pretest the Interview

Step 6: Prepare the final draft

Step 7: Conduct the Interviews

A checklist and toolkit were established for the conduct of each interview, following the pathway advised by Bell (2010). My personal distance from the programme permitted reflexivity, but conscious of mitigating against perceived bias, including subjects' desire to impress (Veal, 2011) and aware of the difficulty of its total eradication, I standardised my interview technique (Mason, 1996), revisiting topics on several occasions during each interview.

The number of interviews was constrained by a number of factors. Firstly, only 2 members of management staff in the hotel were completely familiar with the programme. Similarly, only 3 members of HEI staff were sufficiently familiar with programme delivery, and ultimately only 6 programme participants remained in employment in the hotel for the full duration of the programme. Of these participants, a number declined to be interviewed. Notably, most of the programme participants had departed the hotel and the country, and were not in a position to be interviewed. I had intended to collect data from programme participants using focus groups, but two factors hindered this method, the limited number of remaining participants and coordination issues due to the vagary of the shift system.

Remaining alert to imbalance of power relations during interviews (Savin- Baden and Major, 2013), I tried to critically situate myself in relation to the participants, through transparency of the process and self- disclosure, including appropriate use of technical terms and holding interviews in a neutral space when possible.

In order to conduct interviews in the hotel I was obliged to visit the hotel on multiple occasions between June and September 2011, becoming increasingly perplexed by rather complicated shift and internal communication systems. Ultimately, personal contact with one of the restaurant management staff facilitated access to programme participants. This, however, followed a number of months of stalled progress as the newly appointed HR Administrator appeared unable to facilitate requests to organise staff interviews.

Interviews were also conducted with the HR Manager who negotiated and supervised the programme, and with the Restaurant and Bar Manager responsible for an operational unit involved in the programme. This facilitated investigation of the administrative and operational impact of the programme.

Interviews were conducted with the three HEI staff involved in delivery of the programme. These were the Head of the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Department at AIT, and one full-time and one adjunct member of academic staff. These interviews facilitated investigation of the academic and delivery aspects of the programme.

An interview was also conducted with the Regional Manager of Fáilte Ireland whose agency had designed the programme and who was responsible for encouraging hospitality standards in the region. This interview facilitated contextualisation of the programme and the case study within Fáilte Ireland's work in the region.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Prior to commencement of the study, desk research was initiated by perusal of research interview transcripts conducted for the AIT (2010) research on attitudes to WBL in the HTL sector in the Midlands. Although these interviews were not used as raw data for my study, the material contained in the transcripts informed my thinking on WBL prior to commencement of the literature review.

In order to gather data for this study, desk research consisted of perusal of reflective learning journals produced by programme participants, and perusal of minutes of steering committee meetings held during the programme delivery. The steering committee included senior members of AIT academic management, industry policy experts, representatives of the hospitality sector in the region and representatives of hotel management.

Accessing these documents was relatively straightforward as I received permission from the Institute delivery staff and Institute management, and subsequently gained access to Institute archives where these documents were housed. With permission, I accessed learning journals, exam scripts (see Appendix 6) and participant results compiled throughout the programme, as well as minutes of the steering committee. These sources of secondary data complemented primary data and facilitated triangulation of the study.

3.7.3 Pilot Studies

Often referred to as feasibility studies, pilot studies are scaled-down versions of a full-scale study (Polit *et al.*, 2001). They facilitate checking of ‘fitness for purpose’ of the research instrument, such as the interview guide, and provide the qualitative researcher with a clear focus for the study. I drafted my interview guide for academic staff in consultation with an academic who is familiar with WBL.

A pilot interview was carried out with an industry consultant who worked in a part-time capacity in a management role in the hotel. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) suggest inclusion of pilot qualitative interview data in the main study. However, I did not take this approach as there were a number of amendments made to the interview guide following this interview (Appendices 7, 8 and 9). I realised on analysing the pilot interview that I needed to probe more deeply how participants actually approached learning.

Although the pilot study was helpful, I under-estimated the difficulties of conducting an interview on site in the hotel workplace. The participants were slightly distracted because of noise, and never fully relaxed. Nevertheless, it offered some useful insights to inform the study. The interviews were taped and conducted in public view. This, I feel, particularly inhibited one of the line staff participants, as she appeared quite reticent to speak freely in the initial moments of the interview.

3.8 Yins Case Study Design - Interpreting the Study's Findings - The Analytical Framework

The final component of research design is a decision on criteria that will produce high quality analyses, examining all evidence, displaying and presenting this evidence while taking into account varied interpretations. Yin recommends that data and analytical techniques suit your case study and that the conceptual logic linking data to original propositions is fit for purpose.

According to the Platlow (2002), I should be very careful when interpreting the evidence from a case study. The greatest danger is that very general conclusions may be drawn on the basis of a single atypical example. For this reason, it is important to have supporting evidence from other sources before drawing such conclusions.

3.8.1 Pattern Matching

Analysis of the data was undertaken on a within-case basis, that is comparing the findings from the relevant actors involved in each embedded unit of analysis of the case study.

According to Yin (2009), analysis should rely on all the relevant evidence, ensure all major interpretations are dealt with, ensure the most significant issue of the study is addressed and allow prior expert knowledge to be brought to the study. Therefore, following Yin (2012), I compared the observations of the case study with the research proposition in order to identify patterns and validate findings. Although not using any quantitative or statistical criteria, this increased the external analytic validity of the study by matching the pattern of findings and making a fundamental comparison between the case study finding and the original proposition (Yin, 2009).

Informed by Yin (2009), the exact steps I took to integrate pattern matching analysis into this research are outlined in Table 3.3. Trustworthiness of 33 codes identified was achieved by asking an academic to review the data and confirm my selection of 6 emergent meta-codes or hierarchical themes.

Following coding, categorisation and generation of statements from hierarchical themes, I refined my analysis into a number of descriptive findings. The descriptive level is what Boyatzis (1998) refers to as the ‘manifest’ meaning of the data.

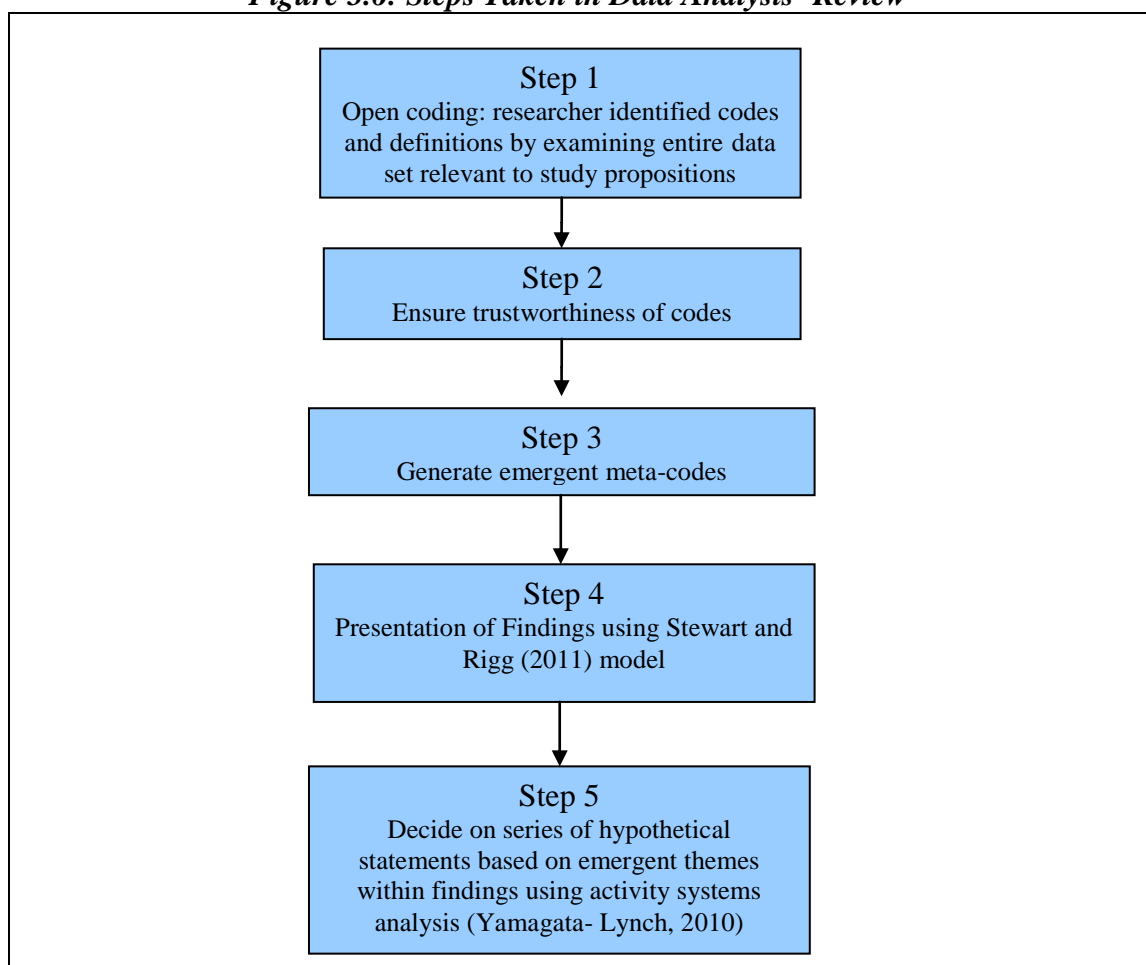
Table 3.3: Broad Stages of Pattern Matching

| Broad Stages of Pattern Matching | |
|--|--|
| Stage | Purpose |
| 33 codes or statements identified. | Purpose – Gather all the evidence and consolidate. |
| Refinement of case study findings into 6 patterns of descriptive findings or meta-codes. | Purpose – Consideration of themes. |
| Selection of particular themes based on their consistency with issues linking findings of case study and research proposition. | Purpose – Present the most significant aspects of the case within analytic framework and provide basis for discussion chapter. |

In this case study, I present my descriptive findings using Stewart and Rigg’s (2011, p. 232) ten-factor model for the design of learning interventions. This theoretical model, which depicts interconnecting factors in the design of learning interventions, facilitates an exposition of my findings in a structured framework that engages all relevant aspects of the case study.

Using this model facilitated generation of statements encapsulating emergent themes from the case study, and enable ‘analytic generalisations’ (Yin, 2009) from the study. ‘Analytic generalisations’ in this case involve generation of ‘hypothetical statements’ from analysis of emergent tensions and contradictions through activity systems (Yamagata- Lynch, 2010) and then ‘consideration not of a conclusion, but of a working hypotheses’ (Cronbach in Yin, 2012, p. 19) by the Delphi study.

Figure 3.6: Steps Taken in Data Analysis- Review



3.9 Quality in Case Study Design

I adapted Yin’s (2009) approach to quality in case study design by encompassing the need to maximise three critical conditions in my planning: (a) construct validity or using correct operational measures for the concepts being studied; (b) external

validity by defining the domain to which findings can be generalised; and (c) reliability or demonstrating that the operations of a study can be repeated with similar results.

Table 3.8 outlines strategies within this research to implement Yin's approach to quality in case study design.

Table 3.4: Case Study Design (Yin, 2009)

| Tests | Case Study Tactic | Phase of Research in which Tactic Occurs | Action Taken in this Research |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Construct Validity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multiple sources of evidence • Establish chain of evidence • Have key informants review draft case study report | <p>Data collection</p> <p>Data collection</p> <p>Composition</p> | <p>Use of interviews and documentary evidence.</p> <p>Interview data both taped and transcribed and entered into customised electronic database.</p> <p>Case study synopsis reviewed by key informants before thesis submission.</p> |
| External Validity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use rival theory in single case studies • Delphi Study | <p>Research design</p> <p>Data analysis</p> | <p>Not used because of evaluative nature of research and lack of existing theory.</p> <p>Delphi study facilitated comparison between representatives of the population and emergent case study themes.</p> |
| Reliability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use case study protocol • Develop case study database | <p>Data collection</p> <p>Data collection</p> | <p>Same method of data collection followed for each embedded unit of analysis; consistent set of initial questions used in each semi-structured interview.</p> <p>Maintenance of customised database.</p> |

3.10 Delphi Study

A Delphi study is defined as a:

Relatively strongly structured group communication process, in which matters, on which naturally unsure and incomplete knowledge is available, are judged upon by experts.

(Häder and Häder, 1995, p. 12 - translation)

This iterative data-gathering tool is deemed an effective way to elicit, collate and focus expert judgement toward a consensus (Collins, 2011), and to identify areas of convergence and divergence in relation to HRD practice (Hatcher and Colton, 2007).

In this research, the Delphi study with seven sector experts followed the initial case study analysis, which had isolated the factors relevant to the delivery and implementation of the WBL programme.

Figure 3.7: Delphi Analysis



I sent descriptive ‘hypothetical statements’ or generalisations (Cronbach in Yin, 2012) from the case study to a Delphi group to gauge their assessment of the relevance and validity of my findings, or how accurately they truly reflected the phenomenon being studied (Veal, 2011). This Delphi study commented on the ‘hypothetical statements’ but did not strive for consensus, seeking to ‘understand the nuances of the situation’ (Skulmoski, Hartman and Krahn, 2007), proffering on the extent to which the research findings applied to their experiences.

The purpose of using the Delphi method for this particular research was threefold. Firstly, it facilitated a refractive consultation with experts and stakeholders (Scapolo and Miles, 2006), chosen by a stratified purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 1990), to consider my initial case study findings and therefore generate a measure of external validity. Secondly, because of the relatively small number of interviewees available, this additional phase of research also helped develop the discussion. While it could not produce generalisable findings, it enhanced the validity of the suggested (rather than definitive) evidence provided by the case study (Yin, 2012). Thirdly, the Delphi method is flexible in its design (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002), which was a key requirement for my particular research, as my overall research design was both iterative – to respond to the initial findings – and inductive in its approach.

3.11 Ethical Issues

I was guided by Veal's (2011) research 'golden rule' throughout the study, that is, you should treat others as you yourself would wish to be treated. All ethical standards required by the DCU Postgraduate Research Office were adhered to and Research Ethics Committee approval was secured for this research. Prior to carrying out the research, I decided the principle of 'autonomy' would be adhered to, with all participants having the right to withdraw at any time with no consequences. Parahoo (1997) advises permission be granted by 'gatekeepers' prior to approaching study participants. Permission was therefore sought from hotel management (Appendix 10) and a copy of the research questions was forwarded for perusal.

Subjects' consent was acquired prior to the commencement of the study (Appendix 11). The purpose of informed consent was to allow the subjects to make informed

choices rather than presuming consent, and to protect participants. However, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) suggest that consent can never be fully informed. Rather they urge that researchers act in a socially responsible manner.

The reality of confidentiality revealed challenges (Lee, 2009) in this study. Subjects were assured that all information and data collected would remain confidential within reason. No personal information within the research data would lead to identification of any vulnerable individual research participant or the hotel involved. However Lee (ibid.) was always cognisant that this type of research may illuminate sensitive areas of professional practice or poor practice. Therefore I intend to discuss the research outcomes with the subjects and ascertain their views prior to placing my thesis in the library.

Subjects on the programme were fully informed of the research topic, which included an opportunity to ask questions. A cover letter was presented to each research participant, outlining that participation was voluntary, the purpose of the study, and that confidentiality within reason was assured. As an insider researcher in AIT, my colleagues were informed of the nature of the research. In common with Bell (2010), I could see that full disclosure and my close contact with the institution and colleagues might make for difficult relationships in the future, however I decided to 'relate the report to the pragmatic concerns of the institution' (Bell, 2010 p. 57) and wish the research to be seen in that context.

3.12 Reliability, Validity and Boundaries of this Study

Mindful of Lincoln and Guba (1985), I focused on credibility and dependability (as opposed to mechanically focusing on reliability and validity), and confirmability (in place of objectivity) within this study. ‘Credibility’ (Joyce, 2010, p. 71), also referred to as ‘trustworthiness’ (Veal, 2011, p. 147), of the case study, is dependent on how rigorously and effectively I, as researcher, am explicit about my subjective experience with the phenomenon. According to Joyce, credibility is established when the subject’s perspectives are reported as accurately as possible. I used strategies identified by Joyce to develop credibility, including prolonged engagement in the field, meetings with my supervisor to disclose any blind spots, and comparisons with previous research studies within the sector. I interviewed subjects over a nine-month period and, in my role as WBL facilitator in AIT, had periodic engagement with all parties throughout the programme.

Confirmability, or the degree to which study results are derived from data gathering and the study context rather than researcher bias, is achieved by making all data from the research available for inspection (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A thorough research process carefully documented and logically constructed helped achieve this by linkage of research questions and methods matrix, filing of research data and explicitness of the data analysis process.

As the research uses a single case study to gather primary data, the study is limited in its generalisability; however, I considered that multiple studies were not possible given the logistics and resources available. Indeed, taking into account Griffiths’

(1998) doubts concerning exact repetition of any form of research involving human subjects, I wonder if replicate studies are actually possible and ultimately relevant.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has given a detailed insight into the research design and methodological strategy developed for the work. I feel the decision to position this study within an interpretive paradigm proved most appropriate given the phenomena under investigation, and it enabled me to merge practical and theoretical understanding of issues involved in the delivery of WBL.

The chapter also explained the choice of particular research techniques, together with the constraints and limitations faced within WBL. Semi-structured interviews and document perusal provided a comprehensive overview of the research milieu (delivery of WBL), whilst the Delphi study helped to provide broader and contextualised insights by considering ‘working hypotheses’ which were generated during activity systems analysis by isolating emergent tensions and contradictions.

Following Yin (2009), the added value of case study analysis includes opportunities to work with a manageable unit of analysis, identification of systemic implications, understanding of systemic issues, and communication of human interactions, in a real-world complex learning environment.

The qualitative case study approach links personal reflection with motivation and experience and facilitates an informed judgement on certain variables examined in this study. WBL in Ireland is a relatively new topic of study and there is little

previous research. Existing theories in the UK are of limited relevance to this particular field of HTL learning and development, and therefore a case study approach provides an ideal platform for study of this important topic in Ireland.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I present the evidence in terms of ‘what it was saying’ about the phenomenon and generate a ‘descriptive explanation’ (Mason, 1996) facilitating conceptual analysis in Chapter 5.

As stated in Chapter 3, data analysis took place at two levels. Firstly, I identified dominant themes in the delivery of this WBL programme by looking at three separate embedded units of analysis which provided interpretative descriptions: HEI academic staff, the hotel management and the programme participants. Using emergent themes identified from these units of analysis, I generated patterns of descriptive findings, or meta codes, consistent within the research proposition.

In this chapter, presentation of these descriptive findings or the ‘manifest’ meaning of the data takes place. This presentation was facilitated by Stewart and Rigg’s (2011) learning design model using emergent descriptive findings from the case study research, modifying my understanding as necessary. Following presentation of each factor of the model, I refined emergent tensions and contradictions into a number of statements using activity systems analysis. A ‘working hypothesis’ (Cronbach in Yin, 2012) is generated for each factor within the Stewart and Rigg model, and a Delphi study discusses each working hypothesis, attempting an exposition of this ‘web of factors’ (Stewart and Rigg, 2011) that contextualise delivery of WBL.

4.2 Stewart and Rigg's Structured Learning Model

Successful design and delivery of a learning programme is dependent on a wider set of interconnecting factors. Stewart and Rigg (2011) capture these interconnecting factors in their Structured Learning Model and give an opportunity to consider issues pertinent to planning, delivery and review of interventions. It is my intention to use a modified version of this model (Appendix 4) to link my research questions and findings with the rationale for this research. The modified model also provides a structured vehicle for presentation of findings which captures observations of embedded units of analysis in the case study – HEI, hotel management and participants.

The modified model examines nine essential factors for design and delivery of structured learning. These are:

1. Clear and appropriate objectives – results intended from the learning objective;
2. Alignment with business strategy – how will the intervention contribute to achievement of corporate strategic objectives?
3. Stakeholders' expectations – balancing the reality of diverse stakeholder interests;
4. Learners – are they willing or compelled to attend?
5. Organisation context – design options are shaped by the wider organisation context;
6. Resources – these determine the level of ambition and comprehensiveness;
7. Learning principles and methods – overarching principles that underpin the intervention;

8. Deliverer capability – engagement of skilled learning architects and WBL deliverers;
9. Transfer and application to work – application of learning in the workplace.

While gathering data I sought to initially identify, particularly through interview questions and perusal of learning journals and minutes of meetings, emergent themes such as resource allocation or application of new knowledge within the workplace. I then considered these findings with the research questions by using the amended Stewart and Rigg model, providing insights into the substantive, theoretical and methodological issues or tensions of delivering WBL to the hotel in this case study.

4.3 Consideration of Research Findings using Delphi Study

Using Stewart and Rigg's model as a scaffold, I constructed an activity system (Yamagata- Lynch, 2010) around the WBL programme which identified emergent tensions and contradictions from the 'manifest meaning' of the data, using inductive interpretation. The Delphi group, comprising seven sector experts, then considered a series of 'working hypotheses' generated through this activity systems analysis. In summary, the group were supportive of the case study findings and helped refine my understanding of the emergent themes by contributing some valuable and challenging observations on my initial findings. These observations not only conferred a measure of validity to the initial findings but also informed my analysis of the findings in Chapter 5.

Comments from the Delphi study follow presentation of each factor of the Stewart and Rigg model and the resulting 'working hypothesis'.

4.4 Stewart and Rigg's Factor No. 1 - Clear and Appropriate

Objectives and Results

Observation

The programme was designed by Fáilte Ireland and duly selected by HEI management as an appropriate work based learning intervention for hotel staff. However operational management of the hotel were not consulted prior to the launch of the programme and programme activities did not include a complete briefing on content for all management, and therefore their understanding of, and input into students' new capacities and programme objectives was limited.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘The programme seemed to be rushed at the start and then went on for 18 months so there is probably room for improvement in managing the introduction, giving more explanation on the purpose of the programme allowing us to plan their immediate future of participants a bit better’ |
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During the programme, line staff were incrementally introduced to a broader understanding of hotel operations, and developed greater knowledge in customer care, bar operations, fine dining and wine studies. Although programme objectives were clearly delineated within guiding documentation, awareness of these objectives among participants and stakeholders was limited. Descriptive programme handouts and comprehensive written briefs were not distributed to participants, and accordingly many participants were unsure of learning objectives and outcomes throughout each module.

Because of limited opportunities for application of learning in the workplace, it was difficult to fully assess the implementation of programme outcomes in a meaningful manner. Accordingly, observations of management and staff on the outcomes of the educational programme were typically unspecific, citing changed attitudes, confidence and expectations of the participants. While welcomed by management, participants reported a subsequent sense of frustration and lack of progression when changed capacities had no outlet for expression.

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| Interviewee –Participant | ‘Maybe involve management more, we talk about improving the skills... let management know what we know.’ |
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Participants expected more learning that was pertinent to the organisation. There was significant emerging tension between participants and management about integrating the learning into work practices in the hotel.

Working Hypothesis Generated

- **Objectives of WBL programmes should meet specific development needs of line staff**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi study achieved consensus on the working hypothesis, and proffered that very few HEIs deliver relevant and interesting programmes for industry. The Delphi study stated that even short WBL programmes require clearly identifiable business applications and engagement of management in implementation of learning.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Some of the academic learning may be too theoretical and not enough emphasis on practical workplace learning to ensure interest of management.’ |
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Delphi respondents suggested that the current situation represents isolationist attitudes and HEIs need to deliver what the industry requires, considering the reality of practitioners.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘There is an onus on us as third-level educators to collaborate more with our industry partners and jointly develop programmes which the sector requires. We are no longer living in the era where third-level institutions hold the “power” and “the knowledge” to deliver what they deem as suitable while ignoring the demands and requirements of industry.’ |
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According to the Delphi group, this situation requires consistent interaction between both parties as differing skills and capabilities are now demanded and the sector is changing.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘I believe review is required as the sector in the last number of years is very different and the capabilities, skills etc. are varied and requires adjustment.’ |
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The configuration of the education system and the orientation of the HEI to deliver purely academic learning has created this situation. This orientation has meant HEIs are neglecting their capacity to deliver WBL programmes where learning is immediately implementable within the business environment.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Hospitality line staff development requirements and needs are mainly of a vocational nature....which the HEIs are uninterested in facilitating.’ |
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4.5 Stewart and Rigg’s Factor No. 2 - Alignment with Business Strategy

Observation

The research indicates that the normal staff development budget is spent on functional requirements, with a focus on health and safety obligations. Staff development is not normally sufficiently systematic to facilitate a calculation of return on investment (ROI). HR management admitted that generally there was no annual training budget

in the hotel and the focus of training completed was normally on an ad-hoc basis, meeting health and safety and mandatory industry compliance requirements.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘From the proprietor’s perspective, it’s an awards-driven property, and this programme really fitted into their pursuit of the Excellence Through People [award] which would help them, but did they really align the programme with their overall goals?’ |
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Aware of the demands in running a business, the policy expert acknowledged that additional knowledge, skills and competencies would be demanded of employees in the future.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘The industry is constantly changing and people are continually demanding a more skilled workforce.’ |
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However, this logic was questioned by operational management who suggested that qualified staff won’t remain in the organisation, and that it was more important to deliver what the current customer base required at this point in time.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘It’s very hard to get uniformity across the hotels of the country because its so diverse and people demand different products and different prices and you have to balance that.’ |
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Dialectic attitudes pertaining to staff development were manifested between the HR Manager and operations staff. Operational management focused on systems within the hotel and current business processes, whereas the HR Manager was attempting to build for future requirements and potentially future markets for the hotel. Stimulated by HR management, rather than through a consultation process with operational management, the programme of learning did not link with the hotel’s overall strategies.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘Internally i had to go to our management weekly meeting withto discuss getting this programme up and running. It wasn’t something that they would traditionally jump at as they would see the costs involved. I was trying to do it in an innovative way where the compromise was that we wouldn’t pay the employees |
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| | but they could attend in their time off, that we would not make it difficult to attend, that we would set up a meeting room for lectures and provide anything that we needed for the practical side of training as well. It wasn't an easy thing to set up or even get across the value of it to senior management, but once they agreed to it they did obviously see that it was of benefit to us'. |
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Prior to commencement, learning needs analysis was not conducted and operational management were unaware of the level of performance changes they could expect from a participant. Programme outcomes were not therefore aligned with operational management's objective that staff work as directed and implement current operational systems within the hotel. This restrictive style is successful in producing short-term results; however, management reported high turnover of staff and are reliant on significant numbers of supplementary part-time staff to fulfil staffing requirements.

Working Hypotheses Generated

- **Differing attitudes to staff development exist between HR and operational management in SMTEs.**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi group achieved partial consensus on the working hypothesis on differing attitudes within HR and Operations management and supported the hypothesis that integration of HR and operational thinking is an essential element for success of WBL interventions. However the Delphi group confirmed that misalignment of business strategy and HR training interventions is a consistent occurrence. This is because of the 'volume of day-to-day activities' that operations management have to achieve, thus relegating staff development to a lower priority.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘I have done a lot of work with HR Managers and they all seem to “talk the talk” i.e. saying that staff development is a priority, but unfortunately, in SMTEs the reality on the ground is that profit is the main objective and sometimes even staying “alive”. Additionally, many small SMTEs do not have dedicated HR Managers; therefore the Operations Manager may “double up” as a HR Manager and may not have the HR background or training to implement best practice HR (including staff development). Frequently, staff development is given “token” treatment and, if at all, a very cursory glance may be given to it once a year.’ |
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The Delphi group argued that in reality, most SMTEs do not have the scale to segregate HR and operational management and as a result staff development initiatives are infrequent and generally ad-hoc.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘This group do not have HR management, and there is little, if any, distinction between the different management roles. It is usually the same person. In addition, the reason is not just workload, but also cost control (formally or, more likely, informally), time available outside of business as usual work itself, the transitory nature of operational staff, the structure of the workforce (largely not permanent, full time), etc.’ |
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4.6 Stewart and Rigg’s Factor No. 3 - Stakeholder Expectations

Observation

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| Interviewee – HEI Management | ‘Well, we conduct frequent informal meetings with the hotel and very often there are a number of things on the agenda, including placements, so we never actually sat down and had a formal meeting about it. Our meetings are generally informal where we sit down and have a chat with the manager about things.’ |
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Persuaded to engage by curiosity, the HEI and hotel management had low expectations, wishing to protect existing relations, rather than a willingness to address deficiencies. Operations management were circumspect in their comments, acknowledging that management were responsible for staff development but feeling that they were already developing employees by ‘training people to a generic standard, how to do things properly’ and performing in a challenging sector.

Although the HR Manager expected that this programme would contribute to the creation of a staff development culture, operational management of the hotel believed that individual line staff were interchangeable within the current system and maintaining this system was the most important feature of staff performance.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘In the Celtic tiger boom staff were difficult to get, people were employed because they have two hands and legs, you took who you could get – now the pool has improved but the HR skills of tourism managers have to be improved.’ |
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As this was an accredited programme, the HEI delivery team expected more attention from hotel management to the programme. Due in part to lack of HR management influence within the organisation, academic delivery staff noted a lack of internal consequences for non-attendance at programmed lectures.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘The more tailor-made the programme is for the property the more likely they are to remain engaged...My approach was to look long term and explain that it might be relevant in the long term. The more the hotel could see a practical application, the more they are likely to support the programme. There wasn’t much in a ‘Fine Dining’ module that was of interest to the hotel.’ |
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Following completion of the programme, some participants reported frustration as appropriate progression opportunities were not accessible for employees. This frustration was an unexpected outcome of the programme and potentially developed internal political consequences for the organisation.

With different sets of expectations, tensions developed around communication systems, particularly between the Institute and hotel management, and between the Institute and the participants. Communications between the hotel and the Institute were challenging as management in both organisations were not anxious to formalise the programme and no paths to support effective discourse were established early

during the delivery. Infrequency of communications meant that when changes occurred in HR management, the programme was under-resourced and no structural supports were maintained. There appears to have been no formal voice or communications process for participants during the programme to communicate with the college or with management regarding the programme.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘From my research I would say that’s just the way it is in the industry. Some of the larger chains would have their own structures but this hotel would reflect the reality of most Irish hotels which are usually owner managed. In these hotels managers mostly learnt on the job and may not have studied formal management and may just see HR as an administration office.’ |
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Reflecting the informal nature of the partnership, similar communication structures were replicated inside the hotel. Staff communications regarding the programme were informal, rarely emanating from management, and subsequently never reaching an appropriate platform or level of expectation, indicating that programme learning was not discussed or seriously considered for formal integration into operational practice.

Working Hypotheses Generated

- **Although SMTE management appreciate the value of higher skills development for staff, they find it difficult to articulate a value for WBL in relation to their business.**
- **There is insufficient communication between SMTEs and HEIs and a need exists to develop clear communication channels during delivery of WBL.**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi group achieved consensus on the working hypothesis on relating the value of WBL to a business, and observed that stakeholder expectations could be increased

by promotion of HEI capacity to assist SMTEs, feeling that small enterprises have little understanding of the potential contribution of an Institute of Technology due to lack of interaction.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘WBL requires an engaged partnership approach to learning and development. Without the commitment and resources and the development of trust and understanding it can be very difficult to succeed. If management are empowered through involvement and design of the WBL process then they can see the benefits and are less likely to be threatened’. |
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The Delphi study supported the working hypothesis on reluctance regarding continuous communications. The reduction in Fáilte Ireland training programmes, which was compounded by the absence of systematic links between practitioners and academic delivery staff, was regretted.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Back in the beginning there was much cooperation as the staff of the Institutes were hotel practitioners and we had real pioneering work - the links need nurturing.’ |
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However, at the moment there are no clear routes to establish HEI/HTL business collaborations and if they are to happen, the Delphi group feel that clear obligations remain with the HEIs to pursue and develop meaningful linkages with industry.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘There are no clear routes or methods for either party to begin the process of establishing relations, and when they do (usually due to serendipity) common ground is sparse.’ |
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4.7 Stewart and Rigg's Factor No. 4 - Learners

Observation

Most participants were volunteer migrant workers who saw the programme as an opportunity to gain a qualification through the English language, achieve career mobility within the sector and improve their basic understanding of their profession.

According to interviewees, new employees generally learn how to perform in the workplace from peer or supervisory management, without any formal objectives. In this case study there is little sense of structured progression or encouragement of career development for programme participants.

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| Interviewee – Adjunct Academic Delivery Staff | 'In my work as a General Manager, a member of staff said to me that "if people could see a future in the industry, they might be able to see this work as not just a stop gap, but as a career" and this type of programme could provide that for workers.' |
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A Recognition of Prior Learning survey of participants established that the majority had achieved prior qualifications in varied disciplines. Accordingly, participants indicated wider consciousness of the societal importance of qualifications in determining their future employment and were aware of the value of qualifications, perhaps not immediately, but for their long-term career prospects.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | 'Tourism was for those who didn't have academic ambition, but this is changing, particularly if it is deemed important by management.' |
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Participants, however, were generally more interested in achieving a higher level of competency in their present employment, and learning practical solutions to everyday work-related challenges.

The HEI delivery staff saw WBL as an opportunity to entice adult learners to consider career advancement through enhanced qualifications, or 'to go and do more' as one

interviewee put it. Delivery of WBL by the Institute in the hotel was therefore appreciated as an attempt to actively engage participants in an act of inclusion.

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| Interviewee – Participant | ‘We felt that the college was reaching out to us.’ |
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However, caution was expressed by the Fáilte Ireland representative that the industry needed people to embrace education, without embracing personal ambition.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘One of the disadvantages is that the ordinary line worker only sees this as a first step, but the industry needs people with education to be happy as the line worker and not wanting to move on.’ |
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Some migrant participants failed to grasp technical or academic terms during the programme and had difficulty relating abstract academic concepts to work situations, consequently leading to descriptions of participants dropping off the programme after the first module.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘...little knowledge of career development pathways within the sector. The industry is notorious for lack of investment in people.’ |
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None of the participants mentioned professional body encouragement or pressure to use this programme or any similar programme to develop a career pathway within the sector.

The education expert countered that there are frameworks for staff development, but these are not commonly appreciated by line staff.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘There is a clear ladder of progression, opportunities everywhere - the educators know it, the managers know it, but the people working there don’t know it.’ |
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Considerably more emphasis was placed by the HEI delivery personnel on accreditation than the participants themselves.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘It shows that they have up-skilled while in industry, they want an outcome at the end, they don’t want to waste their time doing a course and want something to show for it - there is so much competition at the moment – it’s a Fáilte Ireland Award certificate.’ |
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Working Hypothesis Generated

- **Accredited WBL can facilitate defined career development for line workers in the HTL sector**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi study rejected the working hypothesis. Because of lack of support for WBL, line staff do not rely on management for development opportunities and are likely to create their own learning paths if interested in a career in the sector. Many staff already have third-level qualifications from other disciplines prior to joining HTL establishments, and are not encouraged or motivated to earn a qualification in this field. The ECTS and NQAI system has increased public awareness of qualifications at a societal level and this is reflected in the HTL workforce. However, this is not specifically manifested in demand for WBL qualifications in the HTL sector.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘I do believe that employees are beginning to take on the responsibility of their own learning and development. There is a clear shift of not relying on employers to do this as structures in place may not be there to support in SMTE.’ |
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4.8 Stewart and Rigg's Factor No. 5 - Organisation Context

Observation

The case study demonstrated that the hotel culture values productivity over learning, and therefore neglects to implement evaluation of learning interventions.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | 'Training can be improved through thorough planning and evaluation afterwards, but this is a factor for HR, just evaluating training. As a manager if you spent money anywhere you'd thoroughly evaluate it but sometimes with HR, if it's not readily tangible, they just don't do that. If a company invested money on a new machine they would evaluate its performance, but sometimes with a training investment, they don't.' |
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Because of disruptive work patterns, changing priorities and migrant workforces contributing to high staff turnover within the hotel, management valued line staff loyalty and application to the immediate task in hand rather than experimentation with systems.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | 'Staff turnover is a major issue for the hotel industry and it is an easy thing for a manager to justify why they don't invest in training because the statistics say they will leave after X amount of time. That is a key issue. Also the nature of the workforce and the seasonal nature of staff, many are over from abroad to work for the summer or students.' |
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The constant turnover of staff mitigated against a strong development culture in the hotel and influenced the number of development opportunities for staff.

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| Interviewee – Hotel HR Management | 'The hotel industry is notorious for high turnover rates and I feel this is because they target employees with low qualifications, and with less experience and try to work on them themselves, and the person will either leave because it didn't work out or because a better opportunity came up either within or outside the industry.' |
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This impacts primarily on full-time staff as a culture of direct systemic control and strictly defined roles has developed in the hotel.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | 'The manager isn't stuck in the office, he's out there on the floor, helping out in carvery or restaurant – in the hotel they have a management meeting every morning, very much hands on and operational.' |
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This culture even negated the influence of line managers' own previous education, as they resisted the learning programme in favour of satisfying immediate operational concerns.

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| Interviewee – Hotel HR Management | 'I think so, and in this hotel, they wouldn't all have completed degrees and many would have come up through the ranks. But in my experience, the younger managers, they would have known why they had to do it, but I still found it hard to get them to buy into it.' |
|---|---|

Whereas management indicated that one of the main criteria for a development decision is length of service, tensions were identified where full-time staff train up new part-time staff on procedures and are rarely afforded development time. The HR Manager challenged that Fáilte Ireland did not provide much support for line workers who were interested in developing their professional knowledge.

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| Interviewee – Hotel HR Management | 'I think Fáilte Ireland could play a bigger role, a lot of their training is focussed on management development and hotel professionals, people who already had a qualification. It could refocus on line staff as there is very little for them. Fáilte Ireland run courses for management and sales etc, however my opinion is that they neglect the line staff.' |
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The industry attitude, according to this manager, was to recruit staff with low qualifications and shape them according to the organisation's requirements.

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| Interviewee – Hotel HR Management | 'Sometimes the hotel industry is about getting the raw material and you have to work with them and that's the aim and objective, so regardless of their previous qualifications I think you have to work on them, that's core for HR in general that you have to develop your staff. You do this in order to increase the retention rates.' |
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According to the Fáilte Ireland representative, in the past educated staff were perceived as likely to be poached by another employer, move on to another establishment or, more seriously, be a threat to manager's authority. The policy expert stated that this attitude, at variance with intellectual development, will only change

over time and is a focus of Fáilte Ireland's current efforts to educate managers to appreciate the benefits of educated staff.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | 'Environment must be right to support WBL..workers must be encouraged and given the time to carry out the learning, supervisors and management must also be involved and encouraged or supported to encourage their staff – if time off is needed by staff prior to exams, that should be given to the employees at a mutual cost, maybe use some of their own time, should be given time off for study as well.' |
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This Fáilte Ireland notion of a culture of joint approaches by staff and management is challenged in the case study as management perceived themselves to be under severe time restrictions, and stated that time spent on training is subsequently not manifested in superior performance 'on the job'.

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| Student's Learning Journal | 'Team work in the hotel business is very important. I have got one negative experience....one of the managers was passing through so I said his name. He didn't react, so I repeat his name again. When he looked at me I just said..."I need help here." He look at me again and just left...After that my manager came and started giving out to me why I was "shouting" in front of the customers on the certain manager that I need help. (I wasn't shouting) so I just told him...I was busy and I asked for help and now I'm wrong?? He just said: <u>YES!!!</u> That is the way what means team work in the place I work.' |
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Aware of the importance of fulfilling the customer's expectations, management were not prepared to renegotiate their internal control systems with staff on the basis of completion of a once-off WBL programme.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | 'Well, even though what the guest wants hasn't changed fundamentally, this is vitally important. There is a basic standard in serving a table and that's what I concentrate on with staff. The reason I train staff is to bring them to a generic standard, that's the secret. We have a standard for everything in the restaurant and we work towards that standard. This is what we want and this how you will achieve it. Because of the different backgrounds of the transient staff we set out those standards that they must abide by and achieve. Once they achieve that standard we are quite happy. Attitude is the main determinant of performance. This is what we want you to do, if you don't do it, then we don't have room for you.' |
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The participants felt frustrated that the management culture and systems of communication did not facilitate implementation and evaluation of new learning – in the words of one interviewee, they are ‘not using the knowledge of the staff.’

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| Interviewee – Participant | ‘They are here so long that nothing can surprise them, if they could listen more to what we have to say as we are the one close to the customer, listen to what we have to say – we are the one face to face with the customer – maybe they have no interest, no time to listen to us.’ |
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Some interviewees felt that by highlighting areas for improvement in the work milieu, they could be perceived as threatening to the authority of the line managers and disruptive of the culture of benevolent compliance throughout the hotel. This was referred to by one participant as a ‘culture of saying yes and not asking questions.’

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| Interviewee – Participant | ‘No I don’t think it [learning] is appreciated, even noticed. People spending extra time to learn new skills? We have to stay with the basics as we have no staff to introduce more attractive ways of doing things.’ |
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Working Hypothesis Generated

- **Hotel culture leads management in SMTEs to neglect evaluation of learning interventions and undervalue their impact.**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi study group achieved consensus on the working hypothesis and confirmed that appreciation of learning and conduct of proper assessment of learning and development programmes is limited, or even rarely conducted by HR management staff.

Seasonality of workforce impacts on post-delivery appraisal and ROI calculations as staff do not remain in employment in the establishment. According to the Delphi group, the seasonal aspect of the sector impinges on staff retention, and staff development beyond minimum competency levels receives little consideration within the sector. Fáilte Ireland, according to one Delphi respondent, has focused on management development to the detriment of line staff, perhaps, failing to adequately respond to the societal shift towards higher educational attainment and the need for closer management of line personnel development.

Hotel management appreciate the potential value of WBL but perceive a lack of time/finance for such ventures. Timetabling is not the only issue, however, as a cultural shift is required.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Perhaps there is something in sociology or some other field of learning which embeds the required cultural change required in SMTEs and entrepreneurs to consider WBL as “normal” or “expected”. Is there examples of this in other jurisdictions - e.g. Germany's “Mittelstand”?’ |
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4.9 Stewart and Rigg’s Factor No. 6 - Resources

Observation

The major finding from the case study was that resource implications affect all aspects of programme development and delivery.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘In the beginning managers promise the sun, moon and stars; when it comes to the crunch it is a different story - but it doesn’t happen - the focus and at the end of the day it comes down to financial, they want money in and not going out the door.’ |
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Delivery staff, HEI management and participants indicated that at times participants found it difficult to attend lectures even though they were conducted in the hotel. According to the Fáilte Ireland representative, this is a common occurrence during on-site training and reflects an absence of dedicated planned staff development periods during the working week. As the hotel has a busy working environment, operational management did not facilitate delivery of lectures during normal working hours and therefore staff were obliged to attend lectures during unscheduled free time. Occasionally managers asked participants to work shifts rather than attend lectures.

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| Interviewee – Participant | <p>‘No, as it was our day off the management couldn’t change our day off – difficult if it was day of work, some people couldn’t attend – sometimes Anna couldn’t attend – then some of us stood up and said ‘You asked me to do this course, so if you want us to graduate [then we must attend]?’</p> <p>Interviewer: What was the reaction of management when you said that?</p> <p>‘Oh, you start [shift] at 12.’</p> |
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Throughout the programme, Institute delivery staff required resource inputs and assistance from hotel management to facilitate continued delivery of the programme. This input included provision of training aids and materials such as food and drink, preparation of materials including tables and chairs, and organisation of programme-relevant ‘themed’ assessments such as ‘cocktail’ events etc. Programme delivery staff indicated that these events required assistance which was not always readily or immediately forthcoming from the hotel. This was described by HEI delivery staff as lack of ‘engaged’ interest of management in the programme.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Interviewee – Hotel HR Management | <p>‘Maybe they happen in other industries but the hotel industry is notorious for its lack of investment in training, everything is on the job. It would all be determined by the price tag at the end of the day.’</p> |
|-----------------------------------|---|

Working Hypothesis Generated

- **Onsite delivery of accredited programmes requires commitment of resources over a prolonged period.**

Delphi Insight

The Delphi study achieved consensus on the working hypothesis on resource issues and outline that resource issues are common to both academic institutions and HTL businesses. Delphi study respondents suggested that the seasonality of the HTL sector affects the availability of line staff for WBL. When time is available in the low season, staff are not available as they have been laid off.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘There is a huge seasonality issue, though, so hotels cannot afford training in the low season when that’s the time they should be active. Many hotels are closed during the winter period when most gain could be had.’ |
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The Delphi study also referred to the current scarcity of resources within HEIs, affecting their ability firstly to deliver cost-effective WBL for HTL establishments, and secondly to deliver programmes at times suitable for industry.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘There is also the issue of “timetabling”, i.e. staff being able to deliver such programmes at the required time by industry, given that most staff lecture between 16 and 18 hours per week.’ |
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The Delphi study group perceived that HEIs have far more resources available at their disposal than an SMTE.

4.10 Stewart and Rigg's Factor No. 7 - Learning Principles and Methods

Observation

With regard to learning principles, the main finding of the case study was the difficulty of adapting on-campus pedagogies to WBL.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘Some people can do very well at academic learning, come in, learn from lecturers direct, attend lectures, read the learning and do exams at the end of semester and know exactly what is required to get through exams and to do well in exams. Work-based learning is more practical, involves implementing part of the learning as you go along – must be understood – understand the learning not just regurgitate, but be able to do the learning in the workplace.’ |
|-----------------------------|---|

This was the first occasion that the Institute delivered a WBL programme to a local hotel, and as such it was quasi-experimental in its nature. It was deliberately constructed as a challenge to pedagogical capacity with regard to delivery of on-site learning in the workplace by the HEI. The programme learning objectives are normally achieved through on-campus lecture, class discussion and reflection. One lecturer observed that this standard lecture delivery format was unsuitable as students expected knowledge that was immediately and practically applicable to their environment and became impatient if the material was not engaging.

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| Interviewee - Adjunct Academic Delivery Staff | ‘I had previous lecturing experience in Carlow IT, but I found for that level, with people who are used to working every day, you need to engage them by breaking lectures down into smaller amounts, 10-15 minutes and then straight away give them a little assignment/feedback /review, bursts of academic theory followed by practical work straight away. Delivery of training was different from academic delivery which is a more longer-term investment, particularly in the assignments as lectures had to link up with each other as building blocks. With training it's more thinking of today as a stand-alone. At the start I took what they submitted without critical comment, how they wrote and presented their ideas, these are all part of their education.’ |
|---|---|

RPL facilitated conflation of some programme material reflecting participants' prior learning, but in general, conflation was not possible for much of the academic

material and therefore the structured programme was presented over an 18-month period. This prolonged timeframe caused problems for participants as the programme extended through staff holiday periods. As many of the participants were migrant workers, attendance at lectures dropped during these periods.

Participants on this programme felt that online delivery was not relevant in this type of programme as much learning involved the application of practical skill and generally new employees relied on peer or supervisory management guidance to learn their trade skills.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | <p>‘Peer to peer learning I would think is the most influential learning because you will learn more from your colleagues than you will from the educators or managers, people who are willing to train each other, support each other in the work. If a colleague is weak in one particular area they can be supported by others – learning in groups can be very beneficial and easier, this is a people industry, learning as an individual can be a very lonely</p> <p>Having someone who has the knowledge and then having the skills to pass their knowledge on to the next level down, that is hugely important and how the industry has survived up to now, it wasn’t a formal education’.</p> |
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|---------------------------|--|
| Interviewee – Participant | <p>‘Tying your tie knot can’t be learned from a computer.’</p> |
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According to the HEI delivery staff, the process of accreditation of work-based knowledge was dependent on mutual understanding of standards and complex academic process. In this case, necessary mutual understanding was not achieved or desired, and as a result programme accreditation remained a peripheral concept for hotel management but core for HEI delivery staff.

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| HEI Management | <p>‘I think it was [necessary] otherwise participants might feel they were getting it [the programme] on the cheap. I thought it was necessary as we ran a similar programme here in the college and it was important</p> |
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|--|---|
| | that the students see there are national standards that they should reach and also that they could progress onto other courses here if they so wished.' |
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|-----------------------------|---|
| Interviewee – Policy Expert | 'I think probably not as important as we would like it to be – national accreditation – people would like to get their certificate/awards – whether national or local – or a house certificate but I think it makes little difference to the employer or the industry as long as they get a piece of paper – they don't understand the difference of national accreditation or non-national. Industry doesn't understand the difference between the framework degrees.' |
|-----------------------------|---|

Participants were expected to apply their new knowledge at work and record that application in a learning journal. This proved quite difficult to realise as management were unaware of the new knowledge, and therefore were not inclined to afford opportunities for their staff to apply this knowledge in the work environment.

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| Interviewee – Adjunct Academic Delivery Staff | 'It depended on the department, one line manager seemed to support his team and provide them with the tools. As we went on and the hotel appeared under more pressure, I would say we got less and less support to the end where they didn't want to fund the gala dinner...From a learning perspective you really needed the managers to stand up and say "what you are learning is important from the hotel's point of view".' |
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However, a hotel management interviewee indicated that achieving an environment where group learning through public reflection is feasible requires a developmental culture engendered over considerable time. The opinion was that this hotel had not yet reached this point.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | 'Yes, if the senior management in the hotel buy into this. They make the decisions and it's very top-down. From a HR point of view I'd see that [group learning] as very positive and something you could do through employee voice facility or something like that. A failing of the programme was that we wanted this, but there was no history of investing in them before.' |
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Participants valued the formative aspect of the programme; however, the HEI placed a strong emphasis on developing the summative value of the programme.

Working Hypotheses Generated

- **Short accredited learning programmes is more likely to stimulate SMTE employees' interest in learning.**
- **Peer-to-peer learning is a common form of delivery to line employees in SMTEs.**
- **Group learning through public reflection involving management is not common practice in an SMTE.**

Delphi Insights

The Delphi study achieved consensus on the working hypothesis regarding accredited learning programmes, observing that short accredited programmes with implementable learning, compatible with the standards in the establishment, are vital for development of standards in the HTL sector.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘This is where we must be heading if we are to develop our industry.’ |
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The Delphi study marginally supported the working hypothesis on the widespread nature of peer to peer learning. However they cautioned that although peer-to-peer learning is a generally effective and widespread practice, mostly because of the lack of a viable alternative, there is always a danger of institutionalising bad practices. The Delphi study observed that current systems of peer-to-peer learning in hotels may not be the most effective way of developing standards in the sector, and previous experiences and interactions with educators outside the sector have been beneficial and enlightening.

The Delphi study supported the working hypothesis on group learning and agreed that learning through public reflection is practically non-existent within the HTL sector

due to culture and lack of time. Group learning and public reflection are rare occurrences in SMTEs as employees are normally too engrossed in their daily tasks indicating that the required culture for these activities has not been established in SMTEs.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘The required culture is simply non-existent without significant foundation work in advance.’ |
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4.11 Stewart and Rigg’s Factor No. 8 - Deliverer Capability

Observation

In the case study, delivery of WBL challenges the academic staff to respond to needs of practitioners who require knowledge that is immediately applicable and relevant in the workplace. Academic management openly admitted an emerging gap between delivery staff with recent practical experience considered suitable to deliver WBL projects, and staff lacking recent practical experience and understanding of industry who were therefore unsuitable to deliver such programmes. According to HEI management, staff intending to deliver WBL must be extremely versatile and flexible as suitable delivery times vary quite considerably.

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| Interviewee – HEI Management | ‘You can get staff to deliver but you have to have staff who are interested and enjoy doing it. The person we used had a postgraduate qualification in learning and teaching and when staff undergo these types of programmes, it demonstrates that they are interested in experimenting and trying out new things in the classroom. You obviously have to have very committed people; there is no point in putting a square peg into a round hole.’ |
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In the view of the Fáilte Ireland education policy expert, the quick pace of change challenges academic staff who are ‘removed from the application of learning’ to teach and develop theory that is relevant to everyday practices in the HTL sector. As quoted, the policy expert admitted that the sector values contextualised tacit learning

over formal learning, and as a result specialised delivery capacity is required to deliver effective WBL.

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| Interviewee - Policy Expert | ‘Learning in education is one type of learning, learning in industry is another kind of learning, to match the two together is a specific requirement, you need particular people to partake in that learning, to design the learning to suit the participants – and specialist people who know how WBL happens.’ |
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According to participants, joint programme delivery by HEI academic staff and adjunct staff from industry enriched the learning experience, but as confirmed by academic management, finding available and appropriate delivery staff from industry is not always easy for the academic institution and ultimately the quality of delivery/lecturing staff determines the quality of the intervention.

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| Interviewee – Policy Expert | ‘Excellent [concept] as long as the person from industry has lecturing skills – all very well knowing how to do the job as long as you can get it across – you get the best of both worlds. Best of the academic world and industry – industry person is likely to support the learning and the learners.’ |
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In contrast to what one might expect, participants felt the adjunct lecturer from industry overcompensated and included too much theory in their lectures. Initial difficulties with programme delivery were admitted by the adjunct lecturer who cited difficulties adjusting from her previous experiences as an industry trainer. However, overall the inclusion of an adjunct lecturer from industry was welcomed by both industry and HEI staff and added significant value to the programme

Adjunct faculty felt that there was inadequate preparation for delivery of the academic programme. This manifested particularly in design of exams and assessments, as

adjunct faculty reported inadequate appreciation of the need for consistency and sequential integration of delivery and assessment in order to achieve programme learning outcomes.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘Another point was that as a self-employed person I had more flexibility to deliver learning than [a full-time lecturer], in the event of a switch, it was easier for me to find alternative times, while she had timetable and union restrictions...[and said] the school holidays start there, it’s not me, it just wouldn’t be allowed.’ |
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| Interviewee – HEI Adjunct Academic Delivery Staff | ‘I didn’t understand the marking scheme and assessment, so I found myself at the end of the first module setting assignments and not having covered all the material that would back into a marking scheme. Or really properly understanding how well it should have been broken down. If I was to embark on something academic again, I would need to be better prepared for [it].’ |
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Although only quietly expressed during interview by HEI staff, the influence of existing union agreements hinders flexible delivery of WBL by restricting the possibility of additional hours. HEI management alluded to potential industrial relations issues when they suggested that it was better the union were not aware of the WBL programme. Delivery staff also felt restricted to working within the normal term time because of union influence.

According to the steering group, this may require specific staff appointments in both industry and academia that would progress WBL interventions, helping to interpret culture for either side. The policy expert felt that this was a necessary feature for the future development of WBL.

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| Minutes of Steering Group Meeting | ‘Some preliminary observations include the need for a learning champion in the workplace, a welcome for the concept of work-based learning and interest in an academic/industry “buddy” system.’ |
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Working Hypothesis Generated

- **WBL challenges academic staff to respond to needs of HTL practitioners who perceive that HE academic staff may not possess relevant operational knowledge.**

Delphi Insights

The Delphi study achieved consensus on the working hypothesis and concurred that academic staff in HEIs need to develop their voice and visibility within the industry.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Many academic staff who deliver programmes may not have worked in a private institution, they may have gone straight from college to lecturing, therefore do not possess the knowledge of the work environment.’ |
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As the Delphi study suggests, this helps perpetuate the notion that current academic programmes do not meet development needs of line staff in the hospitality sector. The structure and orientation of HEIs is towards higher-level conceptual learning and industry requires more practical skills-based training for staff.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘I believe this is due to the structure and orientation of the education system. HEIs are HETAC-orientated and driven by HEA requirements.’ |
|-------------------------|---|

The sector is evolving and academic delivery staff must understand the skillsets and knowledge required in industry. The Delphi group expressed significant underlying beliefs that some HEI staff may not have relevant knowledge to impact on operational performance. This can be rectified by academic staff spending more time with industry.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘I would suggest that there should be an emphasis on academic staff being employed in a private institution for a semester or during summer holiday time in order to gain a full grasp of what is required in industries today.’ |
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4.12 Stewart and Rigg's Factor No. 9 - Transfer and Application to Work

Observation

Participants did not get opportunities to consider or suggest implementation of programme learning in the workplace. Participants said that they rarely had an opportunity post-programme to apply their administrative and technical knowledge within their work environment. They were not encouraged or invited by hotel management to share their knowledge with co-workers.

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| Interviewee – HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘The biggest challenge was that work-based learning has to be parallel with day-to-day work and they were not generally allowed or encouraged to apply. So we spent a lot of time dealing with comments like “it’s all very well for you to say that, but when we get a customer complaint, the manager responds this way”. The hotel was going through a lot of turmoil and the time and support wasn’t necessarily there. You would have a much more accelerated outcome if they could have implemented the following day or week.’ |
|--|---|

In this context, difficulties balancing theory and practice are particularly acute, as the hotel tended to value immediate productivity over learning and faculty tend to value academic knowledge over immediate productivity.

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| Interviewee - HEI Academic Delivery Staff | ‘I would be showing them the book way of doing things...which was very frustrating for the student as they were learning the correct way of doing service, but when they went back into the workplace, they went back to the old habits.’ |
|---|---|

Participants indicated that qualifications do not necessarily equip the holder to perform a task or job role effectively and challenged that learning strategies must be formally integrated into daily work through ‘on-the-job’ problem-solving.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Operations Management | ‘What we would do here and what the course would actually give wouldn’t mesh together, but there was an improvement in attitude and performance of the participants.’ |
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The accredited programme existed prior to the commencement of the partnership and it was clear from the evidence that the HEI had not made significant changes to the programme to reflect the particular needs of the cohort of workers.

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| Interviewee – Participant | ‘Some academic parts seemed to be irrelevant, for example the event marketing. More interaction, scenarios, role play was needed.’ |
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Following each learning session participants were required to complete a reflective piece on learning implementation in a learning journal. Invariably these pieces became a regurgitation of lessons taught in the classroom, and failed to describe an occasion where the learning was implemented. Without implementation of the learning, respondents referred to co-workers’ views that programme participation was a waste of time and reinforced the impression that the intervention was purely an academic exercise.

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| Interviewee – Participant | ‘Preparation for after the course needs more thought, more decision-making for the staff after training, more involvement in the decision-making process, how we can make the place more attractive for the customer.’ |
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However, a positive outcome of the WBL programme was that participants benefited from the opportunity to display their personal capacities in front of management.

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| Interviewee – Hotel Management | ‘One of the projects on the course was the presentation of afternoon tea. This was something new for the participants, the GM attended and you could see their enthusiasm and we could see the enthusiasm and allowed participants portray themselves in a new light.’ |
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Some participants outlined that the programme content should include more real-life case studies and help devise strategies for dealing with frustrating and emotive situations. For example, in the bar, management of drunk and awkward customers appears to be a source of much dissatisfaction and embarrassment for staff.

Working Hypothesis Generated

- **Line employees in SMTEs find it difficult to relate academic learning to their workplace.**

Delphi Insights

The Delphi study achieved partial consensus, emphasising a realistic assessment of learning needs in order to really understand company needs, and suggested conducting a return on investment study where the educator is required to present real evidence of value.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Some of the academic learning may be too theoretical and not enough emphasis on practical workplace learning.’ |
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Due to absence of formal structures to facilitate communication, programmes are developed without a sufficient level of common understanding.

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| Delphi Study Respondent | ‘Largely due to the disconnect between industry and academia...programmes are largely designed in isolation from the target audience.’ |
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Learning outcomes from HEI programmes tend to have a long-lasting effect rather than achieving immediate results as required by the business managers.

4.13 Synthesis of Findings

Case Study Research Findings - Hotel Management

- Fundamental divergences exist in the hotel between HR and Operational management approaches regarding staff development through WBL;
- Tensions exist between implementation of WBL and maintenance of current standard operating systems.

Case Study Research Findings - Participants

- Participants had difficulty in relating academic knowledge to tangible applicable outcomes in the workplace;
- Practical knowledge is considered more useful than completion of an accredited WBL programme in the workplace;
- Completion of WBL programme helps to remove participant fears and encourages future learning.

Case Study Research Findings - HEI Management

- Requirement for more effective WBL delivery strategies/resources/staff capacities;
- Prior agreements and coordination with hotel are required in order to maintain clear relationships;
- Accreditation system generates a sense of inertia regarding innovative programme delivery and tailoring of content.

4.13.1 Summary of Delphi Comments

The Delphi group provided an objective analysis, confirmed the validity of those findings within their given range of experiences, and provided further distillation of some points.

Table 4.1: Summary of Findings

| Working Hypothesis | Observation by Delphi |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Reluctance to formalise SMTE-HEI communications | Group Consensus |
| Programmes need to meet development needs of line staff | Group Consensus |
| HEI staff perceived not to have relevant operational knowledge to deliver WBL | Group Consensus |
| On-site delivery requires commitment of resources | Group Consensus |
| Line employees find it difficult to relate learning to the workplace | Group Consensus |
| Peer-to-peer learning is an effective mode of delivery of WBL | Partial Consensus |
| Public reflection is not common practice | Group Consensus |
| Short programmes stimulate employees' interest in learning | Group Consensus |
| Accredited WBL facilitates career development in the sector | Rejection of 'working hypothesis' |
| Differing attitudes exist between HR and operations management | Partial Consensus |
| Hotel management find it difficult to articulate value of WBL for their business | Partial Consensus |
| SMTEs do not appraise and therefore under-evaluate learning interventions | Group Consensus |

This commentary by an expert group permitted the author to conduct an inductive analysis on emergent themes from the case study in the light of Delphi study contributions.

The expert group were quite forthright in a number of areas, in particular that:

- There is an onus on HEIs to provide for WBL and improve their relevancy in this area;
- Financial costs and staff turnover are major prohibitors for HTL management; and
- HRD practices and ROI evaluation of learning interventions must be improved to justify WBL initiatives within the sector.

Specific measures suggested by the Delphi group as central to improving WBL included use of industry practitioners as lecturing staff, development of online learning capacities, financial assistance to cope with staffing and resource implications, and development of bespoke practically focused programmes for line staff. They also suggested that academic staff should spend time in industry during holiday periods and that industry advisory boards should inform design and development of programmes that are planned with local industry.

4.14 Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I outlined the data in terms of ‘what it was saying about the phenomenon and generated a descriptive explanation’ (Mason, 1996 p. 137), which facilitated further analysis of the phenomena of delivery of WBL later in the document. I mapped comments from the three units of analysis into the Stewart and Rigg (2011) model. These comments were used to understand each factor within WBL delivery. Gathered data were placed within this model and each factor was thus considered within a systems analysis (Yamagata- Lynch, 2010).

The tensions identified in the systems analysis were then condensed into a series of hypothetical statements, which were considered by a Delphi study comprised of experts from the sector. The Delphi study confirmed the validity of these statements and provided objective comments on their own experiences regarding the research findings.

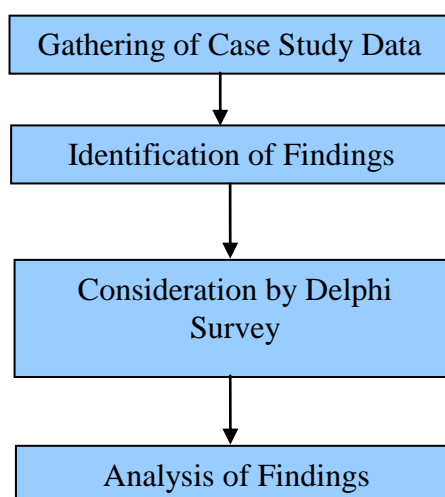
Chapter 5 attempts a deconstruction of the implications of these tensions through generation of ‘higher order themes’ by working with the ‘latent meaning of the data’ (Boyatzis 1998). This inductive process reframed findings having considered the expert analysis provided through the Delphi survey.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, following production and presentation of case study findings in the previous chapter, my analysis deciphers ‘higher order themes’ (Boyatzis, 1998). These themes are generated through reflection, which probed the research data to uncover latent meaning of the data. I present these refined findings, having considered expert analysis generated through the Delphi survey.

Figure 5.1: Analysis of Findings



As Griffiths (1998) observed, once the facts are established, values are brought into play in order to use the knowledge. In Chapter 5, I discuss relationships between my primary findings and the dominant themes found in the literature. Thus I consider whether the findings of this study support, contradict, or modify facets of previous debates by authors discussed in the literature review. This analytic discussion is developed in three sections: the role of power and structure within the WBL dynamic; linkage of identity and affordances for HTL workers; and inertia within the HEI. The

chapter concludes with a summary of the consequences for the substantive issues of the research question.

5.2 Restatement of the Research Proposition and Problem

Taking the advice of Bell (2010), I restate the research problem and proposition prior to discussing how my results compare with existing knowledge.

The extant research proposed that:

1. Effective organisations normally have an appreciation of the impact of higher levels of education on careers and business performance (Hinkin and Tracey, 2010).
2. Organisations have responsibility for developing their staff (Brownell, 2010).
3. Staff developed through work-based learning improve business performance (Mora, in Linehan and Sheridan, 2010).

This thesis set out to identify why the potential for WBL in the hospitality businesses in the Midlands remains unfulfilled. Essentially this inductive case study research explored spaces between perceived potential of WBL and contextual issues that affect this ‘bounded phenomenon’.

My research question was to ascertain the factors which influence delivery of work-based learning programmes within the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure environment with a view to recommending improvements.

5.3 Strengths of the Research Approach

In terms of previous development and delivery of WBL, I did not uncover any previous descriptions of delivery of WBL to the hospitality sector in the Irish Midlands.

Yin's (2009) case study framework provides a systematic method of managing and making sense of a rather complex phenomenon. During the process, the embedded design of the qualitative framework furnished a deconstruction of the phenomenon into meaningful units of analysis. Analysis of these units permitted pluralistic identification of relationships and systemic implications. According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), this type of systemic analysis is often difficult within qualitative methods due to the lack of a reference point to consider the relationship between themes.

Case study permitted analysis of systemic contradictions and challenges that exist within delivery of WBL. Accordingly, my empirical research was able to demonstrate how contextual issues within a complex learning activity brought pressure on the subjects. For example, case study research helped identify existing tensions between the goals of the HR and operations management within the hotel. These tensions ultimately drive transformations in future activities and can portray how human

actions are multifaceted and interlinked, rather than simply a causal relationship between individual variables.

By using the Stewart and Rigg (2011) model as the theoretical framework for presenting the study findings, I was able to present my research in a structured, manageable manner based on a web of factors, reflecting the views of all stakeholders.

5.4 Challenges of the Research Approach

Observable behaviours are really only the entry point for developing an insider perspective. Although this case study framework provided for elegant exposition of the data and findings, there was a danger that the web of factors was so broad that I might not be able to focus on the really pertinent issues of the case, nor fully demonstrate its relevance to understanding delivery of WBL in the HTL sector. For example, data emerged (such as the role of peer-to-peer learning in organisational learning and the impact of cost on work-based learning) that were extremely important, but not the focus of my study.

A further challenge I identified in case study analysis, and also identified by Stake (1995), was the danger that application of the framework produced simply academic descriptions and failed to produce generalisable recommendations for change or improvement in practice. Admittedly, the goal of this particular study was not to make generalisable claims in the traditional sense but to produce what Stake (*ibid.*) describes as ‘petite generalisation’ as a product of qualitative research. Findings of this study are particular to this environment, but to generalise it might be helpful, if

possible, to re-enact this study in more than one setting, to establish if there are common implications.

As I used case study analysis to explore a two-year project, there was a danger of being reductionist and arbitrary in order to produce a snapshot. To reduce this effect and to produce trustworthy outcomes, I built the presentation of findings around recurring themes that research participants identified. Once I drew up these themes, I asked a colleague to read the data and check whether my themes reflected a trustworthy interpretation. In addition, following the advice of Yamagata- Lynch (2010), I constantly revisited the research question to determine information I might include in the presentation of findings. Finally, as the coordinator of this WBL project, I was aware of recurring themes through constant conversations with participants, hotel management and HEI staff prior to, and during the research.

5.5 Analysis of the Case Study Evidence

According to Rowley (2002) there are no ‘cookbook’ procedures outlined for the analysis of case study results, but I agree that analysis should be cognisant of Yin’s (2003) principles outlined in Chapter 3. Yin states that analysis should use all relevant evidence, consider all major rival interpretations, draw in my previous expert knowledge, and particularly, address the most significant aspect of the case.

To focus my analysis, I intend to outline the most significant aspects of this case study, and in particular to address issues that have been highlighted in the literature review. I reflected that the findings presented in Chapter 4 could be further condensed from Stewart and Rigg’s (2011) theoretical framework into three major emergent

conceptual headings. I now present a more detailed analysis, identifying and relating the latent meaning of my findings to my research objectives.

5.5.1 Management and Participant Power and Interest Issues within the WBL Dynamic

Relevant Research Objectives

- Identify if HTL management engagement impacted on programme delivery.
- Examine if the WBL programme was culturally appropriate for a medium-sized hotel.

In this study I observed that WBL revolves around sometimes unequal power relationships – internal staff-management relationships in the case of the hotel, and interagency relationships between the hotel and the HEI.

The data demonstrate the relevance of management support for WBL and concur with a majority of the extant literature regarding the impact of management engagement on WBL.

The question of power is particularly significant in characterising different stances on WBL. Hotel management's reluctance to engage with opportunities presented by WBL, and gradual withdrawal of resources (thus degrading the sense of purpose), provides clear evidence in this empirical study that micro-political thinking impacted on management behaviour with regard to the WBL programme. There are resonances of Foucault's (1970) suggestions of the inseparability of power, knowledge and social

relations in the exercise of hotel management. For example, the major concerns for employers were cost and loss of income, when employees were not focusing solely on their defined job.

Clear manifestations of a 'restrictive management' philosophy emerge (Fuller and Unwin, 2004), which expounds rationality as the platform for all activity. Consistency of internal systems took precedence over development aspects such as enhancing employees' understanding of their job, ensuring employee retention or helping employees' progression. Apart from compulsory training in health and safety, few resources were invested in learning and development activities for line staff. Most learning was informal and took place 'on the job', and managers did not indicate an appreciation that learning was essential for the maintenance and improvement of production.

Keep and Rainbird's (2000) comments about the 'command, control and surveillance' approach engendered through low-trust employee relations are also relevant in the sense that hotel management maintain power imbalances through enforcement of systems and avoidance of 'discursive' forums where these systems could be debated. The 'management by walking about' culture espoused in the hotel, and lauded by academic staff, could be interpreted as an attempt to achieve Foucauldian 'surveillance' by constantly monitoring employees while carrying out their work responsibilities in order to ensure systems compliance.

Staff development was considered irrelevant as management excluded staff from most decisions regarding their work environment. Echoing Baum (2007), operational management played a gatekeeper role with regard to staff development, dictating the running of the hotel and unilaterally imposing systems with minimum consultation with HR personnel.

As expounded by Bourdieu (1993), these findings suggest that exclusion of participants from opportunities to gain increased understanding and awareness of their roles limits the potential of line staff to build their 'social capital' within the hotel, and find their sense of place in the wider 'field' of HTL operations. The strong operational focus of the hotel appeared to negatively influence participants' views of the value of contextual knowledge in the HTL 'field', thus reducing their ability to develop their sense of 'habitus' in the sector by not allowing participants to develop a sense of belonging on the programme, and subsequently self-regulating their professional ambitions. Refusals by line managers to renegotiate work rosters to permit programme attendance could be seen as little acts of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1993), exposing the superior social capital of operational management.

The low expectations of participants resonates with Lukes' (1974) view that the ability of elite groups to act contrary to interests of less powerful groups by the extent they influence their desires. Operations management in the hotel were generally quite content to maintain a status quo as it facilitated a non-threatening and less challenging environment. Personal identities and aspirations are formed by the culture of the hotel. However, there is significant emerging frustration at the lack of interaction with management regarding work practices.

Participant comments on lack of opportunity to apply knowledge post-programme delivery highlight personal disappointment regarding programme content and absence of overall impact on work performance or career progression. This suggests a ‘low road’ culture (Lucas, 2004) within the hotel, prioritising labour cost management, valuing limited investment in recruitment and development activities, and neglecting a recognised career path linked to qualifications.

Contradictions are obvious between hotel management’s espoused policies of providing for development of their staff and the apparent dominant ethos of non-learning. This is demonstrated in dictatorial language, associated by Griffiths (1998) with coercion and force, thus suggesting Foucauldian domination within this work environment.

‘This is what we want and this is how you will achieve it’

Hotel Management Interviewee

With minimal organisational commitment from employees, management perhaps feel less obliged to provide an ‘expansive’ (Fuller and Unwin, 2004) attitude to staff development and maintain practices like rigid roles, bounded communications and lack of emphasis on innovation, which facilitate a restrictive learning environment.

I suggest these attitudes may have been a factor behind the frustration obvious in comments by the HR Manager about operational management, and different managers appeared to espouse polar opposite ends of the ‘systems-control’ and ‘process-

relational’ philosophies (Watson, 2006). By encouraging formal communication systems with line staff, the HR Manager appeared to view the organisation as a network of interlinked relationships, espousing a ‘process-relational’ approach. On the other hand, operational management did not encourage staff consultation and it appeared that structural systems existed to ensure control, on the understanding that employees were there to implement management systems.

5.5.1.1 ‘Rewarding’ Long-term Service with Disinterest in their Development

The case study supports Riley’s (1996) observations on the economic model, which dominates the HTL sector. Riley defined the HTL labour market as ‘weak’. Although the case study was focused on delivery of WBL, the evidence showed that this model is in operation in the hotel, including a high proportion of unskilled occupations, low transferability of skills, high levels of labour turnover and low levels of pay, particularly for unskilled work.

In this hotel, management invest in perfunctory learning and development initiatives for their staff, perhaps reflecting Riley’s (1996) observation that pay and skills are interlinked, that there is a top limit to the capacity for skill and knowledge learning in each establishment, and that productivity does not depend on job tenure to any large degree. In this establishment, I did not observe incentives for employees to acquire higher skills as the business model pushes management to deskill line employees to facilitate and perhaps encourage high staff turnover.

Amid recent economic challenges, according to one hotel management respondent, this model is widespread and prevails in many hotels in financial administration. Even though there is no evidence of severe financial problems in the hotel in question, the case study shows that these attitudes are prevalent as management revealed that the only real benefit from enhanced learning was an improved attitude.

In summary, this case study corroborates with Riley (1996) that immediate financial concerns of the hotel conflict with the overall skills needs of the HTL sector. In this case, management implement policies that reflect a weak labour market, influenced by fluctuating consumer demand with a surplus supply of unskilled workers. The implication of this analysis is that the impetus for skill development must be raised with vocational education providers, such as Fáilte Ireland, or perhaps with hierarchically-structured units such as multinational corporations who have resources.

5.5.1.2 Vertical Misalignment between HR and Operational Management Strategies

The case study reflected Van Dierdonck and Debackere's (1988) findings, that operational functioning is the primary concern of management and therefore a major reality for HEI-Industry collaboration. This led to a classic Bourdieuan internal struggle between the HR and operational management, as social actors looking for dominant positions within their 'field'.

It appears self-explanatory that linking learning and development interventions to business strategy assists 'alignment' of the intervention with other activities in the organisation. In this case study, however, there was a lack of agency on the part of the HR Manager as his interventions were dominated by operations management within the negotiated order of the hotel. This lack of agency appears compounded by absence of return on investment (ROI) calculations subsequent to learning and development interventions.

The original HR Manager aspired to 'horizontal alignment' (Stewart and Rigg, 2011) or linking interventions with other HR and HRD activities and eventual 'vertical alignment' (ibid.) linking the business approach to learning and development within the overall business strategy. 'Vertical alignment' was not achieved as the overall HR business strategy was predicated on low skills and high turnover of staff, therefore negating the HR Manager's efforts to create a learning and development culture in the organisation.

These points illustrate a dialectic ontological struggle between social actors of the HR and operational departments. Perhaps this justifies Reidy's (2003) comments that a learning organisation is not necessarily suited to every organisation, and Davison, McPhail and Barry (2011) and Baum's (2012) more recent observations on the diminution of HRM's role in the tourism industry globally. Comments from the HR Manager implied that personal development was an important and necessary issue for people in the workforce nowadays. However, this was not emphasised by programme participants who appeared satisfied to pursue the programme for the programme's sake, and were seemingly oblivious to higher self-actualisation aspects of

development programmes. This may reflect participants' own personal expectations, but might also indicate a construct of needs by the HR Manager around staff development.

The absence of staff engagement on operational matters was confirmed by participants, management, and noticeably the sector expert, who maintained that the sector was generally 10-15 years behind every other industry regarding HR developments, contributing to less organisational commitment and less staff engagement. These attitudes persist in the case study, despite management awareness of Kinicki, Carson and Bohlander's (1992) assertion that developmental HR programmes positively affect employee perceptions of the organisation and work attitudes.

As acceptance for these 'people –first' (Solnet, Baum and Kralj, 2012) view has grown within the extant literature, one might imagine that the influence of the HR Manager and his role within the organisation should have undoubtedly been accentuated to a greater level of influence in this organisation. The case study highlights Baum's (2007) comments regarding re-emergence of the line manager who is responsible, yet ill qualified to undertake human resource activities. This analysis has important political ramifications within the HTL industry and the eventual role of people development strategies, as current practice obviously does not reflect either Fáilte Ireland policy or academic rhetoric. According to the evidence provided in this case study, Fáilte Ireland is not challenging the status quo regarding the skills development and career progression of line workers.

5.5.2 Linkage of Identity and Affordances for HTL Workers

Relevant Research Objectives

- Examine if the WBL programme was culturally appropriate for a medium-sized hotel.
- Establish if the application of programme learning was encouraged in the work context.

5.5.2.1 Affordances for Participants

Management attitudes in the hotel reflect Eraut's (2007a) observations on informal learning in organisations, that learning was not the primary aim of the organisation, and most learning is informal and occurs as a by-product of engaging in work processes and activities.

Evidence in the case study portrays the hotel as unaware and lacking systemic supports for helping employees reach their potential through learning opportunities, using either broader work experience or formal learning programmes. Line management comments on operational needs of the hotel portray cultural dominance of consistency and productivity over provision of career structures and pathways for line workers, reflecting Fuller and Unwin's (2004) 'restrictive' work environment. This view resonates with comments of the HR Manager who felt management permitted the programme because of 'tokenism' (Kanter, 1977) – they felt that something should be done, but the dominant practice remained one of 'instinctive' reactive behaviour.

This phenomenon supports Le Clus's (2007) theories that social cultural processes and relationships determine how employees 'afford' or 'constrain' learning opportunities for each other. Experiences of employees in the case study confirm the phenomenon as they express frustration and incapacity to apply new learning due to management's inability to see potential for new developments and initiatives.

The sentiments also reflect Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which described conditions for learning and modelling behaviour: retention, reproduction and motivation. In this hotel it appears that, due to turnover in junior management, line staff spend considerable time introducing new management to their responsibilities. In so doing, recalling Lukes (1974), the implications of this analysis is that line staff actually play a role in generation of their boundaries through job definition. This is perhaps unsurprising given the HR model within the hotel, and also reflects the inability of line staff to translate personal knowledge into social and economic capital leading to symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

5.5.2.2 Lack of Voice within the Industry – Reluctance to Participate

In the context of development of self as a professional, participants neglected the importance of development of their 'voice' (Moon, 2006). The absence of trade unions and professional body interest appears to have cultivated the absence of social identification with others carrying out similar work in the profession, so there were no systemic opportunities to voice their opinions and subsequently allow the emergence of their ideas, perspectives and metaphors of their workplace.

In interview some participants appeared to understand their own 'lack of voice' within the industry and expressed their frustration. However, others were not aware of their lack of voice, and neither did they indicate appreciation of Griffiths' (1998) assertion that power and empowerment are really debates about voice.

This may reflect an influx of non-demanding migrant workers who indicate satisfaction with the hotel's non-unionised environment, where the physical exertions and long hours of the HTL industry are accepted unquestioningly (Baum, 2012). The programme was described by HR as an opportunity to improve line staff perception of self-worth in a sector 'notorious for a lack of investment in people', demonstrating awareness of the problem at managerial level.

I believe these findings justify Lukes' (1974) argument that powerful elite groups (such as hotel management) are able to persuade less powerful groups (such as a largely female migrant workforce) to act in ways contrary to their own interests, by influencing, shaping or determining their own wants. This is evident in the participants' passive acceptance of the absence of a learning culture and absence of professional representation in the industry (Baum, 2012). It is perhaps also evident in the participants' initial interest in WBL for local workplace application, rather than developing their personal education.

The migrant population working in the hotel had significant difficulties engaging with the programme. These findings, and the participants' sense of exclusion from decision-making in the workplace, again resonate with Bourdieu's recognition that 'habitus' and social capital are an important determinant of power within an

organisation. As the majority of participants were immigrants to Ireland (Baum, 2007) their personal ‘agency’ within the organisation may not be well developed. They appeared to accept the situation without questioning management’s motives. Recalling Baum (2012), there were semblances of an emerging ghettoisation of HTL migrant workers into lower skills work, who work shift work and gather enough money to return to their home country on holidays, without any real and deep socialisation within their host country.

Reflecting Tallantyre (2008) and Lester and Costley’s (2010) comments on the likelihood that WBL widens third-level participation for learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds, participants very much appreciated the initiative for the positive catalytic impact that learning as a fundamental competence (Hase and Kenyon, 2000) could make on their lives both academically and professionally. One participant felt that through WBL, the college was reaching out to her, to engage with higher education. Significantly, by encouraging this participants knowledge base, the college could be interpreted as exposing emergent frustration within this workforce, forming participant’s productive power (Foucault, 1970), using discursive formation to resist the structural power of hotel management, and establishing a positive force for the emergence of ‘enterprising selves’ (Garrick and Usher, 2000) within the hotel.

5.5.2.3 Over Here, Over Qualified and Under Challenged – Frustration and Emotional Labour

Originating with a migrant participant’s extraneous description of his superior skills in maths and computers, it was evident from interviews and RPL assessments that the majority of participants on the programme had previously participated in third-level

education and a minority had achieved Masters level in various disciplines. However, reflecting Linehan and Hogan's report in 2008, this previous formal learning was not given value within this workplace. Although participants' comments regarding his superior ability in Maths were unrelated to the interview question, it revealed underlying sensitivity and frustration that employees were not given credit for their competency and knowledge.

Notwithstanding participants' satisfaction in completing an accredited programme, they challenged Drucquer, Thomas and Morrison's (2010) findings on accredited learning within career development, by placing more emphasis on the importance of relevant content than accreditation.

The lack of recognition for their previous education, and the subsequent reconfiguration of professional identity of migrant participants with previous third-level education was a noticeable feature of the interviews and is a feature not easily identified in the extant HTL literature. Even though reconfiguration of identity by engaging with education is a noticeable feature of Ahlgren and Tett's (2010) essay, there is an absence of studies addressing this practice of 'de-education' practiced in this workplace. This 'de-education' acts as an effective de-capitalisation in the Bourdieuan sense, rendering migrant employees more vulnerable and powerless in their workplace. One might ask at this point if there are future implications in this observation for integration of migrants into their host community.

On the other hand, the findings reflect Baum's (2012) writings on the increasing emphasis of 'emotional labour' in the sector, and decrease in social distance between

the guest and employee, placing greater emphasis on employees' aesthetic appearance, 'soft skills' and management of emotions. The frustration of dealing with awkward or intoxicated hotel customers demands tacit knowledge and skills that can be shared horizontally with fellow line employees and vertically with supervisors and management. Encouraging sharing of this knowledge would not only change the concept of line workers from 'skills deficits' to 'knowledge brokers' (Ahlgren and Tett, 2010) but also open up possibilities for revision of the WBL delivery model to deal with real problems (Raelin, 2008) encountered by participants.

Lack of awareness or interest in a career structure and preoccupation with their operational performance has perhaps influenced this attitude, as from the outset the programme was considered supplementary to the requirements of operational running of the organisation. Reinforcing this view was management insistence that participants attended lectures during time off, rather than during scheduled work time. The extra logistical burden for participants reinforced a perception that the learning programme was tangential to normal operations and sent a powerful message regarding the lack of importance of staff development. The question emerging from this case study is then 'why are the employees reticent to redefine themselves through education?'. Drawing on Foucault, I suggest that WBL can create a more challenging power relations for participants with more personal responsibility, without apparent rewards or symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1970), thereby rupturing the safety of the familiar (Zembylas, 2005).

5.5.3 Re-contextualising Knowledge – Relevance

Relevant Research Objectives

- Establish if current programme delivery strategies are fit for purpose.
- Establish if the application of programme learning was encouraged in the work context.
- Determine the contribution of academic faculty during delivery of WBL.

5.5.3.1 Inertia within the HEI

Despite Lester and Costley's (2010) upbeat assertion that a set of principles and practices have emerged to mark out WBL as a distinct field of learning in HEIs, there is little evidence to that effect in this case study. Indeed the case study reflects O Cathain's (2010) comments on the deficiencies in quality engagement between state development agencies and education and training providers in the Midlands.

This research confirms the extant research regarding generally hesitant attitudes of academia in providing for mainstreaming of WBL practice in their institutions. The vague response of this HEI towards the challenge of delivering WBL ultimately points to the lack of respect (Evans, Guile and Harris in Malloch *et al.*, 2011) accorded to epistemologies and practice of this facet of education, where it continues to reside at the margins (Boud and Solomon, 2001).

The research illustrates common acceptance of and positivity towards the notion of WBL provision, acknowledging common inherencies with industry. However, operationalisation and development of capacity remain unclear and lacking in committed leadership. This was best exemplified in the case study, by the reluctance

of the HEI to formalise the WBL partnership with the hotel through a Memorandum of Understanding (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012), as HEI management were perhaps reluctant to commit resources.

The case study uncovers similar challenges for WBL in the HEI as those identified by Garrick, Chan and Lai (2003), Vaughan (2008) and Smith and Preece (2009). These include debilitating application of stringent quality assurance, absence of particular government funding, intensity of labour required for WBL programmes, lack of sufficient responsiveness required by WBL students, and dearth of management support.

Reflecting Smith and Preece's (2009) comments, while not overtly impacting on the participant experience, the quality assurance procedure within the Institute required a sequence of committed actions creating additional work for individual lecturers. However, this case study differs significantly regarding the impact of some of these challenges on the programme. For example, the quality assurance process did not interfere unduly with delivery and one of the HEI lecturers was enthusiastic about making modifications to the assessment process for future deliveries of the programme.

The case study demonstrated underlying positivity towards the concept of WBL in the HEI, while academic staff were reluctant to engage in experimentation with content and delivery technique. There are indications that this reluctance may be due to traditional conservatism with regard to programme construction within this academic institution. Reflecting Garrick and Clegg's (2000) comments on power and agency

within the sector, programme construction is seen as the domain of the academic, and ceding total control of this aspect of Institute life might be perceived as having crossed a line within academic circles, where HEIs no longer have a monopoly on generation of knowledge definitions.

The concept of accreditation of WBL (or giving value to learning at work) is a relatively recent phenomenon. Boud (2003) suggested that most learning developed in the workplace was unaccredited until recently, but has provided a platform for future studies. Garrick, Chan and Lai's (2003) challenge to HEIs to broaden their thinking beyond pre-set curricula and accreditation processes to give learning at work its rightful credit is relevant, but unfulfilled. As they suggest, change in WBL delivery requires a major shift in power balance from the HEI 'providers to partnership' approach underpinned by the principle of 'emancipatory learning'.

As identified by Linehan (2008), accreditation, or the process of recognising and *giving value* to a broad range of learning experiences, can depend on particular approaches to the curriculum in which learning is defined in sets of learning outcomes, grouped in terms of units or modules, and at an identified level and volume. These issues of giving value to learning experiences are significant for the future of WBL. It can be seen in the case study that the discourse and practice of learning at work are dominated in the Foucauldian sense by the 'language of educators' (Flint and Jones, 2011), whose knowledge is mostly contemplative, rather than the performative knowledge (Barnett in Garrick and Clegg, 2000) that is demanded in the HTL workplace. In the case study it is remarkable that often the common discourse using power terms like 'capacity building', 'intellectual capital'

and ‘up-skilling’ comes from neither the operational management nor the HEI management, but mostly from the HR Manager and the representative of the state development agency. It appears these actors have bought into a discourse that hasn’t been accepted by the educators themselves and in my opinion indicates ongoing internal divisions regarding the language of education used within higher education perhaps discernable through potential union reluctance to engage in development of WBL. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Although not mentioned in the extant literature, an alternative interpretation of the HEI interest in accreditation might have been the difficulty in maintaining the WBL partnership momentum. Accreditation was possibly seen by academics as ‘glue that binds’ the relationship needed for the learning partnership. Accreditation may have made it difficult for the employer to withdraw from the relationship during the period of delivery.

Furthermore, HEI delivery staff acted on Gallacher and Reeve’s (2005) advice, trying not to over-formalise WBL which might lead to an administrative burden on employers, and subsequent ‘collaborative inertia’. In this case, however, employers appeared to be eventually so far removed from programme delivery that demands for closer relations with the management were justified.

5.5.3.2 Staff Capacity to Deliver WBL

Professor Deegan’s remarks in 2009 regarding people responding to rewards are pertinent throughout this case study. The findings *fail to illustrate meaningful*

rewards or incentives in the HEI system for full-time academic staff to engage with delivery of WBL.

The case study resonates with Hodkinson's (2008) assertion that workplaces are different, and it is important to tailor training to the specifics of existing practices, focusing on what is feasible and can realistically be achieved. Although relevant, the aspiration of 'principled pragmatism' seems inappropriate in this case. Hardly 'principled', in that the practitioner did not think hard about what is to be learned, how and why; and hardly 'pragmatic', because delivery of learning was not adapted to specific circumstances by the HEI. The high levels of flexibility and innovation required from academic delivery staff was provided in this case by exceptional members of staff, but there are insinuations in the data that generally academic staff are not interested in providing for this type of learner.

This programme falls far short of Boud's (2001) notion of negotiated programmes with individual learning plans and organisational commitment. Neither do these findings correspond with Shiel *et al.*'s (2007) demands in Linehan (2008) that WBL partners are 'receptive, responsive and sufficiently visionary'.

Reference by academic staff to gaining trade union acquiescence in support of programme delivery was a factor that lurked in the background, and significantly, although mentioned as a factor in the HEI environment by Kelly (2009), this is not mentioned in any previous studies on WBL in the literature review. In this case study, HEI management mention that delivery of WBL maintained a low profile, 'under the radar', perhaps for fear of antagonising industrial relations. This is consequential as it

indicates current absence of mainstream scaffolding for WBL within the Institute, and subsequent lack of academic capacity to deliver off-campus flexible learning in a coherent manner integrated with normal work practices.

Reflecting Becket and Brooks (2008), academic staff are also perceived by stakeholders to have career profiles incongruous with delivery of WBL programmes. Acknowledged as a problem for academic staff by the sectoral education expert, the issue reflects an inability within HEIs to translate the capacity to deliver WBL from social capital to economic and ultimately symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) for either the exceptional lecturer or the Institute.

The HTL department made efforts to address this deficiency by recruiting adjunct staff. However, the research confirmed Louziotis's (2000) proposition that use of adjunct lecturing requires significant prior preparation. In common with Stenström's analysis of workplace instructors, adjunct staff in this programme reported lack of preparation with regard to academic assessment techniques and structuring of learning delivery to encompass a full programme of learning.

Lack of preparation of the adjunct lecturer may have been the result of short-term decision-making often associated with hiring of adjunct staff, intimated by Rice (2006). Although these lecturing staff bring obvious benefits, the phenomenon needs careful management to prevent superficial interventions that lack coherency and damage the reputation of the Institute.

In the HEI environment currently undergoing significant demands on existing resources, this lack of clarity and integration undermines future capacity to build WBL into a mainstream activity.

5.5.3.3 Relevance of HEI Knowledge

Prior to programme design or commencement of delivery, the HEI or Fáilte Ireland (2005a) may not have given their aspired principle of relevant content sufficient consideration. Solomon and Ushers' (1999) comments regarding modification of the boundaries of learning for the workplace environment are pertinent as WBL demands flexibility from multiple interested agencies. Gallacher and Reeve (2002) allude to this by mentioning the necessity to develop an academic staff of 'enterprising selves' to successfully engage with the unpredictability of the workplace.

The case study reflects Garrick and Clegg's (2000) assertion that the delivery practice of most academics in the HEI is sharply conditioned by reward structures oriented towards the 'norms of scientific practice'. Delivery of WBL challenged the HEI to enter into a three-way dialogue with employees and HTL management in terms of programme building. In this case, unilateral design was quicker and used less resources and energy, so an existing programme was delivered.

As a result, the findings confirm Eraut's (2004a) perceived gap between the knowledge needed at work and the knowledge and skills delivered through formal education.

'It is simply not possible to drop a body of disciplinary knowledge into a workplace and expect to sustain the same boundaries around it.'

(Solomon and Usher, 1999, p. XX)

A central tenet that distinguishes work-based from academic learning is the relatively immediate applicability of WBL in the workplace (Linehan, 2008). Often this stems from clearly identifying learning needs of participants prior to the programme and designing your intervention learning outcomes to suit those needs. A weakness of this intervention was the absence of learning needs analysis, and subsequently failure to design a curriculum of tailored programme outcomes.

Reflecting constructivist thinking, Maher's (2004) comments on learning outcomes, and more specifically Biggs' (2003) 'constructive alignment' of programmes (breaking learning into smaller amounts, or 'bursts of academic theory followed by practical work straight away') helped the adjunct lecturer to keep participants engaged and accordingly affected the perceived relevance of the programme material. This can be contrasted with the full-time lecturer who was also conscious of the gap between the theory and the practical, but didn't outline any particular strategies for dealing with the issue.

Highlighting Gappa's (1984) position that HEIs need to meet the challenge of delivering learning of appropriate quality in a coherent fashion, the research observed that programmes in their current format are considered incapable of making a meaningful impact on hotel operations. This connects with Kock and Ellström's (2011) assertion that, depending on the character of the business, some workplaces value competency over qualifications. Perhaps the greater challenge for WBL in SMTes is to use strategies that encourage learning apart from formal programmes.

Weaknesses described by Boud and Solomon (2001) in traditional education models and training practices resonate, and this research validates Gallacher and Reeve's (2002) identification of a need for 'relevance' as central to the growth of work-based learning. They stipulate that work-based knowledge should be relevant to the context of application and distinct from traditional discipline-based knowledge.

On reflection, if employers perceived that formal education through WBL produced skills that gave a distinct edge in the workplace, they would be anxious to engage at every opportunity. Eraut's doubts regarding transferability of theoretical knowledge into a workplace such as the hotel environment, and whether even practical skills can be mapped into the workplace, are validated in this study. Further development of Poell's (2006) contention that WBL should not just equip employees to contribute but should have tangible outputs, such as work-related projects, would be helpful.

5.6 Summary of what the Key Findings Mean for the Substantive Issues of the Research Question

- The case study reveals structural dichotomies between HR (people development) and operations (systems) in their approach to business management, thus exposing dialectical power tensions in their existential relationship within the HTL business. The study demonstrates a lack of agency/social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) on the part of HR staff, whose HRD thinking is considered superfluous to the organisation, and HRM functions are mostly delegated to line management. The HR Manager's frustration is evident, leading to a divergence in opinions on worker identity within the systems-control nature of the organisation. This was perhaps an element in his

subsequent exclusion (Foucault, 1970) and marginalisation from decision-making, and ultimate resignation from the firm.

- The internal capacity of the HEI to deliver effective WBL is lacking, as overarching accreditation and teaching material issues predominate. There appears to be a mismatch of dominant language between the HEI and workplace, which affects implementation of learning. The case study exposes intransigence among some academic staff, lack of resources, and reluctance to experiment with delivery systems and language, leading to difficulty overcoming inertia within the present systems which work on assumptions of primacy of accredited learning. Neither the HEI nor the hotel express the desire to change or wish to experiment, with the HEI seeking to *avoid risking their institutions symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and marginalisation within the academic community*. There is an obvious lack of incentives, support resources and mechanisms for academic staff who engage with WBL, thus implying that delivery strategies needs significant restructuring. Currently there are conflicting norms of standard delivery to WBL, so adjunct staff need significant preparation, prior to commencing programme delivery. The case study found that breaking theory into bite-sized ‘portions’ held the attention of participants. However, the HEI ultimately risks marginalisation of WBL within academia if delivery continues to be dominated by adjunct staff.

In my opinion, these tensions exist as an expression of power relationships between formal education and work. Development of academic knowledge and theory currently resides within the realm of individual academic institutions and departments. Significant power is vested in these institutions and ultimately any change may dilute or threaten their gatekeeper role within the professional sectors.

- The case study observed that the financial model and systems of SMTE work against implementation of learning and staff development. Although Government policy does not encourage this financial model, the ‘low cost’ environment dominates in the HTL sector, and is facilitated by control systems in operation that prevent systematic and meaningful contributions from line staff. These systems worked against implementation of ‘emancipatory’ learning (Freire, 1970), hindered by lack of applicability of learning and the delivery model which needs to be fashioned around the meso (institutional) and micro (individual) environment leading to praxis, or modified theory in practice.
- Staff workplace identities are shaped by management to suit delivery systems within the hotel. Staff self-identity is focused on operational competency and this appears to act as a form of domination, restricting their capacity to generate social capital within their habitus, as a bigger picture of context is hidden from view. WBL programmes reshape workers’ identity, and may rupture the safety of the familiar (Zemyblas, 2005), so staff failure to engage raises questions about whether employees want to redefine themselves in a

manner that might destabilise their current identity, creating *considerable risk for participants without apparent rewards or enablers for learning*.

- HEI/Fáilte Ireland discourse around WBL generally tries to impose contemplative values on the HTL business, but because management generally do not have extensive exposure to HTL education systems, and because of the HTL industry culture of performativity, they are not embracing the value of contemplative knowledge. Their discourse and culture is shaped and dominated by the managerial imperative. The case study confirms Fáilte Ireland observations, that the industry lags significantly behind other industries with regard to attitudes to human resource development. However there is little evidence that Fáilte Ireland are seriously challenging these attitudes regarding line staff development, raising the question, that if they do not challenge the dominant discourse, are they complicit in these contradictions and tensions?

5.7 Conclusion

In Chapter 5 I discussed the findings outlined in the case study and analysed these findings to uncover latent meaning of the data. I explored these refined findings, having considered and interwoven the expert analysis of the Delphi study, in order to add broader validity to my discussions. I discussed relationships between my primary findings and the secondary data themes found in the literature and considered whether the findings of this study support, contradict, or modify others' findings. I feel the key findings provide a critical response to the research question and contribute to contextual understanding of the delivery of WBL in the HTL sector.

The conclusions of the study in Chapter 6 are drawn from a critique of the research methodology and methods, and an examination of contributions of the study to WBL. The implications of the findings for delivery of WBL to the HTL sector are discussed and future research is proposed. Finally, structural enablers of WBL programmes are introduced.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

I began this research with the intent of studying the phenomenon of WBL delivery within the HTL sector. Following this intent, in Chapter 1, I introduced this case study research and contextualised WBL within a knowledge-based economy. In Chapter 2 I presented a review of the extant literature surrounding WBL in the hospitality sector. Chapter 3 described methods used to carry out this research in a clear and comprehensive manner that will ensure findings are reliable and valid. Chapter 4 used the Stewart and Rigg (2011) model to present the findings on a descriptive level or the ‘manifest’ meaning of the data and integrated observations from the Delphi study. Chapter 5 deciphered ‘higher order themes’ and latent meanings, and appropriately related these themes to the extant literature.

For this study, the WBL programme is incorporated into a ‘systems’ focused hotel environment. From a pedagogical perspective, the programme attempted to marry a constructivist reflective approach, with situated learning within a community of practitioners. As the hotel operated a ‘restrictive environment’ (Fuller and Unwin, 2003), the programme ultimately aimed to generate a reconsideration of the participants dependency culture engendered by an absence of social capital. The aim of this final chapter is to present the conclusions and to outline recommendations that, based on the experiences of this case study, could improve delivery of WBL by Athlone Institute of Technology to organisations in the HTL sector.

6.1.1 Research Question

My research question is to ascertain the factors that influence delivery of work-based learning programmes within the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure environment with a view to recommending improvements.

6.1.2 Substantive Research Questions

In order to ‘operationalise’ that question I drew up three questions:

1. What issues impact on delivery of WBL in the HTL sector in the Irish Midlands?
2. Are there particular cultural issues in the HTL sector that affect development of WBL?
3. What can make WBL ‘work’ for the HTL sector in the Irish Midlands?

From these questions I formed secondary research objectives used to guide the research and gain insider and outsider perspectives. These were to:

1. Identify if HTL management engagement impacted on the programme;
2. Establish if current WBL programme delivery strategies are fit for purpose;
3. Establish if the application of programme learning was encouraged in the work context;
4. Examine if the WBL programme was culturally appropriate for a medium-sized hotel; and
5. Determine the contribution of academic staff during the programme.

6.2 Critique of Methodology and Methods

Case study research is an appropriate qualitative methodology when the phenomenon and related variables are impossible to separate from the context (Yin, 2003). In this research, case study research was appropriate as the ultimate goal was to understand a single case within a bounded system, in light of the questions posed at the outset, and not to compare it with others in order to make generalisations.

Data collection methods of document analysis and interviews allowed exploration of the 'swampy lowlands', providing rich material and formulating signposts which ultimately lead to answers to my questions. The Delphi study however, was limited in that it revolved around elicitation of participants beliefs relative to a fixed set of constructs.

In my 'observer as participant' role (Glesne, 2005) I was able to take a role observing both academics and practitioners in their natural setting over the prolonged period. According to Yin (2012), this reflexive position replicated previous experiences of researchers who applied case study to instigate and study change management experiences, which ultimately produced both research implications and practical implications. Researchers choosing this analytical model need a strong capacity in qualitative data collection, as prior to case study analysis some form of thematic analysis is required.

Weaknesses that emerged during the study included the time delay between the modules and interviews, which meant that most participants had left this workplace. Also, through the pursuit of tensions the study may have unwittingly undermined management/staff relationships; management may not previously have been fully aware of the potential unsettling effect of an on-site education programme, and may have under-estimated the requirement for post-programme implementation of new knowledge.

The case study contains some unique features that enhance the implications of the findings. The fact that the hotel is a renowned and highly regarded awards-driven brand, with a significant market status, high reputation for quality and a receptive human resources manager, all lead to an expectation that a commitment to work-based learning would be more likely to succeed (REAP, 2012) in comparison with other establishments and the apparently poor application of work-based learning approaches in the industry more generally (AIT, 2010).

6.3 Key Conclusions

A number of key themes have been identified within the findings chapter and all play a central role in terms of responding to the research topic. From the literature review (including commentators such as Murphy *et al.*) and the views encountered within the research, it is obvious that there is a need for development of much greater clarity around delivery of WBL within both academia and the HTL industry. A cloud of doubt and perceived *risk* appears to hang over WBL in its current form.

As a profitable business operating in a troublesome economic environment, the hotel displayed characteristics of a 'restrictive' working environment (Fuller and Unwin, 2004) with regard to development of line staff, and management do not currently see the benefits of reshaping employees self identity. The operational culture predominates in this hotel. It emphasises productivity over learning, and enforces highly systemised performance. This structuralist environment seems counterintuitive for the services sector, but reflects many service sector environments' attitude to command and control (Crowley, 2012) and ultimately limits the potential for development of social capital within this field, hitherto advocated in the extant literature. Despite many years of emphasis of the importance of human resource development in the industry (Baum, 2007) , the case study indicates that this rhetoric has made superficial progress in this hotel, possibly as a result of the culture and practice engendered by 'low-cost' travel and tourism. In interview, Fáilte Ireland staff (representing the development agency responsible for standards) acknowledged the primacy of productivity over learning, admitted that it is deeply embedded in HTL culture, but they did not demonstrate a strong willingness or commitment of resources to change this culture.

Internal communications are not highly developed and reflection on work practices is not commonly practiced. Current practice generally reflects the financial model of the hotel with weak and unsystematic human resource development, implemented as a form of domination, (Foucault, 1970) restricting staff capacity to generate personal praxis in a micro (individual) or meso (institutional) environment, which could lead to 'enterprising self' described by Garrick and Usher (2000) .

The study indicates that WBL involves considerable *risk* for the programme participants, the HEI and the Hotel involved. Primarily, programme participants *risk* redefining their relationship with their employer and their fellow employees, and are renegotiating the level of commitment and demands placed on them within their work environment given their increased knowledge.

The Hotel *risks* external interference into their operations and loss of income, and also *risks* redefining their employee's sense of identity, and career expectations within the workplace, therefore placing greater challenges on their management staff and internal career structures.

The HEI publically *risks* its academic reputation as it encounters a mismatch between its public discourse and its actual capacity to deliver a coherent programme to industry outside the confines of the college. Deep ontological differences exposed through discursive mismatches between the HEI and the workplace contribute to collaborative inertia, and the *risk* of loss of reputation through compromise on programme development and delivery process is very real.

Despite the critical role played by skills in maintenance of competitiveness, *Fáilte Ireland do not appear to provide any real enablers or rewards*, financial or otherwise, for engaging with the *risks* involved.

6.3.1 Implications of Research Findings

From the perspective of AIT, despite the best efforts of individual delivery staff, the manner of design and delivery of this WBL programme does not meet the needs of the employer and programme participants to enhance customer satisfaction. Commitment to WBL can be enhanced when the programme is shaped around the macro (societal) or *what customer's are demanding*, meso (institutional) or *how an organisation responds to their customer*, and micro (individual) or *how participants needs are fulfilled* leading to desired tangible outcomes and rewards. In this case study there are insufficient desired outcomes or rewards from the WBL programme for participants or management. Recommendations are outlined below to focus the Institute to initiate conversations between HEI management, willing HTL management and sector professional bodies that are analytic, inclusive of employers' needs and considerate of flexible design and delivery, without compromising on the needs of the accreditation process. Questions resonate regarding a potential 'construct of needs' by HEIs in relation to employees' perceived desire for accredited programmes.

There is a need for greater energy from the state agency and professional bodies with regard to mitigation of risks outlined and creation of demand from line workers and HTL management. Building on Baum and Szivas' (2007) comments, the case study is clear that the market is failing with regard to hotel-HEI learning partnerships and incentives and rewards must be provided by the state agencies and professional bodies to encourage real engagement. Fáilte Ireland have committed to WBL within their policy statements, however to date, there is no substantial evidence of their practical commitment, perhaps due to their acceptance of 'low cost' financial model as the

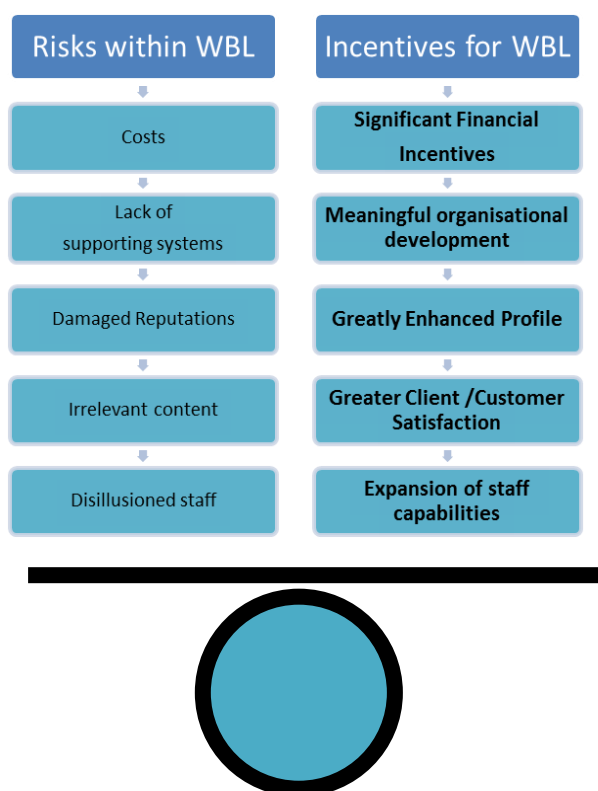
viable option for the majority of Irish HTL businesses. Indeed, I feel the findings reflect an existential struggle for HRD within HRM practice within this ‘low cost’ hospitality environment.

Current HEI language around WBL is obscure and creates an unnecessary obstacle to partnership. The study suggests that even the term ‘work-based learning’ is ambiguous and fails to make an impact on employers. In summary, the implications of this study are that the incentives for all parties to engage with WBL must significantly outweigh the risks involved.

6.4 Recommended Improvements on the Delivery of Work-based Learning in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Sector

While there are numerous challenges for both AIT and hotel staff, there are considerable potential benefits from developing closer relationships. According to Linehan (2008), these benefits include sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences. Nevertheless, this research has identified that considerable multilateral developments must occur prior to the actualisation of these benefits.

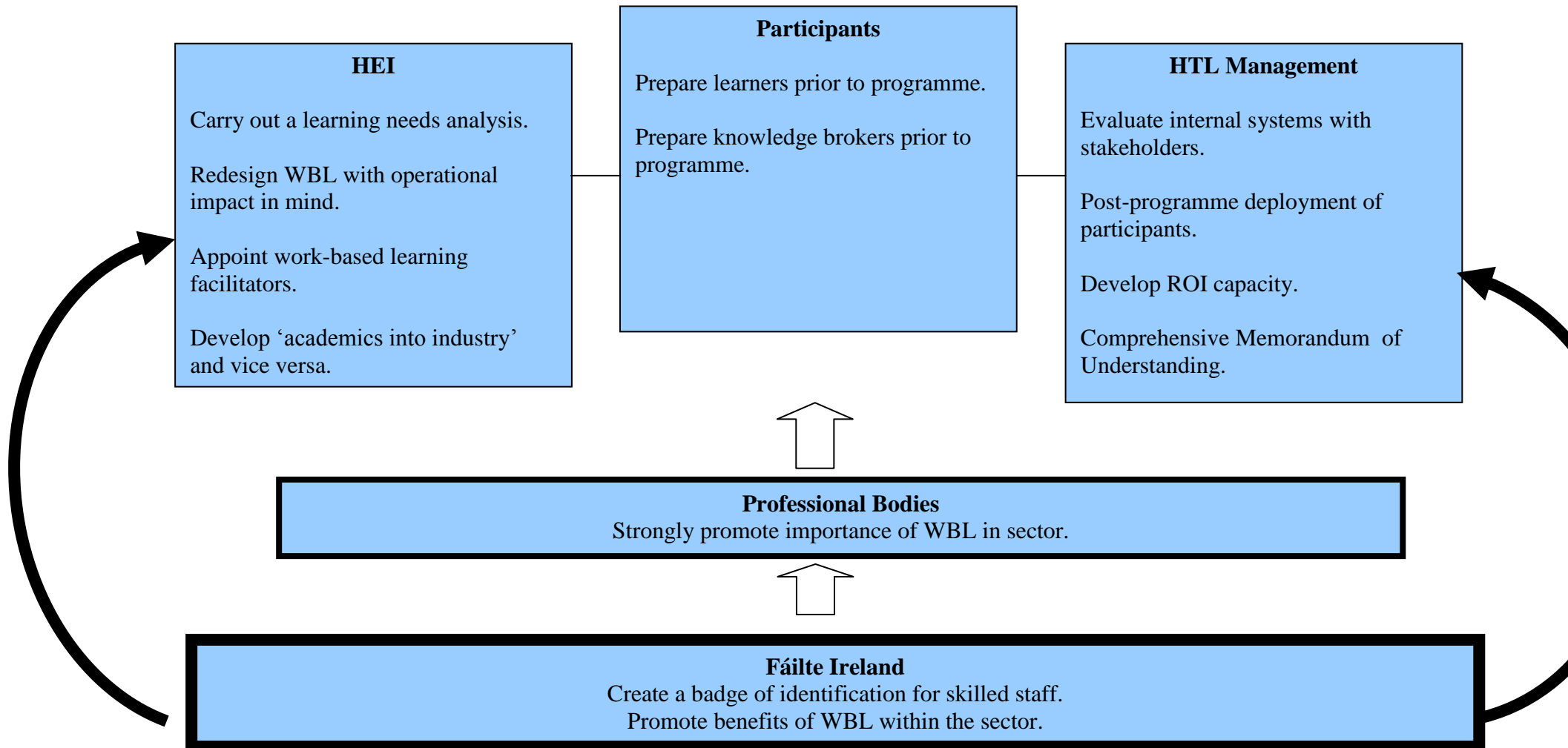
Figure 6.1: Balancing Risk and Incentives in WBL



The recommendations described in the following paragraphs will help improve development of WBL partnerships and structure approaches toward common understandings prior to and during delivery of a WBL programme. In developing this common approach, I am building upon previous shared experiences across the entire sector.

Figure 6.2: Thirteen Recommendations to Improve Delivery of WBL in the HTL Sector

Thirteen Recommendations to Improve Delivery of Work-based Learning in the HTL Sector



6.4.1 Recommendations for Improvement of Delivery of WBL to HTL Sector - Sector Perspective

Recommendation 1 - Fáilte Ireland need to promote benefits of WBL more widely within the sector

This research indicates that perceived risks of work-based learning for this HTL business outweigh the perceived rewards for management and line staff. In line with Baum and Szivas' (2007) recommendations that the state should be prepared to step in where the market is failing, the state development agency, Fáilte Ireland, must establish the value of a work-based learning culture for business through commitment of resources, and through their own convictions, convince participants and hotel management of its potential for their particular business and professional careers. It is Fáilte Irelands espoused policy to develop people within their employment, however evidence of their complicity with the 'easily disposable' or ephemeral worker model of HRM emerges, and there is little evidence within the case study of systematic commitment of resources by Fáilte Ireland facilitated by career structure for line employees.

Continuing exposure of HTL management to best practice examples, such as the Schindlerhof model highlighted in the literature review, will emphasise the importance of engagement with existing professional standards and career structures for line staff within the industry. HTL management must be convinced that these programmes are essential for future competitiveness and job security in a sector that aspires to provide high quality experiences aligned with competitive prices. National and regional awards for establishments with outstanding HRD practices may be also be appropriate to highlight good practice, and dedicated advertising promotions of

establishments that implement WBL might encourage participation. Financial incentives may be necessary to cover extra staffing and costs of learning delivery during WBL.

Recommendation 2 - Fáilte Ireland should create a badge of identification for skilled HTL staff

The research indicated that there is no visible differentiator to indicate level of professional training and competency that a member of line hotel staff has attained. Resonating with Illeris' (2003) social aspect of learning, Fáilte Ireland should consider adopting a marking or uniform badge for line staff that complete continuing professional development programmes and demonstrate superior competency, thus demarcating staff with advanced professional skills to customers. This notion, based on Bourdieu's (1986) 'symbolic capital' could also be introduced to honour HEI delivery staff who deliver WBL programmes to industry.

Recommendation 3 – Professional bodies need to strongly promote the importance of a routine learning for line staff in sector

The case study indicated that there was an absence of professional body influence or leadership with regard to professional standards for line staff. Resonating with Burns (1997), professional bodies operating in the industry (such as the Irish Hotels Federation and Irish Hospitality Institute) need to provide a stronger voice for line staff and emphasise the importance of routine learning. This may take the form of practical and financial assistance from professional bodies to students and HTL establishments who decide to engage with WBL. In addition, they must encourage the emergence of learning champions from staff, in the mode of Evans, Guile and Harris

(2011), who can act as ‘knowledge brokers’ and encourage other staff in WBL initiatives.

6.4.2 Recommendations for Improvement of Delivery of WBL to HTL Sector - HEI Perspective

Recommendations 4–7 are relevant to the HEI and are illustrated graphically below in Figure 6.2 as enablers. These enablers prescribe a series of appropriate practical actions for each stakeholder, implemented prior to delivery of WBL.

Recommendation 4 – Carry out a learning needs analysis prior to commencement of delivery

The research demonstrated clearly that HEIs need a simple yet proactive structured approach to delivery of WBL. Ultimately staff in the HEI didn’t know where to start the process of delivery. Understanding specific learning needs through formal analysis of the company prior to delivery of WBL is an important requirement for successful delivery of a relevant programme and is a logical starting point for delivery of learning.

Recommendation 5 - Redesign WBL with operational impact in mind

The research demonstrated that the impact of learning was too far removed from the workplace. As stated previously, enablers such as reconstruction of the WBL lexicon and redesign of WBL programmes around problems in the workplace could unlock this problem. Alignment of material in the manner suggested by Biggs (2003) allows the academic delivery team to relate programme material to identifiable work challenges, inducing participants personal ‘reflexivity’ within the academic theory, and how they apply through praxis (Freire, 1970) and even modify theory in practice.

Programme activities should include personal reflection (learning journal), community reflection (network discussions which include participants, management and academics) and integration with professional development (through recording of activities with the existing personal skills passport or a professional development plan).

Recommendation 6 – Appoint work-based learning facilitators to coordinate programme

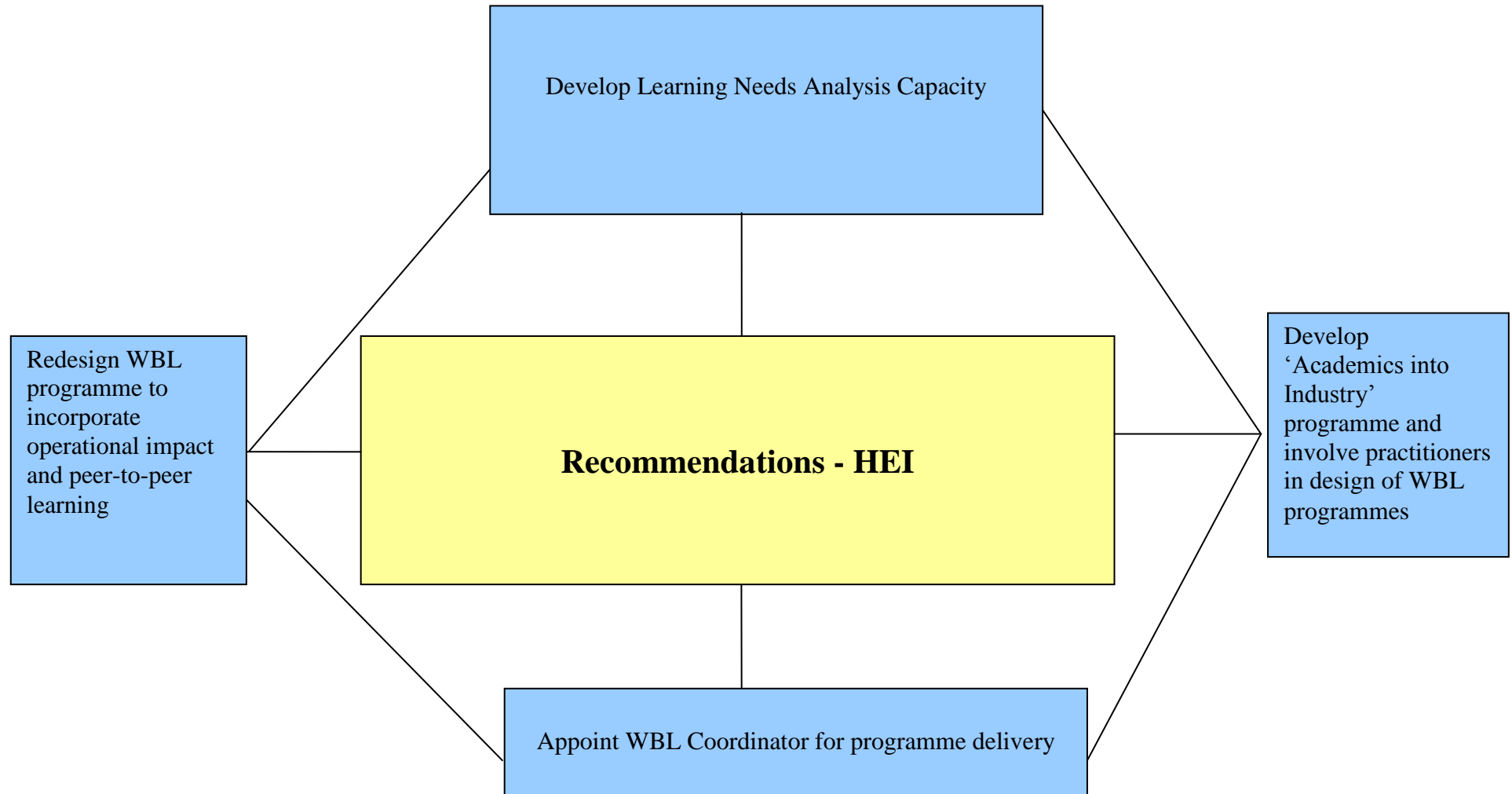
It was evident from the research that throughout the duration of a WBL programme, the HEI must continuously be able to interpret and respond to the realities of the workplace. This requires the appointment of a ‘skilled facilitator’ (Raelin, 2008) to ensure communications are timely and adopted appropriately for HEI, HTL management and programme participants.

Recommendation 7 – Invite academics to spend time in industry prior to delivery and invite HTL management practitioners to spend time in academia

The research indicated that there were mutual gaps between the HEI and hotel in cultural understanding and appreciation of each other’s environments (Nixon, 2006; Becket and Brooks, 2008). In order to facilitate learning and avoid irrelevancy in WBL, individual academics should be invited to build their social and knowledge capital (Bourdieu, 1986) within the industry by spending time in the HTL establishment prior to delivery of WBL to familiarise themselves with contemporary and future challenges. The establishment’s ability to serve future customer needs is compelling for each establishment, and by defining the future landscape, academics can differentiate WBL as an aspect of tertiary education provision, as opposed to

delivery of current skills based training. HTL practitioners, likewise, should be challenged to spend time in an academic environment, helping to shape and deliver segments of HEI programmes where they detail current practices while contrasting and comparing them to academic material.

Figure 6.3: Enablers for Improving Delivery of Work-based Learning in the HTL Sector – HEI



6.4.3 Recommendations for Improvement of Delivery of WBL to HTL Sector - Participant Perspective

Recommendations 8–9 are relevant to programme participants and are illustrated graphically in Figure 6.3 as ‘enablers’. These enablers prescribe a series of appropriate practical actions for each stakeholder, implemented prior to delivery of WBL.

Recommendation 8 - Prepare learners prior to programme commencement

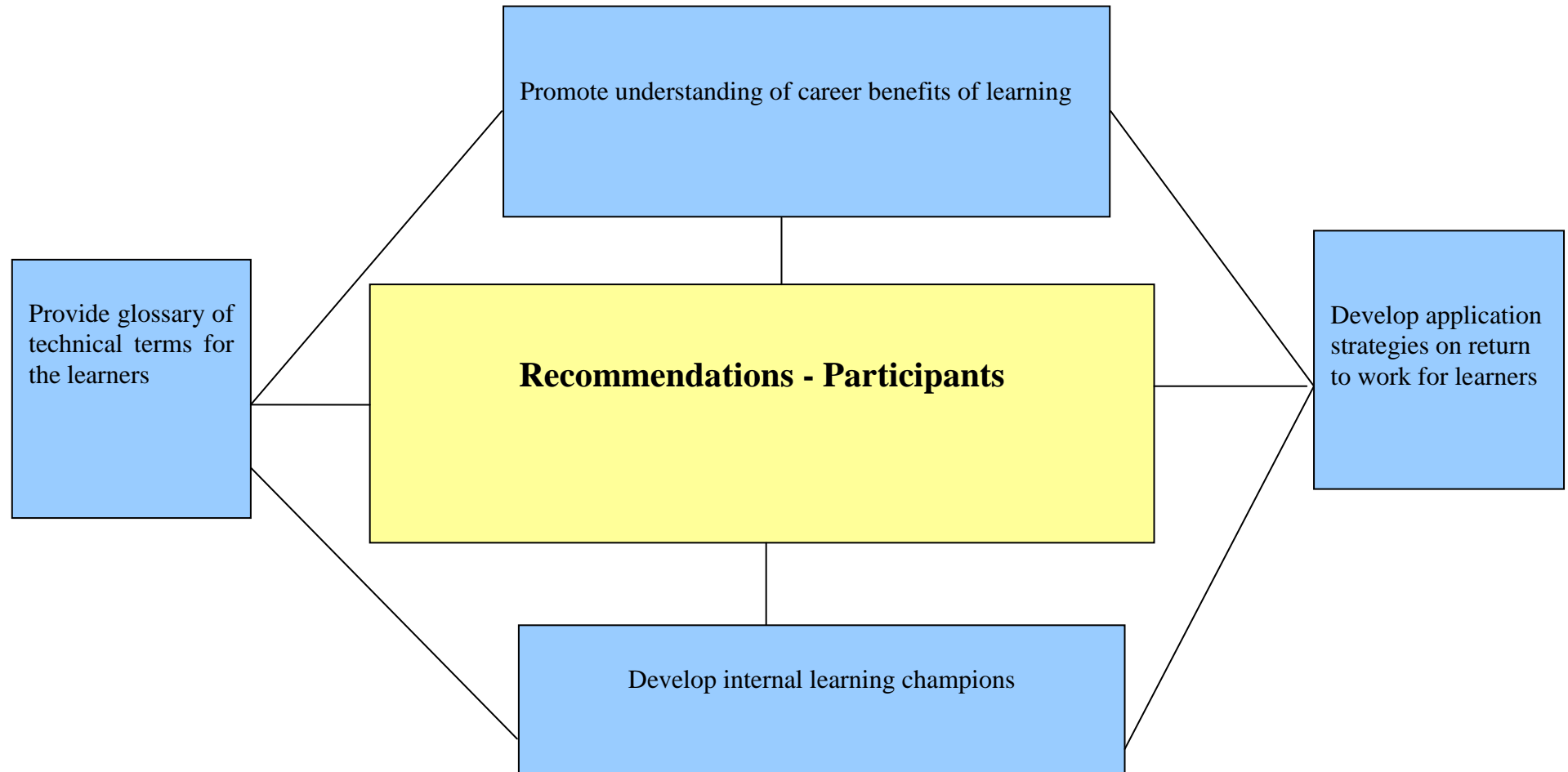
The research indicated that participants commenced the programme without a basic understanding of some core terms and concepts. Initially, as indicated by the University of Glamorgan (2011), participants need prior preparation by the HEI for the programme, ensuring they are familiar with and understand technical and business terms necessary for successful learning experiences. The HEI, in cooperation with hotel management, should also ensure that participants understand the outcomes of their learning programme and where learning will be expected to be applied in the workplace.

Recommendation 9 – Select and prepare knowledge brokers prior to programme

The research indicates that while there are pedagogical risks, peer-to-peer learning could prove a powerful motivator for line staff on work-based learning programmes. Acknowledging the dominance of peer-to-peer learning within the HTL culture, line staff have the potential to provide WBL programme learning champions or ‘workplace instructors’ (Stenström, 2010) from within their ranks. Properly prepared by the HEI in delivery and assessment techniques, the purpose of these ‘knowledge brokers’ (Evans, Guile and Harris, 2011) would be to contextualise programme

learning for other participants, devise ways to ensure learning outcomes can be practically applied, and reinforce the importance for participants of staying engaged and completing the programme. They should also be involved in the construct of assessments.

Figure 6.4: Enablers for Improving Delivery of Work-based Learning in the HTL Sector - Participants



6.4.4 Recommendations for Improvement of Delivery of WBL to HTL Sector - Hotel Management Perspective

Recommendations 10-13 are relevant to HTL management and are illustrated graphically in Figure 6.4 as ‘enablers’. These enablers prescribe a series of appropriate practical actions for each stakeholder, implemented prior to delivery of WBL.

Recommendation 10 – Joint review of SMTE systems prior to commencement of programme

The case study demonstrated that SMTE management apply strong systems in order to generate profitability and maintain operational running of the establishment. This study indicates that systemic and joint periodic review of these systems by both HR and operations staff, followed by consideration of opportunities for meaningful staff interactions with customers (Crowley, 2012), for example, would help identify the opportunities for application of work-based learning. The benefit of ‘humanising’ systems could include creating an enhanced sense of collegiality around the programme, developing personal agency within the organisation and reinforcing the sense that people are at the core of the system. The systems review may help reinforce the role of HR staff in facilitating the HTL operation rather than fulfilling mainly administrative functions (Solnet, Baum and Kralj, 2012).

Recommendation 11 – Consider post-programme deployment of participants

The research indicated that participants need to know the consequences of completion of the work-based learning programme for their future career. Post-programme outcomes for successful participants need more comprehensive scrutiny prior to commencement of the programme in order to understand its potential career impact. This will assist in creating tangible outcomes for participants and avoiding apathy towards the programme, as advised by Ahlgren and Tett (2010).

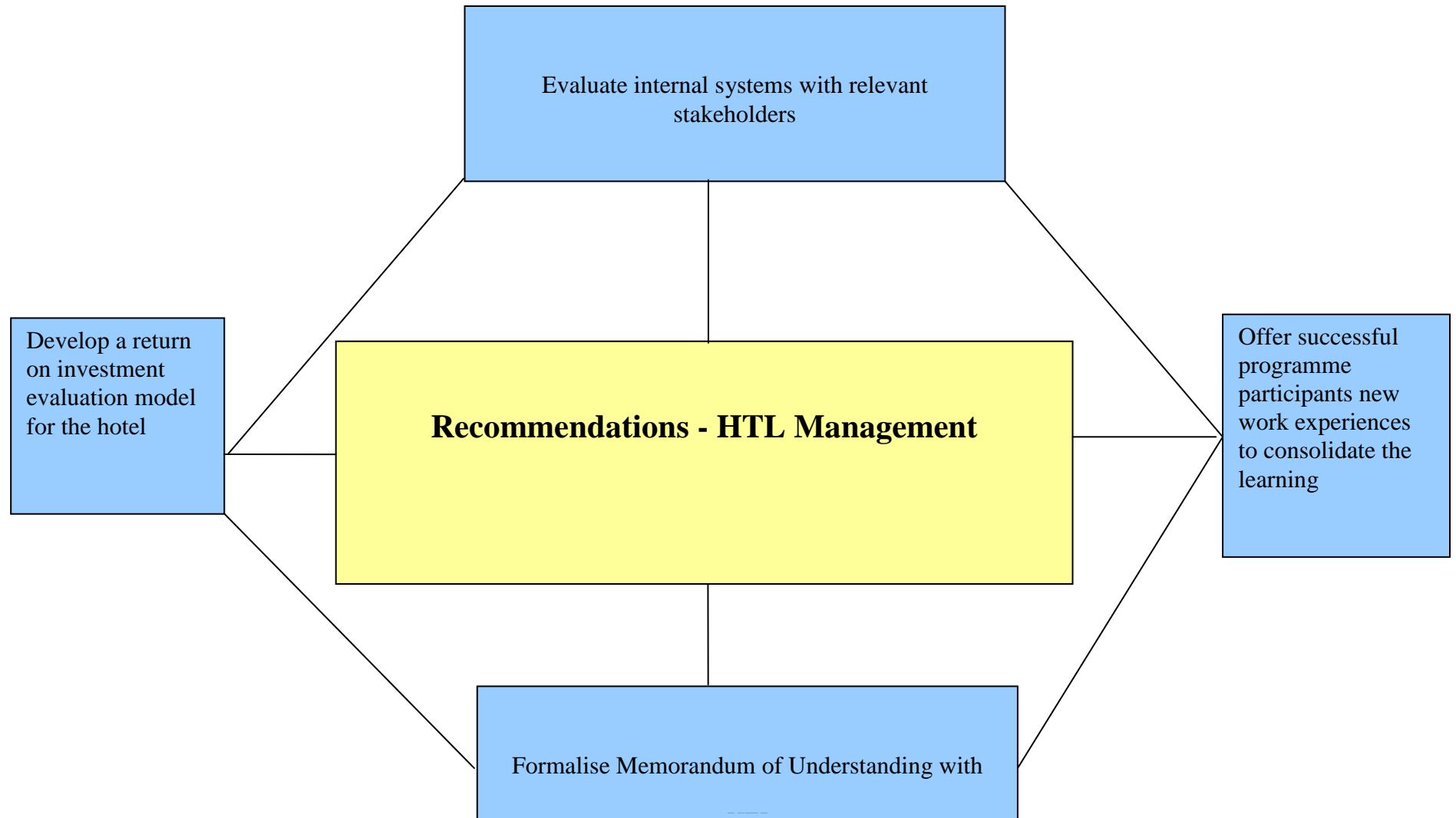
Recommendation 12 – HTL HR Managers must develop ROI capacity

It was evident from the research that although HR management espoused the value of staff development through work-based learning, they were unable to quantify previous impact on business operations and profit margins. In order to build credibility, the case study indicates that HTL management staff would have benefitted from application of ROI, thereby quantifying the business performance impact of learning interventions in order to measure returns.

Recommendation 13 – Draft Comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding

In line with the recommendations of REAP (2012), hotel management, in collaboration with the HEI, should allocate resources to a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding, drafted prior to commencement of the programme, outlining both parties' contribution to the programme. Drafted in clear terms, this memorandum should serve to bridge existing cultural and discursive gaps as identified by Flint and Jones (2011).

Figure 6.5: Enablers for Improving Delivery of Work-based Learning in the HTL Sector – HTL Management



It is clear from the research that modification of the perception of social capital within the hotel is needed if WBL is to be fully embraced. Problems with WBL are relational as opposed to interactional, and the observation of this research is that the legitimacy of current social structures in the hotel overwhelms the social capital of line employees. Prior to commencement of future WBL programmes, these structures must be critically evaluated and future planning must appropriately involve members of senior management of both the HEI and the hotel in the programme.

6.5 Contribution to Delivery of Work-based Learning in the HTL Sector

According to Melia (2011), decisions concerning human resources in an organisation should logically be made on the basis of knowledge and research appropriate to that sector. In light of this, how do my findings relate to previous studies and contribute towards informed decision-making?

The findings of this case study support previous publications of the REAP consortium (2009, 2010) and Baum (2007, 2007a and 2012) . The study indicates clear necessity for a structured partnership approach to delivery of WBL, which values hotel management and participants' contribution in the design and support of the learning process. The challenge for AIT is to transcend the traditional HTL programme and move into a flexible, job-relevant and learner-led educational paradigm with the necessary quality measures. Moving in this direction depends on a number of commitments from various stakeholders within the HTL sector and AIT. This research indicates that despite a plethora of reports and writings dominating the

literature, and resources spent emphasising the critical role of people engagement in HTL operations, this thinking are not evident in the case study.

Three major contributions of this study for the provision of WBL in the context of the HTL sector are:

- It reflects the existential and political struggle for HRD within HRM in a ‘low cost’ hospitality environment and highlights the lack of responsiveness within the HTL sector to the extant HRD/HRM literature;
- It highlights the importance of acknowledging internal dialectical tensions within and between participants, management and academia as a factor within provision of WBL in the HTL environment;
- It highlights the lack of tangible commitment behind Fáilte Ireland policy and AIT rhetoric, in order to develop WBL in the HTL environment.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The intention of this study was to contribute to the body of knowledge on delivery of work-based learning in the HTL environment. Even though this research study provides a number of findings relevant to the approach hotels and HEIs have taken to staff development, research of this nature inevitably highlights areas that are outside the scope of this study but are worthy of further investigation. Consideration should be given to future research that investigates:

- The impact of migrant workers on staff development decisions in the HTL industry;

- Development of work-based learning pedagogical models to improve communication skills of migrant workers in the HTL sector and;
- Comparative evaluation studies of WBL delivery to similar organisations in the HTL sector facilitating meta-analysis.

6.7 Conclusion

This final chapter has summarised the main findings of the research and implications for delivery of work-based learning from the perspective of hotel management, HEI and participant stakeholders.

Extrapolating lessons from a work-based learning programme or the ‘local, specific and contingent’ (Fenwick, 2010), the case study uses embedded units of analysis to understand a complex learning environment of HEI-industry partnership.

This investigation has identified that the absence of work-based learning programmes in the HTL sector in the Midlands is attributable to beliefs among HEI and HTL staff that current programmes are not a priority because they involve commitment of specific resources, and the operational impact of the current programme is currently ambiguous. Successful work-based learning implies delivery of relevant knowledge to impact operations, achieving a balance of resource allocation, maintenance of trusting relationships and attaining realistic objectives for all stakeholders.

The case study illustrates that the dominant financial model in the hotel encourages employment of an ephemeral workforce. This depiction predicts the ultimate diminution of the hotels competitive strength, however as this is a long term

prediction, there are no immediate incentives for investing in this workforce. Although there was no evidence of deliberate neglect of development of this mostly migrant workforce, their situation was vulnerable to exploitation due to the imbalance in power relations.

Lester and Costley (2010) state that with adequate resources, work-based learning has the potential to invigorate work practices and transform professional capacities. However, work-based learning involves risk, change and commitment. This research identified, that fear of destabilisation of power relations, inertia amongst all stakeholders, avoidance of risk and cost, coupled with tendency toward the safety of the familiar (Zemyblas, 2005), as its biggest enemies.

Not only preparing an establishment for future customers ‘who crave a sense of uplifting’ (Tourism Ireland, 2011), work-based learning would clearly demonstrate the establishment and the HEIs commitment to;

- HTL employee’s education and training;
- corporate social responsibility;
- growth of social capital of HTL workforce, and;
- restoration of balance between a weak labour market and job security within the sector.

The industrial climate for the HTL sector in the Midlands is now in a critical phase. More than ever, the industry needs leaders to nurture businesses of the highest capacity, which are staffed by well trained, engaged and motivated staff. According to

the European Commission report (2013) the totality of work-based learning is improved competitiveness, customer service and reputations. However the case study demonstrates that engagement with work-based learning for all parties is a risky political act which redefines power relations. Stimulating work based learning requires not just articulation of policy by state agencies and HEIs, but actual *reduction of perceived risk through appropriate enablers* facilitated by allocation of resources, assiduous management of relationships and realistic aims on the part of all the stakeholders.

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Appendix 1: Work-based Learning Backdrop

In today's competitive world, the Irish economy needs more people with higher level skills in the workplace (Forfás 2007a). A reliance on traditional manufacturing and low-skilled services will not be sufficient for developed countries like Ireland to remain at the forefront of economic and technological advancement. Organisations across all sectors have to respond rapidly to market dynamics,, and traditional education routes may not necessarily be a suitable response to these challenges (Illeris, 2003).

Learning for Life (2000), Ireland's first white paper on adult education, underlined how skill shortages threatened Ireland's economic progress. Relevant stakeholders endorsed this view, and also agreed on the high priority status of addressing the skill shortage issue. The white paper, however, reported that "there is less agreement as to how workplace education should be organised and financed "(Department of Education and Science, 2000, p. 76). Since the publication of the white paper, educators, employers, and politicians have given increased attention to the concept of learning as a lifelong activity and to the concept of organisational learning.

The publication of a National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (HEA, 2011) has given fresh impetus to the central role that higher education will play in supporting growth and sustainment of innovative enterprises of the future. The document strongly emphasises creation and enhancement of human capital by expanding participation in higher education, while acknowledging the relatively poor performance of our systems in the area of life long learning.

Government Policy Backdrop

In May 2011, Mr Ruadhri Quinn, TD, Minister for Education, while commenting on the National Strategy for Higher Education 2011-2030, emphasised the important role that third level and industry interaction should play in Ireland's development;

And we want to reach for new levels of system responsiveness, of connectedness between higher education and wider society; new levels of performance and quality. In short, our future ambitions for Ireland are entwined with our ambitions and capacity for enhancing the responsiveness and quality of our system of higher education

Approximately 1.4 million of the Irish workforce are predicted to remain in the labour force in 2020, but changes in technology and business processes will have rendered many of their skills obsolete (Forfás, 2007a). Changing employment patterns in the organisation of work practices have impacted on demand for higher-level skills. Employees are expected to be more flexible, have a broader range of skills and manage their own career development. Graduate-level skills and qualifications are seen as increasingly important in the changing workplace. The Forfás Expert Group on Future Skills Needs proposes a vision of Ireland in 2020 in which a well-educated and highly skilled population contributes optimally to a competitive, innovation-

driven, knowledge-based, participative, and inclusive economy. The Expert Group suggests that, if Ireland is to realise this vision of a new knowledge economy which competes effectively in the global market place, the country requires a resident population with enhanced skills, increased participation in the workforce, and greater third-level participation (Forfás, 2007a).

The report goes on to suggest that:

- Universities and, in particular, institutes of technology will have to deliver flexible, market-driven solutions. This will require these institutions to tap into market trends and to develop improved linkages with potential customers;
- There is a need to develop ways of capturing data on skills needs at a regional and sectoral level and to feed it back to education and training providers;

Several themes emerge from the above reports:

- Lifelong learning is essential for the development of ‘human capital’, which is inextricably linked to personal, social, and economic development;
- Educational provision for workplaces must be context-sensitive, flexible, innovative, and adaptive;
- Developments must be informed by an understanding of the needs and opportunities, by region and by sector;
- The education sector needs to proactively facilitate and simplify the engagement process;
- Higher education institutions and employers should strive for mature, long term partnerships that can meet and exceed current needs and anticipate future needs.

This indicates that genuine dialogue must exist between third-level education institutions, training providers, and those seeking learning. Global competition requires a collaborative, national team effort in which all key stakeholders actively contribute and assume their respective responsibilities to deliver on our shared national vision.

Commentators have added that a country that has the objective of creating a knowledge society, must support individuals to continuously update and complement their knowledge, competencies and skills for personal and professional development. The Continuing Vocational Training survey in 2005 (Source - CSO) showed that, although, at the time, training costs were the highest in the EU, private sector engagement with formal training programmes was sporadic. It showed that many countries with much lower training spends, for example the UK, were using their money to achieve more quantifiable outcomes. The OECD (2007) recommends that Ireland should increase access to part time education and other types of flexible education in order to increase skill and education levels in the Irish workforce.

Under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013, the Irish Government identified lifelong learning as the guiding principle for education and training policy in the context of the Lisbon Agenda. The main goals in relation to up-skilling the workforce under the NDP Human Capital Priority are: -

- To promote access to appropriate training and lifelong learning.
- To implement the National Skills Strategy with the goal of increasing workers' skill levels and 'to provide the labour force with the skills and adaptability to meet the challenges of the future'. (NDP, 2007, p. 189).
- To expand the workforce through the activation of groups such as the unemployed, people with disabilities, lone parents, Travellers, ex-offenders, women and older people as well as the implementation of an appropriate skills-based migration policy.¹³

Forfás in its National Skills Strategy (Forfás, 2007) has identified the goal of 48% of the workforce having NFQ¹⁴ (National Framework Qualification) levels 6 to 10, 45% with NFQ 4 & 5 and the remaining 7% with NFQ levels 1 to 3 by 2020.

¹³ The NDP goal of attracting highly skilled migrant workers to supplement the workforce has knock-on training requirements for these employees. (This goal may need revision in the light of current economic conditions).

¹⁴ NFQ levels 6-10 is Post Leaving Certificate to PhD; NFQ level 4, 5 is Leaving Certificate; NFQ level 3 is Junior Certificate.

Appendix 2: Sample of Minuted Meetings of Steering Group

ATHLONE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AIT/Fáilte Ireland Joint Initiative on Work Based Learning (WBL) Thursday 27th November 2008

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Present: Dr Margaret Linchan, AIT, Kieran Doyle, AIT, John O'Sullivan, AIT, Vivian Doyle (The Wineport), Mary O'Sullivan (Fáilte Ireland), John O'Sullivan (Heritage Centre, Clonmacnoise), Michael Kelly (Hodson Bay Hotel), John O'Sullivan (The Prince of Wales).</p> | <p>Apologies: John O'Sullivan in</p> |
| <p>Meeting Notes</p> <p>Dr Margaret Linchan opened the meeting by introducing and explaining this national pilot as a work based project funded by Fáilte Ireland.</p> <p>AIT is very grateful to Fáilte Ireland for this funding and the opportunity to run this initiative.</p> <p>From this meeting it is hoped to determine how best to engage with industry.</p> <p>Kieran Doyle gave a presentation which covered the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is work-based learning • What does this mean • Higher Education and Industry Partnerships • Examples of AIT Industry Partnership/WBL Development • Recommendations for Employers in Implementing Work-based learning <p>A copy of the report on Work Based Learning by Dr Margaret Linchan from Cork Institute of Technology was distributed to all attendees.</p> <p>Mary O'Sullivan of Fáilte Ireland expressed their pleasure to partner AIT in this initiative. It is now time to look anew at the college/industry relationship especially given the economic downturn and greater demand for jobs in the hospitality area. FI looks forward to this pilot delivering a model on how to partner with education/industry.</p> <p>The attendance offered a number of comments regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff interest in advancing in their role/company • The importance of a structured approach • The importance of academic credits for courses/modules • The need for a streamlined approach | |

Appendix 3: Description of Case Study

Case Study Description

Between November 2009 and April 2011, as part of Fáilte Ireland funded research project, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) delivered a FETAC accredited WBL programme to line staff in a medium sized (180 bedroom) four star hotel in the Irish Midlands.

Lectures were delivered onsite in the hotel and occasionally on campus in AIT. The rationale for the programme was to deliver a programme pilot programme to hotel staff in order to establish current Institute capacity with regard to WBL. The programme was delivered by tutoring staff associated with the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies, AIT and governed by a Project Steering Committee.

Programme

In consultation with the Head of Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies, the Advanced Certificate in Professional Restaurant and Bar Service was chosen for delivery as it is an 18 month accredited programme aimed at developing the knowledge, skills and competencies required in a food and beverage operation.

The aim of the programme was to provide students with professional craft skills of restaurant and bar service in order to provide a quality and unique customer experience in the Irish tourism industry.

Students graduating from the programme should have developed the knowledge, skills and competencies to enable them to:

- Demonstrate and respond in a professional manner to the needs and expectations of customers, using appropriate social/relationship skills.
- Meet customer expectations by demonstrating, with confidence and creativity, the knowledge, skills and competence required for professional food and beverage service.
- Communicate effectively through a range of media.
- Demonstrate an ability to market and sell the food and beverage product to customers.
- Understand and apply stock control; cost control; quality and environmental sustainability procedures.
- Operate effectively within a culturally-diverse environment.
- Understand and apply relevant legislation
- Demonstrate awareness of current industry trends

The programme was delivered in a modular format with programme modules including Casual Dining, The Business of Customer Care in Professional Food and Beverage Service, Fine Dining, Bar Operations and Wine Studies.

A modular format was adopted so that participants could complete all modules for a full award or take stand alone modules for component certificate awards.

Programme Delivery

The programme was facilitated by the Institute WBL Development Executive and delivered by members of staff from AIT, including members of full time faculty and members of associate faculty depending on the content. Overall two members of academic staff delivered the vast bulk of the programme. Familiarisation visits to AIT and to other HTL establishments were included during the programme. The programme was not governed by a memorandum of understanding or any formal agreement. Almost all communication was delivered directly to the participants through the academic tutors.

Participants

The programme was attended by volunteer staff members from the hotel and a sister hotel located in Athlone. Twenty-nine participants commenced various stages of the programme. 21 participants completed various aspects of the programme. This included representatives from functional units of the hotel including bar, restaurant, carvery, banqueting and cafe sub units of the programme. The majority of participants came from bar, restaurant and carvery sub units of the hotels.

Staff participated in the programme during their time off and all attendance at lectures was during their spare time.

Programme Assessment

The choice of assessment methods for each module reflected the stated objectives and learning outcomes and the teaching methods employed. Examples of assessment methods used on the course include:

- Practical assessments
- Written assignments
- Seen and unseen examinations and case studies
- Presentations
- Team projects
- Individual projects
- Reflective journal

Practical assessments tested skills acquisition and improvement and allowed a structured opportunity for critical reflection on hotel practice .

Projects and team assignments enabled learners to undertake a detailed examination of issues and developed the skills of teamwork, problem identification, information collection and analysis, as well as, written and verbal communication.

Assessment in a number of modules were designed to take account of ability of learners to demonstrate the integration of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in other areas of the curriculum. For example assessment during the first module included an opportunity for syndicate groups to present a detailed outline of a marketing event to hotel management and academic delivery staff.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Each participant completed an RPL Assessment to gauge previous learning. As the programme was delivered to experienced practitioners, RPL facilitated leverage of previous learning to conflate teaching hours during the programme and accelerate delivery. This was achieved by completion of an RPL Assessment Form which captured the participant's relevant formal, informal and accredited learning and a subsequent RPL verification interview at the commencement of the programme delivery. This should have allowed tutors to focus on participant weaknesses and knowledge gaps, however few participants were able to articulate significant prior learning, relevant to programme learning outcomes.

Evaluation of Engagement

The process of engagement was very lengthy. Up to five meetings and briefings were required over a period of six months before the nature of the programme was agreed. This period of time was necessary to allow hotel management to plan work schedules and academic facilitators to coordinate tutors and necessary resources. The programme was delivered successfully to participants who presented themselves for each session. Because of the vagaries of the hospitality industry (staff turnover and shift systems), it was often difficult to ensure maximum attendance.

After delivery of two modules of the programme, the HR Manager responsible for driving the programme within the hotel unexpectedly resigned from his position, leaving a gap in the corporate awareness of the programme and an absence of a designated contact person within the hotel.

Appendix 4: Modified Design of Strong Learning

Interventions (Stewart and Rigg (2011))

| Factors | Essential questions |
|--|---|
| Clear and appropriate objectives | <p>What is the purpose of the intervention?</p> <p>What learning needs have been identified?</p> <p>Are there stated objectives for each stakeholder?</p> <p>Is there any risk of inappropriate objective – setting?</p> |
| Alignment with business strategy? | <p>How is the intervention to be aligned horizontally with other HR strategies and vertically with overall business strategy?</p> <p>How will the design align with specific organisation priorities?</p> <p>In light of there being several key stakeholders, to what extent do they have differing priorities for the intervention?</p> |
| Stakeholder expectations | <p>Who are the key stakeholders, both internal and external?</p> <p>What outcomes do they expect from the learning intervention?</p> <p>What concerns and needs does the line manager have?</p> <p>What opportunities can the line manager provide to support HRD</p> |
| Learners | <p>Are they compelled or willing?</p> <p>What learning skills and experiences do they bring?</p> <p>What are their preferred way of learning?</p> <p>Are they the right people?</p> <p>What are their expectations? Do these need challenging?</p> |
| Organisation context | <p>Do the organisation culture and the management practices welcome and encourage learning, whether formal or informal?</p> |
| Resources | <p>Who is paying?</p> <p>What time commitment is required from learners and others?</p> <p>What are the cost implications of this time? Which budget does cover from?</p> <p>What facilities and equipment are required?</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Combination of learning methods and interventions | <p>What are the options?</p> <p>How are learning methods combined?</p> |
| Transfer and application to work | <p>How is application and transfer integrated into the learning methods?</p> <p>How are learners incentivised to transfer?</p> <p>Is there a system for encouraging learners to share and apply their learning?</p> <p>How is transfer followed up?</p> |
| Deliverer capability – skilled learning architects and deliverers | <p>Who is leading the design?</p> <p>How influential are they with key stakeholders?</p> <p>How skilled are they at design, project management, securing resources, managing conflict between stakeholders?</p> <p>Who will deliver and are they suitably skilled and experienced?</p> <p>Are they briefed on the organisation and learners' background?</p> |

Appendix 5: Sample Learning Journal

Professional Restaurant and Bar Service Programme

Athlone Institute of Technology

Fine Dining Module

Wáilte Ireland

~~XXXXXX~~ Hotel

$\frac{80}{100} = 16$

Reflective Journal

Date: WEEK 8

Name: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Students are required to keep a record of the Positives, Interests and Negatives (PIN) that have happened during the weekly service.

WE DIDNT HAVE A CLASS THIS WEEK, BUT INSTEAD OF THIS WE WENT TO VISIT WINE PORT LODGE GUEST HOUSE. ON THE ARRIVAL WE WERE SERVED TEA AND COFFEES IN THE LOUNGE. PLACE WAS VERY CLEAN, NICE PRESENTED AND ALL STAFF WERE VERY FRIENDLY AND POLITE.

LATER ON GENERAL MANAGER TOGETHER WITH BAR AND RESTAURANT MANAGER CAME AND SHOWED US DINING ROOM. THEY OFFERED US BREAKFAST AND SHOWED US THE TABLE. SO 7 OF US WERE SEATED ALL TOGETHER AT AROUND TABLE. TABLE WAS WELL PRESENTED.

STAFF SHOWED US COLD BUFFET AND OFFERED TEA & COFFEE. AFTER THAT SHE CAME AT TAKE ORDER FOR HOT BREAKFAST. AFTER FEW MINUTES WAS BREAKFAST SERVED, BUT SOMEONE WARRIED THAT JANA DIDNT GET FOOD SHE REQUESTED.

IT TOOK ONLY LITTLE WHILE TILL SHE GOT FOOD SHE REQUESTED. FOOD WAS WELL PRESENTED AND HOT. WAITRESS OFFERED US FRESH TEA & COFFEE. WE ALL WERE PLEASANT AND HAPPY WITH SERVICE.

AFTER BREAKFAST DECIDE, THE BAR & RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR

Appendix 6: Sample Exam

Written Exam Semester 2 2011
Answer all questions

1. What are the aspects that separate a fine dining experience from casual dining?
2. (a) Describe the composition of a good cheese board.
(b) What drinks best accompany cheese
3. What are the reasons for decanting a wine?
4. Describe the following soups:
 - Consomme,
 - Bouillabaisse,
 - Chowder,
 - Gazpacho,
 - Minestrone
5. The last impression is as important as the first. Describe the steps that should be taken from when the guest requests the bill.
6. What is the conference and banqueting manager responsible for when planning an event
7. Identify the six steps in the decision making process
8. When taking a booking for a function in a hotel e.g a wedding identify and explain five items that need to be addressed to help in the planning and coordination of the wedding.
9. Identify ten points that need to be considered when doing outdoor catering.

Appendix 7: Questions for HEI Delivery Staff

Brief description of involvement

What was the outcome of the programme?
Was an accredited programme really beneficial and necessary?
Was this a suitable programme to achieve the needs of the Hotel?
Were there practical difficulties in delivering the programme?
Were there academic challenges?
How problematic was joint delivery concept?
Have the HEI discussed the programme with the Hotel since the conclusion?
How did management demonstrate support for the programme?
Was the process of partnership development appropriate? –this included WBL facilitator / Hotel management / HEI management / HEI Delivery Staff
How can delivery of such a Work-based Learning programme be improved?
Do many other colleges deliver these type of programmes?
As a HEI/Enterprise/Business Consultant venture – could you consider this project a success?
As a HEI/Enterprise venture – would you encourage repeat of this project with another employer/ group of employers?
What makes/could make Work-based Learning work?
Brief Background/CV prior to programme

Purpose of Interview

Explore HEI attitudes to WBL delivered through external partnership with HTL sector.

Why did the Department deliver the Work-based Learning programme?
Describe the process of delivery and the people involved.
What was the purpose of the programme?
What material exactly was delivered?
What tools /modes of delivery did you use? What worked – what didn't work?
Where the learning outcomes achieved?

Probing Strategies (Joyce, 2010)

- Repeating- the last sentence verbatim, in a questioning tone, followed by a silence from the interviewer.
- Request for clarification- if the repeating probe is insufficient, ask for clarification e.g. 'what do you mean by that?'
- Request for elaboration- 'can you tell me more about that?'
- Request for confirmation- summarising and returning the interviewee's answers in a questioning form.

Appendix 8: Questions for Hotel Management

Initially show description of WBL and describe the previous WBL programme delivered in the hotel / Read through the syllabus /Discuss their Background/CV prior to programme /What is your job in the hotel?

Questions

Explore management role in the delivery of the programme

- What did the WBL programme mean to you?
- What was your goal when facilitating the delivery of this programme staff?
- What was the outcome of the programme?
- How did you demonstrate support for the programme?
- What were the practical difficulties of this programme?
- Was there a training gap analysis prior to delivery of the programme?
- What did you know about the programme prior to commencement of delivery?
- How do you know if it worked? – Examples of application of WBL from this programme
- Was the programme suitable for your needs?
- Why do we train?
- What are the key issues that impact on local learning and development decisions
- Can these key issues be addressed?
- Is there a sense of responsibility for developing staff within the sector
- Have you rewarded staff for achieving learning and professional development?

Examine cultural fit of ‘public reflection’ as the basis for WBL within the sector

- How useful has staff input been in the past?
- How often do staff suggest good ideas

Explore HTL management attitudes to WBL through external partnership with HEI

- Were there benefits of working with AIT
- Were there disadvantages
- Do you know of any hotels who are working with a Higher Education Institute
- Could hotels /colleges work together more often?
- How can the delivery of such programmes be improved?
- What makes / can make Work-based Learning work?

Probing Strategies (Joyce, 2010)

- Repeating- the last sentence verbatim, in a questioning tone, followed by a silence from the interviewer.
- Request for clarification- if the repeating probe is insufficient, ask for clarification e.g. ‘what do you mean by that?’
- Request for elaboration- ‘can you tell me more about that?’
- Request for confirmation- summarising and returning the interviewee’s answers in a questioning form.

Appendix 9: Interview Question for Programme Participants

Subject

Tell us about yourself

Education

Work Background

Role in the Hotel

- What was your objective when you decided to undergo the programme?
- Did you achieve the objective?
- What was the outcome of your participation on the programme
- Did you learn during the programme?
- How did you find doing exams
- Did you attend all the sessions
- Prefer On site /Off site delivery /online delivery?
- Was it difficult to manage your time off to attend this course
- What was the most enjoyable /useful part of the programme?
- How did your fellow workers react to you going on the programme?
- What was the most difficult part of the programme /
- Partners/homelife ok with you completing the programme?
- Did you implement new learning?
- How did you find the AIT academic delivery staff / Training Consultant?
- Do you feel management have a responsibility for your professional development
- Is learning rewarded?
- Is the workplace a classroom?
- Is learning and development planned?
- How do you inform the manager when you can't do something
- Main benefits of previous staff learning and development
- How do you know if it works?
- How does management share information?
- How do you react when management start to discuss work related problems with you?
- How often does management implement new ideas from staff?
- Do you think group decision-making would work in a hotel environment?
- How do you feel about working with seasonal workers?
- Does it affect your chances of getting upskilled?
- What makes / can make Work-based Learning work?

Probing Strategies (Joyce, 2010)

- Repeating- the last sentence verbatim, in a questioning tone, followed by a silence from the interviewer.
- Request for clarification- if the repeating probe is insufficient, ask for clarification e.g. ‘what do you mean by that?’
- Request for elaboration- “can you tell me more about that?”
- Request for confirmation- summarising and returning the interviewee’s answers in a questioning form.

Appendix 10: Letter to Hotel

WBL Office
AIT
Athlone

Mr X
General Manager
X Hotel

Dear X,

I am currently undertaking completing research as part of a doctoral thesis through the School of Education Studies, DCU.

The purpose of the research to assess the impact and ‘fitness for purpose’ of current Work-based Learning delivery for the hospitality sector in the Midlands

In order to complete the research I would like to set up an interview with you to discuss the impact of the Fáilte Ireland ‘Restaurant and Bar Services Operation’ which AIT delivered within your organisation and to discuss staff learning and development within your organisation.

I also seek permission to interview individual managers and carry out interviews or focus groups with your staff regarding the impact of the programme. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and as a participant, you may withdraw from the process at any stage.

The intention is to conduct an academic study on Work-based Learning within the hospitality sector. The data collected will be used to inform an academic thesis under the supervision of an academic supervisor. Although an unlikely feature of this particular study, participants should be aware that in such exercises, confidentiality of information provided can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting.

The recording of all data and quotations collected during this study will be anonymous. However as we intend to conduct a focussed case study within the sector in the region, it would be reasonable to assume that, on occasion, the origin of specific comments may be difficult to conceal within the thesis document.

Please find enclosed a copy of the proposed questions for our interview. I would be grateful for your approval and permission to carry out this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Doyle

Appendix 11: Consent Form



Consent to Participate in Research Study

I understand that my participation is requested in a research study, which will be carried out in the X Hotel in part fulfilment of the requirements of a doctoral programme in the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University.

The purpose of the study is to assess the impact and 'fitness for purpose' of a Work-based Learning programme delivered in the hospitality sector in the Midlands

I agree to participate in the study by completing the following interview / focus group.

I agree my participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time.

All information pertaining to my participation in the research will remain confidential, subject to legal requirements, and will remain in the possession of the researcher.

The overall findings will contribute to the production of a doctoral research thesis.

I fully understand the information given to me and agree to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant

Date: _____

Signature of Witness:

Date: _____